

## **REFLECTION GROUPS – Year 2** **SM120-1**

*Fall 2021(Continued in Spring 2022)*

Tuesdays 3:00-4:20pm

ZOOM Link: <https://lpts-edu.zoom.us/j/95257243284?pwd=cHU2S0tiUWdONXZ0Wld6cUJZVXdDZz09>

Meeting ID: 952 5724 3284

Passcode: 334379

**LEARNING CULTIVATORS:** Rev. Janice Catron, [jcatron101@twc.com](mailto:jcatron101@twc.com)

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**CREDIT:** 1.5 credits/sem. for a total of 3 credits. Taken alongside a 34-week long congregational placement (1 FE unit/sem. for a total of 2 units). This is a required MDiv course.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Second year reflection groups combine field-based and classroom learning in order 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.

**PREREQUISITES:** Students should have completed first year Reflection Groups (SM1101 and SM1102). Congregation-based field placement is ordinarily required to be **concurrent** with second year reflection groups.

**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 congregational placement, support MDiv Program Goal 5 (see p. 13 of the 2019-20 Academic Catalogue).

**TEACHING METHODS:** We will utilize lectures, panel discussions, group discussion, congregational projects, and case study reflection. Students will also write several notebook entries and add artifacts to their online Portfolio.

## FALL SEMESTER SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	KIND	ASSIGNMENT	DUE
<b>A Trilogy of Introductions</b>				
SEP 14	Intro to the Class and Each Other	Plenary - Z	Hopes, Fears, Expectations	Fri., Sep. 17, 5:00PM
SEP 21	Joint Session - All RG	Plenary - Z		
SEP 28	Intro to Case Studies, Artifact Gathering, and ABCD Project	Plenary - H		
<b>The Person in Ministry</b>				
OCT 5				Tue., Oct. 5, Class
OCT 12	What is the work your soul must have?	S. Groups	Reflective Piece 1	Tue., Oct. 12, Class
OCT 19	Research and Study Week	<b>NO CLASS</b>	Case Study 1	Fri., Oct. 22, 5:00PM
<b>Case Studies</b>				
OCT 26	Case Study 1	S. Groups	<b>Case Study 1 Feedback</b> Case Study 2	<b>Tue., Oct. 26, Class</b> Fri., Oct. 29, 5:00PM
NOV 2	Case Study 2	S. Groups	<b>Case Study 2 Feedback</b> Case Study 3	<b>Tue., Nov. 2, Class</b> Fri., Nov. 5, 5:00PM
NOV 9	Case Study 3	S. Groups	<b>Case Study 3 Feedback</b>	<b>Tue. Nov. 9, Class</b>
<b>Organizational Culture</b>				
NOV 16	ABCD 1 Presentations	S. Groups	ABCD 1 - DRAFT <b>ABCD Feedback</b>	Tue., Nov. 16, Class <b>Fri., Nov. 19, 5:00PM</b>
NOV 23	Thanksgiving Week	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Gleanings</b>				
NOV 30	Artifact Catalogs	S. Groups	Artifact Catalogs <b>Artifact Catalog Feedback</b>	Tue., Nov. 30, Class <b>Fri., Dec. 3, 5:00PM</b>
DEC 7	Gleanings	Plenary - H	Reflective Piece 3	Tue., Dec. 7, Class
<b>NO FINAL DUE THIS SEMESTER</b>				

