

SM 1301:
Theological Reflection Group
for 3rd-Year MDiv Students

ASYNCHRONOUS SECTION

Syllabus for Fall 2021 (1.5 credits)

Instructors:

Susan R. Garrett (sgarrett@lpts.edu); 502-639-2248)

Kathryn House (khouse@lpts.edu; 919-423-1538)

Description

The third-year reflection group (a two-semester sequence) will provide a structured context for you to reflect on your entire seminary experience and discover how your vocational commitment and focus have evolved during your time at LPTS. With guidance from LPTS faculty members, you will expand and refine the portfolio of seminary work that you began to compile in the second-year reflection group. Other opportunities for reading, writing, and discussion will help you evaluate how your own heritage and experience have shaped your approach to ministry, and sharpen your understanding of the dynamics of organizational life and leadership.

Please note that you will need to pass this course in order to graduate in spring of 2022. To pass the fall-semester course (1.5 credits), you must assemble a full draft of your portfolio content. To pass the spring-semester course (1.5 credits), you must design and complete a presentation-version of your portfolio (the default format being online, though other options are available).

Online Course Platform

There will be a course website hosted on Canvas. All announcements and assignments will be posted on this site. Plan to log into the site **several times per week**. Class sessions will be conducted on campus. (Note that there is a separate, parallel syllabus for students electing to take the course in person.) You need to select yourself into *either* the asynchronous *or* the in-person section; floating back and forth between the sections will not be possible.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate how you have achieved each of the Student Learning Outcomes for the Master of Divinity Program, as illustrated by annotated artifacts from your coursework, field education, and extracurricular engagement;
2. Reflect critically on where and how you acquired your particular knowledge about ministry and views of leadership, and on how you have been able to transfer knowledge, experience, and skills from one arena of learning and experience to another; and
3. Identify next steps for your continued learning and growth.

You will have the opportunity to extend your achievement of each of these outcomes in the spring semester course.

Key Concept

A recurring theme in our course will be the concept of “Sankofa.” This is a Ghanaian word (from the Akan tribe) meaning “Go back and get it,” and it is often symbolized as a bird with an egg in its beak, with its feet forward but head looking back. The Sankofa bird represents *the importance of going back to retrieve what is precious from the past in order to live more wisely in the present and future.* This key concept will shape the course in the following ways:

(a) together we will read and discuss essays by African American authors who draw “Sankofa lessons” for ministry from the riches of African American history; and (b) each of you will actively reflect on your own heritage (broadly considered) to make sense of your particular vocation to ministry.

Grading

Grades will be assigned on a Pass/Fail basis. In order to earn a passing grade and advance to the second part of the course in the spring semester, **you will need to earn at least 80%.** Assigned point values for each course component are as follows:

1. *Participation and Engagement.* You will have opportunities each week to demonstrate your engagement with the course material. We will utilize two types of reflections - short responses and discussion boards where you will respond to reflections from one another. **Please see the course site for full description of P&E assignments and associated due dates. (= 15% of final grade);**
2. *Reading Reflections.* Completing assignments #s 703, 707, and 712 (reflections on readings), at an acceptable level of quality and on time (**= 15% of final grade**);
3. *Portfolio Components.* Completing all drafts of portfolio components at an acceptable level of quality and on time (**= 8% apiece, for 64% of final grade**):

#701: Initial inventory of artifacts

- #701a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #701b: Revised version; worth 8%

#702: SLO 1 (Bible)

- #702a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #702b: Revised version; worth 8%

#705: SLO 2 (History)

- #705a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #705b: Revised version; worth 8%

#706: SLO 3 (Theology)

- #706a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #706b: Revised version; worth 8%

#708: SLO 4 (Systemic Racism)

- #708a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #708b: Revised version; worth 8%

#709: QEP/ Antiracism SLO

- #709a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #709b: Revised version; worth 8%

#710: SLO 5 (Practical Theology)

- #710a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #710b: Revised version; worth 8%

#711: SLO 6 (Ministry in a Multi-Religious Context)

- #711a: Draft; graded credit/no-credit
- #711b: Revised version; worth 8%

Note that you will receive credit only for the revised version of the assignment (the “b” version). Due dates for these submissions are noted on the relevant assignment page in Canvas.

