

**Syllabus**  
**Seminar IV: The Minister as Practical Theologian (DM 6464)**  
**May 29-June 8, 2012**  
**David C. Hester, Instructor**

**Course Description:** This 6 credit seminar is intended to provide an opportunity to further refine a student's understanding of Practical Theology and the role of ministers as practical theologians. To this end, students will complete a set of common readings, provide brief written reflections on them, and provide leadership for discussion of them in the seminar. The primary work of the seminar is integrating what has been learned and experienced in the previous three seminars by working collaboratively on each student's Project Prospectus. Time will be divided between in class reflection on assigned readings, independent research and writing in the library, and collaborative discussion and refinement of each student's prospectus. By the end of the two weeks in residence, it is expected that a student will have a well developed, near final draft of his or her prospectus.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the seminar, students

1. Will be able to define and describe "practical theology" in the context of ministry praxis;
2. Will have learned at least one model for interpreting situations in light of Scripture and theology;
3. Will be able to articulate clearly and distinctly the concern which his or her project addresses, the biblical and theological perspectives and other analytical insights that inform their response to the issue;
4. Will have completed a substantial second draft (at least 15-20 pages) of their prospectus.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Complete assigned course readings, providing a 1-2 pages report on each book, identifying the author's central purpose for it, the argument (or case, if you prefer) that is presented, showing how the argument (case) develops through the book, and offering your considered judgment on how well the author achieves his or her purpose and why that purpose matters to faith and the practice of faith. **Due to the instructor no later than the first day of the Seminar.**
2. Full and informed participation in the seminar discussions, with responsibility for (1) presenting and leading discussion of one of the readings and (2) presenting and leading discussion of your project and prospectus.
3. Write a paper (4-6 pp.) describing your theology of ministry: how you understand your vocation (Christology), how it relates to your understanding of the church (ecclesiology), your understanding of what it means to be human (theological anthropology), and God's relationship

and will for our lives as followers of Christ and citizens of a diverse and pluralistic world. **Due in draft form for your use during the seminar, a final draft to be submitted to the instructor by June 6.**

4. Writing: Prepare prior to the seminar a substantial draft of the first chapter of your prospectus (8-10 pp.), stating clearly the situation in ministry which your project will address. This should be a comprehensive and analytical presentation of the concern you will address, indicating the issue to be addressed, your understanding of it in light of Scripture and theology, and a clear and specific description of research you will need to do to determine an appropriate response to the situation that is theologically and biblically informed and contextually appropriate. Include a working bibliography of resources you will use or consult. **Due no later than May 22, 2012.**

**Note: all papers should be submitted electronically to the instructor to be posted on the CAMS site.**

#### **Required Reading:**

Farley, Edward. *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003. Read chapters 1 and 2.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. New York: Continuum Books, 2011 (paperback edition)

Myers, William R. *Research in Ministry: A Primer for the Doctor of Ministry Program*. Chicago: Exploration Press, 2002.

Volf, Miroslav. *Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2011.

Volf, Miroslav and Bass, Dorothy C. (editors). *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.

#### **General notes:**

**A detailed schedule** will be posted on CAMS well before the seminar begins but for your travel planning, the seminar will begin on Tuesday, May 29 at 10 am in Laws Lodge and conclude by 12:30 pm Friday, June 8. Daily schedule tentatively is 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

All works quoted or closely paraphrased in your writing must be cited to avoid **academic dishonesty (plagiarism)**. LPTS follows the Chicago Manual of Style for formatting citations, which is conveniently presented and described in Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers* (Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 7th Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. ISBN 13-978-0-226-82337-9). Part I, Chapters 1-14 are useful for identifying, developing and writing your project and project report. Part II contains the required models for source citation for your paper. This Manual will be an indispensable resource for writing your project.

It is our policy to **follow ADA guidelines and provide reasonable accommodations for students with a learning or other disability**. However, in order to provide them, it is your responsibility to disclose the information to the instructor.

The Seminary also has **an inclusive language policy** for classroom discussions and for written work. This policy affirms that, because use of language can be hurtful and exclude people based on gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic identity, it is essential that, in our use of language to refer to human beings, we use wherever possible inclusive rather than exclusive language (e.g., "humankind" instead of "man" to refer to people collectively or "chair" rather than "chairman"). With respect to God, using inclusive language means avoiding limiting God by gender ("he") or by a dominant gender defined metaphor, such as "Father," and instead use the full and rich range of metaphors for God provided in our Scripture, such as "Rock," "Fortress," "mother" and "father," "Shepherd," etc.

Every effort will be made to begin and end each day of the seminar on time as stipulated in the schedule. To do so requires that all participants be present in time to begin and plan to remain until the seminar concludes. If exceptions must be made, please notify the instructor.

We will begin each day with Morning Prayer, with leadership shared by members of the seminar. These important times should be no longer than 10 minutes. We will close the seminar with a celebration of the Eucharist, with both wine and grape juice available for participants.

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