

MDIV REFLECTION GROUPS: SM 120-1

Fall 2024 (Continued in Spring 2025)
Mondays 4:30-5:50 pm, Schlegel 121



Henri Matisse, The Parakeet and the Mermaid, 1952, printed under the fair use clause
<https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/6/312> or www.moma.org

LEARNING CULTIVATOR: Lauren Jones Mayfield | lmayfield@lpts.edu

Office hours: by appointment (Tues-Thurs)

by Zoom via my personal meeting ID (860 571 8654)

CULTIVATOR INTRODUCTION: This is my first semester teaching at Louisville Seminary after solo pastoring a small urban church in a migrant neighborhood in South Louisville and then serving on a pastoral team at Highland Baptist Church in the Highlands neighborhood. I served as the Associate Pastor of Care and Justice, offering pastoral care and visitor hospitality while also challenging the church to keep up its work of racial, migrant, environmental, and LGBTQ+ justice. I recently completed my Doctor of Ministry at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. My final portfolio project traced the ministry of Highland Baptist's Anti-Racism Team and Reparations Task Force, which involved researching and inviting a predominantly white congregation to offer reparations to the Black community here in Louisville. My husband Tyler and I parent three children: Livia, Jude, and Taft. Our cat, Kiwi Rainbow, and our dog, Rosie, keep us grounded.

COURSE INTRODUCTION: Ministry in any context inspires us to embrace heartache, change, pain, and longing in ourselves and among those with whom we serve. One of the challenges of any pastoral care ministry is to keep wondering how we, alongside the Divine, provoke joy, compassion, wholeness, and a peace that passes understanding. Paying attention to the signs

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and symptoms of burnout, coupled with a soulful understanding of what makes our ministries unique, equips us to persist in vocational ministry. Further, it equips the people of God to continue embracing all that life delivers.

We will use class space to reflect theologically about Divine movement in the world around us and in our ministry contexts. Using the image of a garden, we will till the soil, sow some seeds, build a trellis, tend the garden, and then glean from it during our harvest season. These actions form the modules and the structure of this class. So find your decent gardening gloves and come ready to dig into new insights, fresh wonders, and expansive images of God.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Second year reflection groups combine field-based and classroom learning to encourage participants to deepen practical, spiritual, and interpretive toolkits through the shared wisdom gained from communal reflection on the practice of ministry. Within small groups, students are 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 practical theological reflection broadly understood as generative conversation between tradition and experience.

CREDIT: 1.5 credits/sem. for a total of 3 credits. Taken alongside at least one semester of a Field Education placement. This is a required MDiv course.

GOALS: We hope that students will

- Develop practical wisdom for ministry and begin to employ frameworks for practical theological reflection and interpretation;
- Experience ministry collaboratively, reflecting with a community willing to wrestle together on issues of importance to each group member;
- Learn techniques to assess theologically and sense intuitively a community's context, culture, and processes in order to guide ministry within that community and its context;
- Explore processes to help a congregation grow in faithfulness and discipleship;
- Develop a clearer sense of self as a pastoral/congregational leader; and,
- Value and cultivate spiritual formation for themselves and others.

These goals, along with work in the field education placement, support MDiv Program Goal 5 (Revised, Spring 2023):

SLO 5: Students will acquire the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the practice of Christian ministry – as demonstrated by effectiveness in and reflection upon such activities as:

- Offering leadership that emerges from the framework of a congregation's or organization's communions, confessions, and polity

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- Preaching, teaching, and leading worship
- Praying and teaching others to pray
- Leading an organization effectively
- Providing public leadership and witness
- Inviting others into the Christian faith
- Offering pastoral care
- Participating in constructive intra-Christian and interreligious engagement.

TEACHING METHODS: We will utilize lectures, panel discussions, group discussion, congregational projects, and case study reflection. Students will also complete several reflective projects and will archive artifacts that demonstrate their learning around the seminary's Student Learning Objectives (SLOs).

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CLASS SCHEDULE:

Module 1: Tilling the Soil

September 9— Introductions

We will use this class time to get acquainted with one another as well as the course topics. We will create a class conversation covenant and set the tone for diverse learning experiences.

September 16— Introductions (cont.)

We will review the syllabus and assignments and begin our weekly opening exercises.

Module 2: Sowing Seeds

September 23— Questioning Calling

We will explore vocational touchstones by looking to an interview with Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon entitled *What Is the Work Your Soul Must Have?*

Module 3: Building a Trellis

September 30— Constructing Coherence (Part 1)

We will consider spiritual practices and life frameworks with the piece *What Holds Our Lives Together?*

October 7— Confounding Concerns

We will host a panel conversation with local clergy and/or non-profit leaders about the ethics of ministry.