4. *Consultation with Professor.* Meeting with one of the professors during Research and Study Week (via Zoom) to discuss your progress in assembling the content of your portfolio (= **6% of final grade**).

Portfolios

You will create a digital portfolio for the course. Note that this will not be a private document: various instructors and other members of the LPTS community will need to be able to access and view it during your time as a student, and **a copy will need to be retained permanently by LPTS for accreditation purposes** (and for other purposes, if you grant your permission). After you leave LPTS, **you will have ownership of the original**, which you can continue to modify to meet your evolving needs.

By the end of the fall semester, using a digital filing system you will have collected most or all artifacts, commented on them, and compiled them together with narrative commentaries on each SLO. Early in the spring semester you will upload these digital files to a portfolio website (or approved presentation software, if that is your preference).

Textbook

*The following textbook is **required for purchase**. Note that, because a substantial portion will be required reading, copyright laws will not permit the contents to be shared on Canvas.*

Hopkins, Dwight N., and Sankofa Institute for African American Pastoral Leadership, eds. *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Wisdom from the Sankofa Institute for African American Pastoral Leadership*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780817017941. \$19.99 in paperback from Amazon; \$12.99 for the Kindle version.

Fall Semester Schedule

Asynchronous students due dates summary:

We want to support you as you find a consistent rhythm for your work throughout the semester. The following is a brief summary of where on the weekly calendar assignment due dates typically fall. **Note that you will have assignments due on most Mondays and Fridays:**

- **Mondays** are when your reflections on assigned readings **and** your corresponding initial posts to a discussion board typically are due (the discussion board the first week is an exception to this pattern: see syllabus below).
- **Fridays** are when you will need to have responded to other students' posts on a discussion board, or submit a first draft or a second (revised) draft of a SLO "narrative overview."

In addition:

- Two assignments are due on **Sundays**: 701b (due 10/03) and #710a (due 11/28).
- You will need to meet on Zoom with one of the instructors during **Research and Study Week**.

September 14: Introduction to the course.

- In advance of the session, read Allan A. Boesak, "Inaugural Sankofa Lecture," in Dwight N. Hopkins, editor, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Wisdom from the Sankofa Institute for African American Pastoral Leadership* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2018). (The article is chapter 3 in the book.) Can you identify a part of your own heritage (theological, family, seminary, other) that you want to "go back and get?" Be prepared to discuss. (*Of interest: you can read about Boesak [here](#). He has visited LPTS at the invitation of Professor Cliff Kirkpatrick; they share the distinction of having each at one time been President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.*)
- Also in advance of the session, read the syllabus carefully, and give some thought to the following topics, which we will discuss in class: Our collective hopes for the semester, the rationale for the course design (why talk about "Sankofa?"), and ways we can establish and sustain a strong sense of community and mutual support.
- **P&E response due 9/17 at 11:59pm. See "Assignments" on the course site in Canvas for details. Note that the timing of due dates differs from the usual pattern.**

September 21: JOINT ZOOM SESSION WITH ALL REFLECTION GROUPS

- Measuring success at LPTS: Introduction to Program SLOs
- What is a summative project?
- Preview of the coming year
- Q&A
- **P&E response due 9/24 at 11:59pm. See "Assignments" on the course site in Canvas for details.**

Special Zoom link for this session: <https://lpts-edu.zoom.us/j/84202386652>

- Meeting ID: 842 0238 6652
- One-tap mobile: +19292056099,,84202386652# US (New York)

September 28: Portfolio Strategy.

Preparation: Prepare a first draft of your portfolio inventory. **See Canvas assignment #701a for details. You will upload the assignment to Canvas by Sept 28 at 3:00pm and also bring a printed copy to class.**

- Submission of revised draft: Edit your document in light of class conversation and upload to Canvas. **See assignment #701b for details; due Oct 3 at 11:59pm.**
- **See "Assignments" on the course site in Canvas for details (nothing needs to be turned in for P&E for asynchronous students).**

October 5: Check-in on portfolios (SLO 1).

