**SENIOR SEMINAR: SPRING 2012**

**Theme: Attention**
Fridays 8:30-11:20
Schlegel 121

**Instructors:**
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**Senior Seminar description**
The Senior Seminar focuses on an area of theological study related to the practice of ministry, providing M.Div. students in their final year of study an opportunity to integrate the various elements of their theological education in a way that contributes to the ongoing discernment of their vocation. Students will produce a substantial essay or project that brings the methods of theological study to bear on problems and opportunities in ministry and that expresses the student’s theological vision. The topic for the Spring 2010 seminar is *Attention*.

**Course: Attention**
Theologians and scholars across disciplines affirm the importance of paying attention. It is intrinsic to the way we communicate and experience care, to praying and learning, to artistic endeavors and the sciences. We are created to tend and attend to the created world. In this seminar we will explore the role of attention across various realms and contexts of ministry — for example, attending to people and situations, to biblical and theological texts, to cultural knowledge and political conditions, and attending to the presence of the Holy. Along the way, aesthetic and ethical dimensions of attention will be important, that is, the relationship between attention and what or who is valued. Who is rendered invisible? What is beautiful? What matters to the body of Christ? In all we will be considering the ways in which faith itself may be a kind of attention giving rise to ways of attending in the life of faith.

**Course goals**
This course will provide an opportunity for senior students to integrate theological study with pastoral practice and build their capacity for contextual theological-ethical interpretation and analysis. The instructors will work with students to create a space for free, creative, and collaborative theological experimentation/play and discovery.

Students will:

1. Bring their passions for ministry and theological reflection into productive conversation with religious and cultural traditions,
2. Gain practice in collaborative theological methods,
3. Refine their skills of constructive theological and ethical reflection and expression,
4. Work towards a deeper understanding of the role of attention in the practices of ministry and the life of faith,
5. Continue processes of vocational discernment that are theologically grounded, ethically informed, and that draw on several theological disciplines (biblical studies, historical and constructive theology, ethics, practical theology).
Course requirements

1. **Preparation and participation:** Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings, read all assigned material, and enter into thoughtful discussion of the matters the class takes up. Students are partners to one another in their work for this course, so conscientious preparation for each seminar meeting is essential.

2. **Senior Seminar essay or project.** The culminating project of the seminar will focus on an area of interest that relates in some way to the seminar topic. The project’s theme should emerge from the student’s own theological interests and passions. The final version may be expressed in the writing of a substantial essay (about 20 pages). It may also be a performance, a particular practice of ministry, a liturgical project, curriculum, or a work of art, in which case the project submitted would include some demonstration of the practice (where applicable) together with an interpretive reflection. The final determination of the project, its scope, and resources necessary to produce it will be the work of the student together with the instructors, in collaboration with the seminar as a whole. Students, thus, will have an opportunity to draw on the perspectives of their colleagues as the project is conceived and undertaken. To serve this end is the following work.

   A. **Topic description:** Students will be prepared to introduce the topic on which they will work Week 2, with revised descriptions to follow.

   B. **Draft Presentation and Bibliography:** Students will present to the seminar their work in progress (Weeks 8-9), submitting five days in advance of the presentation a written summary (4-6 pages) for all to read and come to class prepared to discuss. In addition, students will prepare a brief annotated bibliography.

   C. **Final presentation of final project:** in class (Weeks 11-12).

Readings

Required texts:


Other required reading assignments are indicated (*) in the calendar, below and are available on library reserve.
Seminary-wide Policies

Inclusive Language:
In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible’s images for God. See for further assistance,
http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty:
All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another’s language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Special Accommodations:
Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy:
Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th ed.


Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy:
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. Missing 1/4 of the course or more may result in a low or failing grade in the course.
CALENDAR

Seminar meetings and assignments (* indicates required)

Week 1: February 10
Creating Something Beautiful
  Crafting good projects
  Attending to sacred texts
  Devotions

Resources:

Week 2: February 17
Attending to God and Neighbor

Resources:
Talvacchia, Kathleen T. and Pak, Su Yon. “Attentive Teaching in Diverse Communities and Lifelong Faith Formation,” in Lifelong Faith, (Volume 2.3, Fall 2008)


**Week 3: February 24**

**Psychology of Attention**


*Summaries of projects (under 200 words each)


**Week 4: March 2**

**Poetic Vision**

*Selected poems drawn from below.

*Cook, Carol J. “Emily Dickinson: Poet as Pastoral Theologian.” Pastoral Psychology 60, no. 3 (June 2011), 421-435. (CAMS)

**Resources:**


**Week 5: Wed, March 9**

*Attention and Aesthetics—the art of Jacob Lawrence*


**Resources:**


**Week 6: March 16**

*Prophetic Vision*


**Resources**


March 19-23 (Research and Study Week)

Week 7, March 30
Attention and Wonder in the Community of Creation
Possible Field trip: The Falls of the Ohio


Resources:


April 6 (Good Friday)
**Week 8, April 13**  
Short presentations

**Week 9, April 20**  
Short presentations

**Week 10, April 27**  
Open for consultation

**Week 11, May 4**  
Final presentations

**Week 12, May 11**  
Final presentations