

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

Syllabus for Fall 2022 (1.5 credits)  
Tuesdays, 3:00-4:20 PM  
Schlegel 123

**Instructors:**

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**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.

Collaboration will be essential both to this course and to the second course in the sequence (in spring of 2023). You will be helping one another to create the strongest possible portfolios, which you will present to the class in the spring.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, you will be able (provisionally) 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.*

**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 points, which you can do by:

- (a) attending all class sessions and engaging content and discussions fully (= 4 points per session, for 48 points total),
- (b) completing all drafts of portfolio components **at an acceptable level of quality and on time** (= 7 points each, for 42 points total), and
- (c) Share portfolio with one of the professors during Research and Study Week to show your progress in laying out your portfolio and designing your website (= 10 points).

### **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**. After you leave LPTS, **you will have ownership of the original**, which you can continue to modify to meet your evolving needs.

Here is a document that provides guidance about portfolio creation:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i9WSa4N2dxClnmCSyVhMMWmDcuU0fyK3D0fmA2uH6Cs/edit>

Your progress on portfolio creation will be assessed during Research and Study week. Please make sure that Shannon and I have a link to your portfolio. Further additions and design of the portfolio will be done through the remainder of the academic year.

### **Fall Semester Schedule**

#### **September 13: Introduction to the course. Portfolio design**

- Discussion topic: Our collective hopes for the semester; the rationale for the course.
- Portfolio discussion with Carolyn Cardwell

#### **September 20: Check-in on portfolios. Artifacts**

- Discussion topic: We will review the new anti-racism (QEP) SLO, which states that “Students can describe strategies, grounded in their practice, for working toward racial justice appropriate to their particular vocational settings.”
- Prepare a written inventory listing artifacts you anticipate that you may use to demonstrate achievement of the anti-racism SLO and each of the six (numbered) SLOs. Also answer the following questions: What gaps remain? What courses are you taking this year that might supply something you still need? *Remember that field education and extracurricular involvements are possible sources for documentation of your learning, and remember also to think about non-textual evidence, such as videos or photographs.*

#### **September 27: Retrieving what we have left behind.**

- Discussion topic: Identify a part of your own heritage (theological, family, seminary, other) that you want to “go back and get.” How do you integrate what you have retrieved?

**October 4: Check-in on portfolios. SLO #1**

- Discussion topic: Your knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and your ability to use critical skills and educated imagination to interpret it in contemporary social and cultural contexts.

**October 11:**

- Check-in on portfolio creation.

**October 18. Research & Study Week.**

- Share a portfolio link with one of the professors to review the substance and mechanics of your portfolio creation process.

**October 25. Check-in on portfolios. SLO #2**

- Discussion topic: Your interpretation of the history of Christian experience.
- Draft of your narrative overview of your work toward mastery of SLO #2.

**November 1. Life-giving ministry in the midst of Death's reign.**

- 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?

**November 8. Check-in on portfolios. SLO #3**

- Discussion topic: Thinking theologically and ethically in relation to particular traditions and contemporary needs

**November 15. Check-in on portfolios. SLO #4**

- Discussion topic: Critical and self-critical reflection on the relationships between Christian faith and various forms of systemic injustice.

**November 22. Check-in on portfolios. SLO #5**

- Discussion topic: The knowledge and skillsets you have acquired for the practice of Christian ministry.

**November 29. Check-in on portfolios. SLO #6**

- Discussion topic: Your theological perspective, mindful of the contexts of contemporary ministry.

**December 6. Check-in on portfolios.**

- Preparing for portfolio presentations in the Spring 2023 semester.

## **Spring Semester Schedule (TENTATIVE PREVIEW)**

**February 7.** Preparing for portfolio presentations

**February 14.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 1 and 2

**February 21.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 3 and 4

**February 28.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 5 and 6

**March 7.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 7 and 8

**March 14 - Research & Study Week**

**March 21.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 9 and 10

**March 28.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 11 and 12

**April 4.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 13 and 14

**April 11.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 15 and 16

**April 18.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 17 and 18

**April 25.** Student portfolio presentations, #s 19 and 20

**May 2.** Student portfolio presentations, # 21

## **Appendix: Course Policies**

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

1. To access the Library and its resources, visit: [library@lpts.edu](mailto:library@lpts.edu)
2. To request a library laptop loan, contact the Online Help Desk: [library@lpts.edu](mailto:library@lpts.edu).
3. For help with campus network access, Outlook (email), contact [support@lpts.edu](mailto:support@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>.*

### **Attendance Policy**

Perfect or near-perfect attendance is expected, and roll will be taken. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class prior to the session. Whether excused or unexcused, more than two absences will affect the student's grade, and more than four absences may result in a failing grade in the course. Note that to earn full credit for "attendance" you will need to be engaged in the discussions.