

## **Syllabus Part 1: Overview of Course**

### **PX 2003/2013 Practical Theology in Congregations**

Fall and Spring 2011-2012  
Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
Sessions Meet in Schlegel 122

**Credit:** Three hours graded academic credit and one unit field education each semester for a total of six hours/two units for the two semesters combined. This is a required course for the M.Div. degree and is ordinarily taken in the second or middler year of seminary.

**Course Description:** *Practical Theology in Congregations* is a year-long course taken in conjunction with field education placement in a congregation, intentionally combining field-based learning with classroom learning. The course is designed to encourage participants to benefit from the shared wisdom gained from communal reflection on the practice of ministry. In order to discipline this reflection and deepen practice, the course will draw upon various biblical-theological and anthropological resources as well as field-based and life experiences.

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites; however, supervised, congregation-based field placement is ordinarily required to be **concurrent** with the classroom portion of the course. Additionally, students should have taken the first foundational courses in Bible and Faith Seeking Understanding before enrolling in this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** The fundamental goal is for students to gain practical wisdom for the sake of ministry and to be introduced to various frameworks for practical theological interpretation in congregations. The course will focus primarily upon deepening a student's ability to reflect theologically on the practice of ministry in congregational and public contexts, with an emphasis upon the communal nature of a congregation's ministry.

We expect (and will develop specific measures) that as a result of the course students will achieve the following:

- Gain skills in theological reflection on issues of ministry that will enable the student to move faithfully into God's unfolding future;
- Experience the importance of collaborative ministry, reflecting theologically with a community of peers who are willing to wrestle together on issues of importance to each member of the group;

- Learn to use investigative techniques and to assess theologically and sense intuitively the context, culture, and process of a congregation and use this learning as a basis for choosing ways to work within the congregation;
- Explore processes to help a congregation engage in transformation and grow in faithfulness and into a more biblical/theological understanding of what it means to be the church and to be faithful disciples in a world of religious difference;
- Gain a clearer sense of self as a pastoral/congregational leader;

These learning outcomes will be assessed in the review of case studies, student notebooks, and final projects as well as in evaluating student participation in the small group process.

### ***Teaching Methodology:***

For the classroom portion of the course, we will utilize some lecture and large group discussion, as well as small group work, reflective writing and other exercises, presentations from the field settings, case studies, film analysis, and field trips. Field education supervisors will be invited periodically to join some of the class sessions.

### ***Course Requirements and Grading:***

Students will be graded by their small group professor for the classroom portion of the course (for the six hours of academic credit). Field education supervisors will be responsible for evaluation on a pass/fail basis of the field-based portion of the course (for 2 units of field education credit).

Each semester a grade will be given based on the following:

#### **Class Engagement:**

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Notebook (journal)          | 40%        |
| Case Studies                | 20%        |
| Small Group Work            | 10%        |
| End of the Semester Project | <u>30%</u> |
|                             | 100%       |

#### **Other:**

- A **passing grade** from the field education setting is mandatory to pass the classroom portion.

- **Attendance and active participation** are assumed. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the professor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Three or more absences for each semester will result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### **Notebooks**

At least weekly students will critically and theologically reflect in their notebook (journal) on

- spiritual disciplines,
- readings,
- class discussions,
- assignments,
- congregational experiences.

Small group professors will pick up student notebooks for grading purposes on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class day of each semester. Two to three typed pages of reflection a week are usually needed to fulfill this requirement. The entries will be considerably longer when a congregational study task is assigned. Criteria for assessing the notebooks can be found in the “Rubric for PTC Notebook” on CAMS.

### **Case Studies**

At least twice each semester students will prepare case studies for review by their small group leader. During a designated small group meeting, two students will present their case study (which should have been circulated electronically to other members of the group in advance) for the entire group. Each student in the small group will present one case during the course of the academic year (four in fall, four in spring). Professors will cover the subject of the Ministerial Case Presentation and requirements for case study work in PTC during one of the sessions of the course. Reference materials will also be distributed in class and through the CAMS course site. (The model case study is used with permission from the student, now a graduate, who produced it.) All case studies – both those presented in group and those that were not – will be evaluated by the student’s small group leader.