## ASSIGNMENTS

More detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided on CANVAS

Assignment	Brief Description	Due Date	Points
Hopes, Fears, Expectations	Either 3 sentences, or a piece of art - your hopes, fears, and expectations for the course	Fri., Sep. 17, 5:00PM	3
Reflective Piece 1	Either a 1 page (maximum) reflection, or a piece of art answering the prompts for "What Is the Work Your Soul Must Have?"	Tue., Oct. 5, Class	6
Reflective Piece 2	Brief statement of ethics; bullet points on self and community care; questions for the panel	Tue., Oct. 12, Class	9
Case Study	Approx. 2 page (single space) case study, written according to format. Each student only writes 1 case study per semester, but there are 3 dates for case study presentation, with 2-3 presenters per day. Case studies are due on the Friday <i>before</i> the presentation so that small group members have a chance to read and comment on the case studies before class.	Case Study 1 Fri., Oct. 22, 5:00PM Case Study 2 Fri., Oct 29, 5:00PM Case Study 3 Fri., Nov. 5, 5:00PM	18
ABCD Project 1 (Culture) - DRAFT	4-6 collected interviews (2-3 of each kind) AND 1-2 page reflection on 5 questions, based on your interviews and observations. This is a DRAFT that can be revised to prepare for its final form for the second semester. So, do your best, but it doesn't have to be perfect here.	Tue, Nov. 16, Class	12
Artifact Catalog - DRAFT	A listing of at least 1 artifact per MDiv SLO, with explanations for why you placed each artifact in their SLO category	Tue, Nov. 30, Class	6
Reflective Piece 3	Either a 1 page (maximum) reflection, or a piece of art responding to the prompt about what you gleaned from the course this semester.	Tue, Dec. 7, Class	6
Attending	Being present to the course and to your classmates. You only start to lose these points if you miss <i>more than</i> 3 classes - 25% of the course (see the academic catalog); and/or neglect to provide feedback on more than 25% of your peers' Case Studies, ABCD Projects, and Artifact Catalogs. For each class and/or opportunity to provide feedback that you miss <i>beyond</i> the 25%, you lose 3 points. So, feasibly, you could miss 3 classes this semester, and <b>also</b> not provide feedback on either a couple of your peers' projects each time, or skip providing feedback on one of the projects and <b>still</b> receive all 40 of these points. For Case Studies, you only have to provide feedback on the case study days that you are <i>not</i> presenting, meaning you only have to provide Case Study feedback twice during the semester.	Case Study 1 Feedback Tue. Oct. 26, Class  Case Study 2 Feedback Tue., Nov. 2, Class  Case Study 3 Feedback Tue., Nov. 9, Class  ABCD A Feedback Fri., Nov. 19, 5:00PM  Artifact Catalog Feedback Fri., Dec. 3, 5:00PM	40

## A Rationale for Each Assignment (Why are we doing this?)

First, why have things to turn in at all? Why can't the course simply be talking about what we are experiencing? There are a couple of reasons. 1) Some people are less inclined to "think on their feet." They are not external processors. Having assignments that can be turned in enables those people to have time to process and articulate their thoughts. 2) Processing something before and/or after an experience and before and/or after a discussion enables a deeper level of reflection and learning. Pedagogical philosopher Paulo Freire calls this having a perception of our previous perception, and it is key to his liberatory pedagogy of "conscientization." Writing something down, or creating some kind of art invites us to clarify how we are thinking/feeling/being and then, when we reflect on that with others, we gain insight into the *ways* that we think/feel/be. For this course, there is very little reading of theological texts or historical documents -- other than the ones that *you* are creating. Instead of a primary source of scripture, or a theologian, or a historical record, the primary source is *you* and *your ministry context* and *the people with whom you are in ministry*. In order to "read" these primary sources, it is helpful to "express" what you are experiencing. To "express" is to "press out." Like melting down metal in order to purify it; or sifting soil to find gold; or cleaning water through a filter, the process of reflecting *once* through some type of 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.

**Hopes, Fears, Expectations** - In order for this course to truly be a dialogue between the teaching team and students, it's helpful to know what we all hope, fear and expect from this course. Getting this out in the open can help us to both validate and calm fears, to get ourselves reinvigorated with hopes, and to rightly calibrate our expectations. To remind us that we learn and process in multiple ways, this reflective piece can either be a brief written reflection, or a song, or a poem, or a visual painting, or a collage, or a video diary, or a dance, or a series of cartoons, or, or, or...