October 14— Research and Study Week

October 21— Constructing Coherence (Part 2)

We will share our stories as they give shape to and ground our ministerial identity, wondering together about how our narratives impact who we are as ministers.

Module 4: (At)tending the Garden

October 28— Case Studies 1

November 4— Case Studies 2

November 11— Case Studies 3

November 18— Case Studies 4

Module 5: Gleaning

November 25— Gleaning and Artifact Sharing

December 2— No Class

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Date	Topic (Confer Canvas Modules or see above for more details)
TILLING THE SOIL	
September 9	Introductions
September 16	Introductions (cont.)
SOWING SEEDS	
September 23	Questioning Calling
BUILDING A TRELLIS	
September 30	Constructing Coherence (Part 1)
October 7	Confounding Concerns
October 14	Research and Study Week
October 21	Constructing Coherence (Part 2)
(AT)TENDING THE GARDEN	
October 28	Case Studies Week 1
November 4	Case Studies Week 2
November 11	Case Studies Week 3
November 18	Case Studies Week 4
GLEANING	
November 25	Gleaning and Artifact Sharing
December 2	No Class

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ASSIGNMENT RATIONALE: Given that we each learn differently, there are a couple of reasons why we will engage classroom material in certain ways, both in and out of class sessions.

1) Some folks are less inclined to “think on their feet” as internal processors. Therefore, submitting assignments after class gives each of us time to process our thoughts and articulate our responses.

2) Processing a concept or idea before and/or after an experience or discussion enables deeper reflection and learning. Pedagogical philosopher Paulo Freire calls this a perception of our previous perception, which is key to his liberatory pedagogy of “conscientization.” Writing something down or creating some art invites us to clarify how we are thinking/feeling/being, and then, when we reflect on that with others, we gain insight into *how* we think/feel/be.

For this course, instead of a primary source of scripture, a theologian, or a historical record, the primary source is *you, your ministry context, and the people with whom you minister*. To “read” these primary sources, it is helpful to “express” what you are experiencing. To “express” is to “press out.” Like purifying metal, sifting soil to find gold, or cleaning water through a filter, the process of reflecting *once* through some medium (written, audio, visual, embodied), then reflecting *again* within a trusting community enables us to recognize more clearly what and how we are thinking, feeling, being.

So do your best to engage the variety of assignments with your whole self as together we wonder anew about Divine mystery, tangible ministry, and vocational calling.

ABOUT GRADING AND PASS/FAIL: This is a pass/fail class; no letter grade will be assigned. You either pass the course, or you do not. Over half of your “grade” depends on your attendance and participation in class. Completing, or at least attempting, the eight assignments builds the second half of your grade. You must complete the case study, attend class, and earn 75+ points to pass the course. For these reasons, and given the practical application and timeliness of course materials, *I will not accept late work*.

Please see each assignment in Canvas for a more detailed description and the corresponding due dates. Each assignment has a point value that contributes to a total of 100 points for the entire course.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES:

Module 1: Tilling the Soil

- Sept. 13— Hopes, Fears, and Expectations (submit on Canvas)
- Sept. 16— Opening Class Exercise #1

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Module 2: Sowing Seeds

- Sept. 23— Opening Class Exercise #2
Reflective piece #1: The Work Your Soul Must Have (bring to class and submit on Canvas)

Module 3: Building a Trellis

- Sept 30— Opening Class Exercise #3
Reflective piece #2: Spiritual Practices and Frameworks for Soul Tending (bring to class and submit on Canvas)
- October 3— Reflective pieces #3a: Ministerial Ethics and Codes of Conduct and #3b: Ministerial Ethics Panel (bring to class and submit on Canvas)
- October 7— Opening Class Exercise #4
- October 21— Opening Class Exercise #5
Reflective piece #4: The Power of Story (bring to class and submit on Canvas)

Module 4: (At)tending the Garden

- October 24— Case Studies 1 due on Google docs by 5pm
- October 28— Opening Class Exercise #6
Case Studies 1 feedback due on Google docs by 12pm (*prior to class*)
- October 31— Case Studies 2 due on Google docs by 5pm
- November 4— Opening Class Exercise #7
Case Studies 2 feedback due on Google docs by 12pm (*prior to class*)
- November 7— Case Studies 3 due on Google docs by 5pm
- November 11— Opening Class Exercise #8
Case Studies 3 feedback due on Google docs by 12pm (*prior to class*)
- November 14— Case Studies 4 due on Google docs by 5pm
- November 18— Opening Class Exercise #9
Case Studies 4 feedback due on Google docs by 12pm (*prior to class*)