### **Final Projects**

Each semester will culminate with a final project. The fall project will be a major congregational study based on the student’s field education placement. The spring project will be a major integrative paper, based on course readings, discussions, and experiences in the congregation. More detailed instructions about the final project will be given in class, however, the guidelines for the Context/Congregational Analysis Paper (Fall Final Project) can be found under the “course documents” section on CAMS.

## ***Textbook List***

- Adeney, Frances. *Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. (for Spring Semester)
- Ammerman, Nancy et al. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Carroll, Jackson W. *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Church of England *Mission-Shaped Church*. London: Church House Publishing, 2004. (also at [http://www.congregational.org.uk/uploads/documents/mission\\_shaped\\_church.pdf](http://www.congregational.org.uk/uploads/documents/mission_shaped_church.pdf) and on CAMS)
- Long, Thomas G., *Accompany Them with Singing – The Christian Funeral*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009. (for Spring Semester)
- Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Tisdale, Leanora Tubbs. *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997.

## **Electronic Resources**

Deborah Fortel and David Sawyer, *Curiously Hopeful: Nine Questions Flourishing Congregations Ask (with no right answers)*. (to be distributed or placed on CAMS for the Spring Semester.)

For some class sessions, other readings will be distributed in class or through the CAMS course site. (Look under the “course documents” tab on CAMS)

## **School and Class Policies**

### **Confidentiality**

Professional ethics in ministry helps us understand confidentiality as the trustworthy use of information to assure appropriate care of those who seek our assistance. In other words, confidentiality is not synonymous with keeping a secret (Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, 1985). Rather, it is being accountable for honoring another's trust while assuring the best possible care for them. Accountability may warrant consultation when we need further information. This understanding of confidentiality is illustrated in this course by our practice of asking you to develop case material from your ministry settings for consultation with your classmates and the *Practical Theology in Congregations* faculty. However, to do such consultation responsibly, it

will be imperative that any identifying information is adequately disguised and the written cases themselves are safeguarded once they are distributed.

Additionally, in this age of social networking, students are reminded that professional ethics in ministry extends to this medium. Postings about confidential pastoral and congregational matters in the field education setting on one's Face Book, MySpace, Twitter, or other social network sites are simply inappropriate and may become actionable legal, ecclesial, and disciplinary matters. Students are also advised to be careful and prudent about the personal data they share on such sites because, despite the presumption of privacy, these social networks can be shared with third parties, including ordaining bodies, seminary officials, and church authorities.

### **Statement on Sexual Harassment and Field Education**

**Preamble:** We in theological education at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary are committed to making our seminary and our churches (field educational settings) safe places for all persons.

#### **Definition of Sexual Harassment:**

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when

1. Submission of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or a factor in the evaluation or grade determination of a student's work;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affect that person or a factor in the evaluation or grade determination of a student's work; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or learning performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

#### **Sexual Harassment and Field Education:**

In Supervised Field Education, it is necessary to maintain boundaries in order to avoid role confusion. Many supervisory relationships become the basis of genuine collegial friendship; however, the bringing of sexual behavior, whether verbal or physical, into the supervisory relationship is clearly inappropriate due to the unequal status of the participants. At the same

time, it is our hope that students and supervisors will develop a sufficiently trusting relationship so that dialogue about these kinds of issues might take place in supervision.

Both students and supervisors are responsible to Louisville Seminary as well as to their various congregations and denominations for their behavior in this area. Since the student is serving in the congregation as a pastoral intern, the expectation of appropriate pastoral behavior rests with the student. During the tenure of the student's field education placement, it is the policy of the Office of Field Education and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary that a sexual relationship within the congregation or supervisory setting is incompatible with established ministerial ethics. Furthermore, field education students are expected to maintain appropriate pastoral behavior in conformity with school and/or congregational-denominational guidelines.

Allegations of actions that violate these guidelines should come to the Director of Field Education and will be handled in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Seminary, where applicable. Students may also have recourse to or be subject to the policies and procedures of the field education setting and their denominations.