NOTE: The teaching team also does this assignment

**Reflection Piece 1** - All of the reflection pieces built into this course are meant to be the sorts of things that you carry with you throughout your ministry. They are meant to be things that you come back to when you face challenges, or when you need to be re-centered. This first piece asks you to express why it is you have chosen to explore or to engage in ministry. As Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon put it: What is the work your soul must have? To remind us that we learn and process in multiple ways, this reflective piece can either be a brief written reflection, or a song, or a poem, or a visual painting, or a collage, or a video diary, or a dance, or a series of cartoons, or, or, or...

NOTE: A sample, based upon Marcus' own reflections, will be provided as a sort of pace-setter for your own reflection.

**Reflection Piece 2** - This second reflective piece asks you to write for yourself a statement of ministerial ethics, after reviewing statements of ethics from a couple of different denominations/faith communities (one in which you are rooted, and one which is a stretch for you). It also asks you to write up a framework for soul-tending, a sort of guide for self and community care. Both of these things get at making sure that you can remain whole amidst the stresses and quandaries of ministry. Finally, this reflective piece asks you to put forward a question or two for a panel of veteran ministers who will be invited to respond.

NOTE: A sample, based upon Marcus' own reflections, will be provided as a sort of pace-setter for your own reflection.

**Case Study** - The case study lies at the heart of reflective ministry, and of the integration of your classroom and book-based learning with the on-the-ground realities of your ministry context. Case study presentation hones the skills of observation, reflection, and contextual hermeneutical interpretation. It then relies upon communal, shared wisdom within a small group to complete meaning-making around an event (either positive or negative) in ministry that has produced enduring questions.

NOTE: A sample, based upon Marcus' own reflections, will be provided as a sort of pace-setter for your own reflections.

**ABCD Project 1 (Culture)** - This is part one of a year-long project, which addresses basic skills in organizational ethnography, which is central to understanding the dynamics of an organization. This kind of understanding can enable you to lead or enact change within an organization and its context. These basic skills are at the root of things like community organizing, mission-planning, and visioning. This first part of the project asks you to use interviews and your own observations in order to offer a brief description of the *culture* of the organization in which you are doing ministry. When put together with Reflection Piece 1 (What is the work your soul must have?) and ABCD Project 2 (context) and 3 (calling), these various pieces can help you to align your sense of ministry with your organization and its context.

NOTE: A sample, based upon Marcus' own reflections, will be provided as a sort of pace-setter for your own reflections.

**Artifact Catalog** - The artifact catalog helps you to keep track of artifacts that you are collecting throughout your seminary career, so that you can eventually reflect upon these artifacts in order to create your portfolio during your final year.

**Reflective Piece 3** - The final reflective piece asks you to reflect upon what you have learned this semester. Doing this periodically can enable you to move beyond the transient and piecemeal nature of all of the assignments that you accrue, and to consider with gratitude, lament, and curiosity both what you have learned, what you have unlearned, and what you still hope to learn. To remind us that we learn and process in multiple ways, this reflective piece can either be a brief written reflection, or a song, or a poem, or a visual painting, or a collage, or a video diary, or a dance, or a series of cartoons, or, or, or...

NOTE: A sample, based upon Marcus' own reflections, will be provided as a sort of pace-setter for your own reflections.

**Attending** - During this second year in particular, reflection groups rely heavily on your being present with the people in your small group. This "being present" involves not only attending class, but also attending to what your peers have offered.

**Grading** - This will hopefully be a P/F Course (being voted on by Academic Affairs Committee). A *pass* is considered receiving at least 80 out of 100 points for the course. ***A passing grade in your Field Placement is also required in order to pass this course.***

## Class 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.

Confidentiality applies in many situations in our course. Confidentiality should be kept appropriately regarding discussions in supervisory meetings and in small groups. Confidentiality should also be considered when writing about events in your journals.

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:** For ours to be an open classroom where freedom to speak and respect for all are assured, 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 where students serve and is modeled by them in these settings.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:** 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 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 for 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>

**STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND FIELD EDUCATION:** Please review the Field Education Statement on Sexual Harassment as found in the field education handbook on page 10. <https://lpts.edu/assets/documents/field-education/field-education-handbook-20-21.pdf>

## From the Dean's Office

**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: <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.