- Discussion topic: We will review SLO 1, which states that "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." **Asynchronous students: You will respond to a video by Professor Taylor Mayfield on this topic. See "Assignments" on the course site in Canvas for link and details. Due October 8 at 11:59pm.**
- **Due Friday, October 8, 11:59pm - **Assignment #702a - SLO 1 Narrative Overview First Draft:** Draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO 1. You will submit the assignment through Canvas. *Note that you will receive credit for the assignment only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #702b has been submitted.*
- **Due Friday, October 15, 11:59pm - **Assignment #702b - SLO 1 Narrative Overview Second Draft.**

October 12: Planting seeds of sanity and wholeness.

- Discussion topic: J. Alfred Smith, Sr., "Answering the Call of God for Sankofa Leadership in These Times," in Hopkins (editor), *Looking Back, Moving Forward* (chap. 5).
- ****Assignment #703 due on October 11 at 11:59pm:** Through Canvas, submit a one-page written statement with your answers to these guiding questions (along with any other reflections on the assigned article that you wish to contribute):
 - In what ways are you called to become "a co-creator of love, justice, and mercy to aid in planting the seeds of sanity and wholeness in the world," and how do you envision yourself using "creative power" and "resistive power" to achieve these aims?
 - In what ways does Smith advocate "a spirituality of realism?" What does he want his audience to be realistic about, and what does the Sankofa perspective contribute to such realism? What is *your* "spirituality of realism?"
- **P&E assignment for asynchronous students: make initial posts to the discussion board at the same time you submit your essay (by October 11 at 11:59pm). Make responses to two other posts by Friday, October 15 at 11:59pm. See "Assignments" on the course site in Canvas for details.**

October 19. Research & Study Week.

- ****Assignment #704:** Meet on Zoom with one of the professors (at a mutually agreed-upon date and time) to review the substance and mechanics of your portfolio creation process.

October 26. Check-in on portfolios (SLO 2).

- Discussion topic: We will review SLO 2, which states that “Students will learn to become skillful interpreters of the history of Christian experience.” **Asynchronous students: You will respond to a video by Professor Chris Elwood on this topic. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for link and details. Due October 29 at 11:59pm.**
- ****Due Friday, October 29, 11:59pm - Assignment #705a - SLO 2 Narrative Overview First Draft:** Draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO 2. **Submit through the course site.** *Note that you will receive credit for the assignment only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #705b has been submitted.*
- ****Due Friday, November 5, 11:59pm - Assignment #705b - SLO 2 Narrative Overview Second Draft**

November 2. Check-in on portfolios (SLO 3).

- Discussion topic: We will review SLO 3, which states that “Students will be able to think theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs.” **Asynchronous students: You will respond to a video by Professor Scott Williamson on this topic. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for link and details. Due November 5 at 11:59pm.**
- **** Due Friday, November 5, 11:59pm - Assignment #706a: SLO 3 Narrative Overview First Draft** Draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO 3. **Submit through the course site.** *Note that you will receive credit for the assignment only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #706b has been submitted.*
- **** Due Friday, November 12, 11:59pm - Assignment #706b: SLO 3 Narrative Overview Second Draft**

November 9: Life-giving ministry in the midst of Death’s reign.

- Discussion topic: Diane L. Hayes, “Beautiful Are the Souls of My Black Sisters: The Spirituality of Black Women”; and Alton B. Pollard III, “Life in the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Black Life in the Twenty-first Century and Our Grounds for Hope,” in Hopkins (editor), *Looking Back, Moving Forward* (chaps. 4 and 11).
- ****Assignment #707 due on November 8 at 11:59pm:** Through Canvas, submit a one-page written statement with your answers to these guiding questions (along with any other reflections on the assigned articles that you wish to contribute): What knowledge and skill sets have you acquired in seminary to help you to minister as an agent of hope in this death-dealing moment? In what ways are Boesak’s arguments about courage and anger being the “twin daughters of hope” (see chap. 3 in the book) relevant here?

- **P&E Response due Friday, November 12 at 11:59pm. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for details.**

November 16. Check-in on portfolios (SLO 4 and the Antiracism SLO).