### **Classroom Discussion**

For ours to be an open classroom where freedom and respect are assured regarding one another's point of view, we need to agree that comments and expressions of belief that may be at variance with those of the instructors, another student, or our own must be respected, heard, and treated fairly. We hope this same attitude prevails in the churches where students serve in ministry and is modeled by our field education students in their church settings.

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive. Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse traditionally has been patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of the construction of an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work will be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism and white privilege, homophobia, and prejudice toward people with disabilities also permeate our society and are detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language,

symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to being a community respectful and welcoming of difference and opposed to all forms of social oppression.

### ***From the Dean's Office***

#### **Attendance**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Three or more absences for each semester will result in a lower or failing grade in this course.

#### **Plagiarism and Documentation Policy**

All students are expected to abide by Seminary policies and expectations concerning student integrity, including academic honesty and avoidance of plagiarism. Louisville Seminary's policy on plagiarism is detailed in the Student Handbook (pp. 19-23), which is available on the Louisville Seminary Intranet or from the Dean of Students Office. Assistance with academic writing is available from Kathy Mapes, Coordinator of the Academic Support Services Center, and Sherry Arconti, Writing Tutor.

## SESSION TOPICS AND CALENDER, SPRING 2012

### Week 1

#### **Assignment for February 15**

1. Read Osmer, *Practical Theology*, Chapter 1, “The Descriptive-Empirical Task: Priestly Listening,” pp. 31-78.
2. Pay careful attention to the opening and ending of the chapter and the case of Olivia Potter. In this chapter, Osmer discusses in detail what he means by the descriptive-empirical task of practical theological interpretation. It has to do with the quality of attentiveness that congregational leaders give to persons and events in everyday life. Osmer explores this task in terms of a spirituality of presence, a subject that will be discussed in class, as well as priestly listening, attending, and guiding.

#### **February 15: The Descriptive-Empirical Task of Practical Theology**

Lecture and plenary discussion led by Dr. Dianne Reistroffer, 1:30-2:45

Small groups meet and check in for the semester, 2:50-3:20

### Week 2

#### **Assignment for February 22**

1. Read Osmer, *Practical Theology*, Chapter 2, “The Interpretive Task: Sagely Wisdom,” pp. 79-128.
2. Note carefully the author’s discussion of a spirituality of sagely wisdom, the importance of theoretical interpretations in ministry, wise judgment, Israel’s wisdom tradition and Christ’s wisdom, and various theories of alcoholism helpful in processing the continuing case of Olivia Potter. What does Osmer mean by a “communicative model of rationality”?

#### **February 22: The Interpretive Task: Sagely Wisdom**

Lecture and plenary discussion led by Dr. Dianne Reistroffer

### Week 3

#### **Assignment for February 29: Professional Ethics in Ministry**

1. Read Carroll, *God’s Potters*, Chapter 6, “Potters’ Problems: Commitment, Satisfaction, and Health,” pp. 159-187, and William H. Willimon, *Calling and Character*, Chapter 2, “The Character of the Clergy,” pp. 31-59, and Chapter 3, “The Pastor in Community,” pp. 60-93 (CAMS course site).
2. Be familiar with your denomination’s policies on clergy ethics, sexual



harassment, sexual misconduct, etc., and bring copies of those policies to class.

**February 29 (supervisors present): Sex, Money, Power, and Intellectual Property**

A *special, two-hour* session led by Revs. Ken Hockenberry and a panel of other local pastors.

**Week 4**

**Assignment for March 7: The Normative Task: Prophetic Discernment**

1. Read Osmer, *Practical Theology*, Chapter 3, “The Normative Task: Prophetic Discernment,” pp. 129-173.
2. How does Osmer describe the prophetic office as divine disclosure and human shaping, both in the prophetic traditions of Israel and the New Testament?
3. Describe Osmer’s presentation of “a spirituality of prophetic discernment” as conceptualized on a continuum from “sympathy” to “discernment” to “theological and ethical interpretation.”
4. Describe theologian H. Richard Niebuhr as an example of theological interpretation (see pp. 140-147).
5. Describe Osmer’s correlational, transformational, and transversal models of cross-disciplinary dialogue (see pp. 164-172).