Module 5: Gleaning

- November 25— Opening Class Exercise #10
Reflective piece #5 (bring to class and submit on Canvas)
DRAFT Artifact Catalog (bring to class and submit on Canvas)
- December 5— Artifact Catalog Draft *and* Reflection due on Canvas by 5pm

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Assignment	Due Date	Description (Confer Canvas for more detailed descriptions of each assignment)	Points
Opening Class Exercises	Sept. 26 – Nov. 25 Weekly in class	Participate in 10 weekly opening class exercises throughout the semester	1 point/class 10 points total
TILLING THE SOIL			
Hopes, Fears, and Expectations	Sept 13 on Canvas by 5 pm	It is helpful to know what we all hope, fear, and expect from this course. The written reflection can be as simple as three sentences: hopes, fears, expectations. Please submit your reflection directly as a text entry or as a media file (video, audio)	3
Reflective Piece #1	Sept. 23 on Canvas by 12 pm and bring to class	Listen to the Katie Geneva Cannon lecture and offer a 1-page written reflection (double-spaced) OR a piece of art	3
SOWING SEEDS			
Reflective Piece #2	Sept. 30 on Canvas by 12 pm and bring to class	Spiritual Practices and Life Frameworks	3
BUILDING A TRELLIS			
Reflective Piece #3a	Oct. 3 on Canvas 12 pm and bring to class	Ministerial Code of Ethics	2
Reflective Piece #3b	Oct. 3 on Canvas by 5pm	Questions for Panel	1
Reflective Piece #4	Oct. 21 on Canvas and bring to class	Read chapter 2 “Impact” from Ari Shapiro’s book and offer a 2-page written paper (double-spaced) or a 2-3 minute video of a personal story about ministerial identity	3
(AT)TENDING THE GARDEN			
Case Study	Ongoing throughout Module 4	A 2-3 page (single-spaced) case study written according to the described format. Then typed responses/engagement with each of your classmates’ case studies	20

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GLEANNING			
Reflective Piece #5	Nov. 25 on Canvas by 12 pm and bring to class	A 1-page (double-spaced) paragraph or a piece of art about what you gleaned from this course	3
DRAFT Artifact Catalog	Nov. 25 on Canvas by 12 pm and bring to class	List of at least 1 artifact/MDIV SLO with explanation of why the artifact is in the specified SLO	5
Artifact Catalog Reflection	Dec. 5 on Canvas by 5 pm	A 2-page (double-spaced) paper describing what you learned from the Artifact Catalog assignment and your learning from what others in the class also shared	3
Attendance		Presence and participation in the course and with your fellow cultivators matter greatly. You lose points if you miss <i>more than</i> 3 classes (25% of the course—see the academic catalog) and/or by neglecting to provide feedback on your peers' case studies. For each class beyond 3 that you miss, or for failing to provide feedback on a case study, you will lose 3 points each.	44
TOTAL POINTS:			100

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SEMINARY POLICIES

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality is a matter of ethics in ministry. It is the trustworthy use of information to assure appropriate care of those who seek our assistance. It is not synonymous with keeping a secret (Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, 1985). Rather, it requires being accountable for honoring another's trust while assuring the best possible care for them. Accountability may warrant consultation. In this course, for instance, we ask you to develop case material from your ministry settings for consultation with your classmates and the teaching team. To do such consultation responsibly, any identifying information is adequately disguised, and the cases are shredded after class.

In this age of social networking, students are reminded that ethics in ministry extend to the life we live online. Postings about confidential pastoral and congregational matters in the field education setting on social networking sites are 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; despite the presumption of privacy, these social networks can be shared with third parties, including ordaining bodies, seminary officials, and church authorities.

Discussion in the classroom includes the freedom to speak and respect each one. During our first class session, we will agree on a mutually created class covenant that will support various commitments and expressions of belief. We hope this same attitude prevails where students serve and is modeled by them in these settings. We do well to remember James Baldwin's admonition, "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist" (Baldwin, *Fire Next Time*, 1992). If, at any point during our class discussion, you feel triggered or need to step away, please take care of yourself in the way that is most fitting. If you must exit class, please follow up with me soon thereafter.

Inclusive language at LPTS: Learning is fundamentally linked to communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. It respects individuals, their feelings, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge. 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 a learning 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 transphobia, ageism, and prejudice toward people with physical and intellectual 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 that is respectful and welcoming of difference and opposed to all forms of social oppression. Direct quotations from theological texts and Bible translations do not have to be altered to conform to this policy (though they can be). 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 of God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from this portion of the LPTS website:

<https://www.lpts.edu/assets/documents/guides/InclusiveandExpansiveLanguage.pdf>

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FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All work turned into 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: <https://lpts.libguides.com/digitalresources/citingsources>

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. Six or more absences ([3 per semester]; 1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.