- Discussion topic: We will review SLO 4, which states that “Students will demonstrate the ability to reflect critically and self-critically on relationships between Christian faith and various forms of systemic injustice”; and the Antiracism SLO, which states that “Students can describe strategies, grounded in their practice, for working toward racial justice appropriate to their particular vocational settings.” **Asynchronous students: You will respond to videos by Professor Shannon Craigo-Snell and Dean Debra Mumford on these SLOs. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for links and details. Due November 19 at 11:59pm.**
- ****Due Friday, November 19, 11:59pm: - Assignments #708a (= First draft of SLO 4 Narrative Overview) and #709a (= First draft of Antiracism SLO Narrative Overview).** Draft of your narrative overviews of your work toward mastery of SLO 4 AND the antiracism SLO. **Submit through the course site.** *Note that you will receive credit for the assignments only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #708n and #709b have been submitted.*
- ****Due Friday, November 26, 11:59pm: - Assignments #708b (= Second draft of SLO 4 Narrative Overview) and #709b (= Second draft of Antiracism SLO Narrative Overview)**

November 23. Check-in on portfolios (SLO 5) - ASYNCHRONOUS SESSION FOR ALL STUDENTS

(Thanksgiving week). Instructions: You will watch a video from last year’s class, in which Professor Brad Wigger reviews SLO 5 (“Students will acquire the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the practice of Christian ministry”). [Link to video](#) . **No response required.**

- **Due Sunday, November 28, 11:59pm -- **Assignment #710a SLO 5 Narrative Overview First Draft** Prepare a draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO 5. **Submit through the course site.** *Note that you will receive credit for the assignment only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #710b has been submitted.*
- ****Due Sunday, December 5, 11:59pm -- **Assignment #710b: Second draft of SLO 5 Narrative Overview**

November 30. Check-in on portfolios (SLO 6).

- Discussion topic: We will review SLO 6, which states that “Students can articulate their own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.” **Asynchronous students: You will respond to a video by Professor Cliff Kirkpatrick on this topic. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for link and details. Due December 3 at 11:59pm.**
- **** Due Friday, Dec. 3, 11:59pm - **Assignment #711a - First draft of SLO 6 Narrative Overview** Prepare a draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO 6. **Submit through the course site.** *Note that you will receive credit for the assignment only when any revisions required by your professors have been made and #711b has been submitted.*

- **** Due Friday, Dec. 10, 11:59pm - **Assignment #711b - Second draft of SLO 6 Narrative Overview**

December 7. Sankofa Sensibility and Biblical Interpretation.

- Discussion topic: Stephen Breck Reid, “Biblical Interpretation: How I’ve Changed My Mind,” in Hopkins (editor), *Looking Back, Moving Forward* (chap. 8).
- ****Assignment #712 due on December 6 at 11:59pm**: Through Canvas, submit a one-page written statement with your answers to these guiding questions (along with any other reflections on the assigned articles that you wish to contribute): How has Stephen Breck Reid changed his mind about biblical interpretation? How have you changed *your* mind as a consequence of your seminary studies? Are there things from your heritage that you want to “go back and get” to enrich your process of interpreting and applying the scriptures in your work of ministry?
- **P&E assignment for asynchronous students: make initial posts to the discussion board at the same time you submit your essay (by December 6 at 11:59pm). Make responses to two other posts by Friday, December 10 at 11:59pm. See “Assignments” on the course site in Canvas for details.**

Appendix: Course Policies

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

1. To access the library and its resources, visit: <https://lpts.edu/library/>
2. To request a library laptop loan, contact library@lpts.edu
3. For a summary of information related to accessing Outlook, Canvas, CAMS, and the Intranet, see: [Accessing LPTS Resources](#)
4. For general help with campus network access, Outlook (email), contact support@lpts.edu
5. 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
6. For help with Canvas credentials, contact Carolyn Cardwell at ccardwell@lpts.edu.

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 on “Inclusive and Expansive Language” (see [here](#)).

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the professor 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 (including other students as well as online sources) must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Failure to credit sources (whether intentional or due to oversight) 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, 2018.

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 center: <https://lpts.libguides.com/digitalresources/citingsources>.