**March 7: The Normative Task: Prophetic Discernment**

Lecture and plenary discussion by Dr. Debra Mumford

**Week 5**

**Assignment for March 14: Third Case Study Presentations in Small Groups**

1. All students are expected to prepare a written case study dealing with their field education placement. The case should deal with preaching or worship or with a professional ethical matter.
2. Two students will present their case in their small group on March 14 and are asked to make copies in advance for members of the group.
3. All students will submit their written case studies to their small group leader at the end of the class.

**March 14: Third Case Study Presentations in Small Groups**

*Class notebooks are due to your small group leader*

## **Week 6**

**March 21: NO CLASS, Reading and Study Week**

## **Week 7**

### **Assignment for March 28: Flourishing Congregations**

1. Read David Sawyer and Deborah Fortel, *Curiously Hopeful: Nine Questions Flourishing Congregations Ask (with no right answers)*.
2. Write a 1-2 page reflection on which questions of flourishing congregations identified by Sawyer and Fortel are being asked in your field education church and which are not being asked or not answered in constructive ways.

### **March 28: Flourishing Congregations**

Lecture and plenary/small group discussion led by Dr. David Sawyer and Dr. Deborah Fortel

## **Week 8**

### **Assignment for April 4: The Pragmatic Task: Servant Leadership**

1. Read Osmer, *Practical Theology*, Chapter 4, "The Pragmatic Task: Servant Leadership," pp. 175-218.
2. Note carefully Osmer's discussion of three forms of leadership and his detailed treatment of the nature and marks of servant leadership in ministry.
3. Read N. Graham Standish, *Becoming a Blessed Church*, chapter 7, pp. 143-166 (on CAMS)
4. For your notebook reflection: Describe and discuss the impact of a pastoral or theological leader who has influenced and shaped your views of ministerial leadership.

### **April 4: The Pragmatic Task: Servant Leadership**

Lecture and plenary discussion led by Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick

## **Week 9**

### **Assignment for April 11: Stewardship, Finance and Administration**

1. Read Chapter 5, "Resources," in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, pp. 132-165.
2. Bring a copy of your field education church's annual budget and a summary or explanation of the congregation's approach to stewardship, including material from the church's last stewardship/pledge campaign. (We will be doing budget analysis in

- class.) Does the church share its stewardship mission statement and regular financial reports in writing to members of the congregation? Do they appear on the church's website?
3. For those of you serving denominational churches, how is the larger church's missional giving interpreted to the congregation? What is the pattern of your congregation's giving to the denomination?

#### **April 11: Stewardship, Finance, and Administration**

Lecture and plenary discussion led by Dr. Dianne Reistroffer and Rev. Ken Hockenberry

#### **Week 10**

##### **Assignment for April 18: Read Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 12 of Frances S. Adeney's book, *Graceful Evangelism*.**

Answer the following questions based on the text, using one to two sentences or a few bullet points for each answer.

1. List some good and harmful results of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. mission movement.
2. How does Adeney describe the situation for evangelism in the U.S. today?
3. What challenges and opportunities do congregations face in evangelism today?
4. Outline two approaches to evangelism that are based on biblical modes and would be useful in the congregation you are working with this year.

#### **April 18: Radical Habits: Practices for Graceful Evangelism**

Lecture and plenary discussion led by Dr. Frances S. Adeney.

#### **Week 11**

##### **Assignment for April 25:**

1. Review any suggested or published liturgies for Services of Marriage within your church tradition.
2. Browse through *The Protestant Wedding Sourcebook* (on CAMS)

#### **April 25: Didactic session on weddings/same sex commitment services/counseling couples**

Lecture and plenary discussion will be led by Rev. Ken Hockenberry and Dr. Dianne Reistroffer.

#### **Week 12**

##### **Assignment for May 2: Fourth Case Study Presentation in Small Groups**

1. All students are expected to prepare a written case study dealing with their field

- education placement. The case should deal with issues of leadership in the church.
2. Two students will present their case in their small group on March 14 and are asked to make copies in advance for members of the group.
  3. All students will submit their written case studies to their small group leader at the end of the class.

**May 2: Case Study #4 (meet in small groups for two hours)**

Fourth case study presented and discussed in small groups.

