Theological Reflection Group
Syllabus, Spring 2022

Tuesdays 3:00-4:20 PM

Zoom link here (Links to an external site.). Meeting ID: 848 8597 1895 Passcode: 264480

Instructors

Carol J. Cook, Schlegel 302 carolcook@lpts.edu (Group 1 facilitator)

Christopher Elwood, Gardencourt 216 celwood@lpts.edu (Group 2 facilitator)

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Contacting Us

For any questions or issues related to this course and your learning, feel free to contact your instructors. Use the email address provided above.

Description

The reflection groups provide a structure for students to engage in theological reflection on their full seminary experience with a range of conversation partners. In plenary meetings and in smaller sections, students will experience the value of learning in community. They will be encouraged to make connections among different parts of the seminary's curriculum and community life, to deepen and clarify their sense of vocation, and to practice theological reflection and writing. The course will give considerable attention to systemic and cultural influences on what people believe and how they live out their faith commitments. The groups will meet in plenary sessions or in smaller sections, according to the syllabus.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate their own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry, broadly defined;
2. Identify ways that that social and cultural systems shape human perceptions, beliefs, and experiences, including with regard to ethical issues and experiences of injustice;

3. Demonstrate skills for reading, writing, and individual as well as group *theological reflection* (understood as a generative conversation between tradition and experience); and
4. Exercise agency for their own education by choosing thoughtfully from among various learning opportunities, reflecting about them afterward, and identifying areas where growth or improvement is needed.

Each week, students will be assigned readings and/or reflective exercises in light of these goals. In addition, students will be asked to participate in some limited events outside of class (such as lectures or workshops). Students are advised to put these events on their calendars early to protect the time or identify any potential conflicts.

Expectations

As a graduate level course and as a spiritual practice, students are expected to attend all class sessions punctually and to participate in group discussions. Active participation includes, but is not limited to, coming to class prepared, listening carefully to others, asking relevant questions, responding to others' comments with respect, and inviting others into the conversation. Patterns of behavior to avoid include dominating a discussion, staying perpetually quiet, checking electronic devices, and arriving late.

In addition, students are expected to:

1. Complete all assignments on time and in a way that demonstrates thoughtfulness and accountability to the task. All work is submitted through Canvas, where assignments are described and due dates/times are indicated.
2. Begin the process of gathering and archiving assignments to document the student's progress toward meeting the objectives of their degree program. Developing good practices of filing and archiving their work will bear fruit in the student's summative experience, a project ordinarily undertaken in the final semester of their program. Strategies for archiving and self-assessment of your progress toward meeting degree program outcomes will receive attention in this spring semester.

Required text

Duncan Ryūken Williams, *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020) ISBN 0674244850; ISBN-13: 978-0674244856

Grading

This course is graded Pass/Fail. A passing grade requires each student to:

- Meet the expectations listed above;

- Complete each assignment;
- Notify professors before class of any need to be absent or late (for example, in case of illness).

Assignments

All assignments are listed in the Assignments section and in the Course Summary. Written assignments are submitted through the Canvas platform.

Calendar

See the Course Summary, below. Class meetings, assignments, and other important events related to coursework are listed in your Canvas Calendar.

Seminary and Course Policies

Use of 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. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

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. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) 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 Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 7th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2020.
- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 17th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

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

See also the library's citation help page: (Links to an external site.)https://lpts.libguides.com/digitalresources/citingsources (Links to an external site.)

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. Three or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a failing grade in the course.

Policy on late work

All assignments are due in advance of the class periods of the indicated date. Assignments submitted late will not be accepted.

Use of electronic devices in class

Given the nature of online instruction, our easy access to electronic resources can cause us to lose focus on the task at hand. As you enter into the classroom space that we share together, we ask that you set aside such distractions as email, social media, and smartphones so that you can offer your undivided attention to one another and your professors.

Other Items Relating to Fall Instruction, Learning, and Technology at LPTS

- To access the library and its resources, visit: https://lpts.edu/library/ (Links to an external site.)
- To request a library laptop loan, contact library@lpts.edu
- For a summary of information related to accessing Outlook, Canvas, CAMS, and the Intranet, see: Accessing LPTS Resources (Links to an external site.)
- For general help with campus network access, Outlook (email), contact support@lpts.edu
- For information on Student Assistance Funds to help with costs associated with learning technology and access ($300 maximum), contact Gina Kuzuoka at gkuzuoka@lpts.edu

Appendix 1: Student Learning Outcomes ("SLO"s)

Master of Divinity Degree Program:

SLO1: Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the Bible and the ability to use critical skills and educated imagination to interpret it in contemporary social and cultural contexts.

SLO2: Students will learn to become skillful interpreters of the history of Christian experience.

SLO3: Students will be able to think theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs.

SLO4: Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect critically and self-critically on relationships between Christian faith and various forms of systemic injustice.

SLO5: Students will acquire the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the practice of Christian ministry – as demonstrated by effectiveness in such activities as:

- Leading congregations within the framework of their communions, confessions, and polity
- Preaching, teaching, and leading worship
- Praying and teaching others to pray
- Leading an organization effectively
- Providing public leadership
- Inviting others into the Christian faith
- Offering pastoral care
- Participating in constructive intra-Christian and interreligious engagement

SLO6: Students will articulate their own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.

Master of Arts (Religion) Degree Program:

Louisville Seminary intends that students in this program achieve deeper theological and biblical understanding through a broad foundational course of study in the areas of Bible, History, Theology, Ethics, and Religion. This means that students will:

SLO1: Be able to interpret Scripture critically and imaginatively.

SLO2: Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the global history of the Church.

SLO3: Demonstrate an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary.

SLO4: Demonstrate the ability to think theologically, strategically, imaginatively, and contextually about ethical issues.

SLO5: Students will be able to conduct independent critical research and write clearly and convincingly on a topic of biblical, theological, historical, or ethical concern.

Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy Degree Program:

SLO1: Graduating students will be able to flexibly conduct evidence-based therapy with individuals, couples, and families that meets entry-level professional standards.

SLO2: Graduating students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of systemic theory and MFT treatment models.

SLO3: Graduating students will demonstrate ethical knowledge and ethical practices that meet professional and legal standards in the field.

SLO4: Graduating students will be able to use a multi-contextual, anti-racist approach to Marriage and Family Therapy that attends to religious, cultural, racial, economic, gender,

and sexual orientation diversity and intersectional contexts in client, client-therapist, supervisory, and broader social systems.

SLO5: Graduating students will be able to use a clinically appropriate theological/spiritual framework in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy.

SLO6: Graduating students will be able to apply an ethical framework, including but not limited to the AAMFT Code of Ethics, to make appropriate decisions in therapy, advocacy, service, and public participation.

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) SLO:

This objective applies to all LPTS programs. MAMFT SLO4 engages this theme with reference to the program practices and goals of the Marriage and Family Therapy program.

Students can describe strategies, grounded in their practice, for working toward racial justice appropriate to their particular vocational settings. Students can demonstrate competence with this Student Learning Outcome (SLO) in many ways including, but not limited to, the following:

- Defining and using key terms in ways informed by an understanding of systemic racism
- Identifying racism in its many manifestations (structural, personal, communal, etc.)
- Critical reflection on the history and current contexts regarding race, racism, and anti-racism
- Critical reflection on racist and antiracist practices and theologies
- Developing and implementing antiracist policies, practices, and theologies