**Week 13**

**Assignment for May 9: Session on Saying Good-bye: Funerals and Ending the Pastoral Relationships.**

1. Read Carroll, *God's Potters*, chapters 7 and 8.
2. Guidelines for Dissolution of the Relationship between Pastor and Congregation in The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky (<http://www.midkentuckypresbytery.org>). Go to the "clerk's corner" for the list on the right side of the page.
3. Read Tom Long's recent book, *Accompany Them With Singing: the Christian Funeral*.

**May 9: Saying Good-bye**

**(Supervisors are invited to attend)**

Lecture, plenary discussion, and small groups will be led and facilitated by the PTC teaching team. Supervisors will be invited to share their pastoral wisdom about funerals and about entering and leaving a place of ministry in helpful and ethical ways.

**Due on the last day of class, May 9:**

1. **Your notebooks (aka journals).**
2. **A final reflection paper on the semester and the year, in the range of five to seven pages.**

This reflection paper asks you to reflect on the following: In light of the course readings, class presentations and small/plenary group discussions, and your work in a congregation, where do you see your strengths for pastoral leadership in a congregation or some other type of ministry? Name your strengths and weaknesses as a congregational leader. What are your hopes and fears as you examine your vocational identity? How have you learned to receive feedback on your ministry from your supervisor and members of the congregation?



### **Syllabus for Practical Theology in Congregations, Part 3 (revised)**

#### **PROPOSED PTC SCHEDULE AND RESPONSIBILITIES, 2011-2012**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Subject</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>                                 |
|-------------|---|---|
| 9/14        | Introduction to Course and Opening Supervisory Conference                         | Cliff Kirkpatrick and Teaching Team (for conferences) |
| 9/21        | Interpreting the Context of the Congregation                                      | Small Groups - All                                    |
| 9/28        | Overview of the Discipline of Practical Theology (Osmer Model)                    | David Sawyer  |
| 10/5        | Interpreting the Culture of the Congregation                                      | Small Groups – All                                    |
| 10/12       | Tools for Enhancing Ministerial Practice (Case Study and Congregational Exegesis) | Ken Hockenberry and Debra Mumford                     |
| 10/19       | Transformation and Fresh Expressions of Christian Community                       | Cliff Kirkpatrick and panel on “fresh expressions”    |
| 11/2        | First Case Presentation (pastoral identity)                                       | Small Groups – All                                    |
| 11/9        | Ministry Amidst Multicultural Diversity   | Tony Aja, Debra Mumford, plus groups                  |
| 11/16       | Interfaith Dimensions of Congregational Life and Pastoral Ministry                | Cliff Kirkpatrick                                     |
| 11/30       | Entering the Sacred Space of My Neighbor  | Cliff Kirkpatrick, plus small groups                  |
| 12/7        | Second Case Presentation (diversity and/or transformation)                        | Small Groups - All                                    |
| 2/15        | The Descriptive-Empirical Task of Practical Theology                              | Dianne Reistroffer                                    |
| 2/22        | The Interpretive Task: Sagely Wisdom  | Dianne Reistroffer                                    |
| 2/29        | Professional Ethics (Sex, Power, and Money)                                       | Ken Hockenberry and panel of pastors                  |
| 3/7         | The Normative Task: Prophetic Discernment   | Debra Mumford   |
| 3/14        | Third Case Presentation (preaching or worship)                                    | Small Groups – All                                    |
| 3/28        | Flourishing Congregations   | David Sawyer and Deborah Fortel                       |
| 4/4         | The Pragmatic Task: Servant Leadership  | Cliff Kirkpatrick                                     |
| 4/11        | Stewardship, Finance, and Administration  | Dianne Reistroffer                                    |
| 4/18        | Radical Habits: Practices of Graceful Evangelism                                  | Frances Adeney  |
| 4/25        | Weddings and Same Sex Ceremonies  | Ken Hockenberry and Dianne Reistroffer                |
| 5/2         | Fourth Case Presentations (issues of leadership)                                  | Small Groups – All                                    |
| 5/9         | Saying Good-bye: Funerals and Ending Pastoral Relationships                       | PTC Teaching Team                                     |