

## Writing for the Church

DM 61031

January Intensive 2019

Christian Education (3 hours, Doctor of Ministry Advanced Professional Course)

Professor: J. Bradley Wigger ([bwigger@lpts.edu](mailto:bwigger@lpts.edu))

Class meeting: 8:30-5:00 January 14-18. In addition, there is preparatory and follow-up work.

Location: Schlegel 121

### General Description

This seminar concentrates upon the art and craft of writing for the Church (broadly understood). Students will be introduced to and will practice various kinds of writing, for example, curriculum and devotional materials, Bible studies, poetry, pastoral letters, essays, church newsletters, fiction, and writing for denominational magazines or newspapers. Students will explore the role and place of written words in congregational life and educational ministry. Course readings will include reflections upon the challenges and discipline of the writing process as well as students' own work shared with the class.

### Hopes

Two program goals (and SLO1) of the Doctor of Ministry program of Louisville Seminary intend that students:

- 1) demonstrate an advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines and a focused area of study or track,
- 2) demonstrate an ability to articulate their comprehensive understanding of ministry, grounded in theory and practice in appreciative and critical correlation.

SLO1: Students will demonstrate an advanced (comprehensive, appreciative, and critical) understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines, including practical theology (Goals 1 and 2).

The focus in this course will be upon the ways in which writing provides avenues for integrating theology and practice, demonstrating an advanced understanding of ministry in relation to a particular focus, and articulating understandings of ministry and faith to others.

To that end, through the course, students should be able to:

- reflect theologically on writing and words in relation to ministry,
- identify differences and similarities between processes for *writing* and those for *learning*,
- become sensitive to various genres and contexts for writing,
- find guidance for working through various obstacles to writing (such as fear, writer's block, or over-editing oneself),

- imagine the educational possibilities for writing (such as writing a congregation's Sunday school curriculum, Lenten devotions for home-use, or magazine articles),
- practice writing for children and adults alike,
- discover a deeper appreciation for the joys, hardships, disciplines, and power involved in writing,
- discover their own strengths in and dreams for writing,
- and develop writing strategies for the DMin project report.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

This course will heavily utilize class discussions and writing exercises. Reading materials, and students' own writing will focus the discussions. Accordingly, class participation and preparation are crucial to the course. Guidance for assignments and the final project will be given in class. Additional assignments not listed in the syllabus may be required but will be given adequate time and will be part of the "Reading and Notebook" grade.

### **Technology Policy**

The primary form of technology needed for this course is a pencil or pen and paper. We will not use laptops or tablets during class time. Please turn off your phones.

### **Assignments and Grading**

The following criteria will be used for the course grade:

*Reading and Notebook Assignments (50%)* The Notebook will include a reading log, as well as daily writing exercises in and out of class in light of readings, class discussions, and interests. The emphasis for the notebook writings will be upon engagement with the assignments, not whether the writing is publishable. **The following reading to be completed by January 14):**

Clark, Roy Peter. *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2008.

Lamott, Anne, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Walker, Frank X. *Affrilachia*. Lexington, KY: Old Cove Press, 2000.

Zinsser, William. *Going on Faith: Writing as a Spiritual Quest*. New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999.

*Final Project and Book Review (50%)* Students will submit a final writing project in an area of writing the student would like to develop more fully. Examples: a full length article for a denominational magazine; the beginnings of a graphic novel; a short story or chapter of book or novel; a Bible study or devotional that congregations or households could use; a set of poems, prayers or songs; or other possibilities a student proposes. (Roughly 10 pages, 5 pages presented in class).

Students will choose three additional books from the list below, with a 10 page review (of all 3 in one review) due with the final project February 15.

Barry, Lynda. *What It Is*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly Press, 2008.

Bradbury, Ray. *Zen in the Art of Writing*. Santa Barbara, CA: Joshua Odell Editions, 1990.

DeSalvo, Louise. *The Art of Slow Writing*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2014.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Goldberg, Natalie. *True Secret of Writing: Connecting Life with Language*. Atria, 2013

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Scribner, 2000.

Miller, E. Ethelbert. *Fathering Words: The Making of an African American Writer*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Paul, Ann Whitford. *Writing Picture Books: A Hands-on Guide from Story Creation to Publication*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest, 2009.

Alternative—another book about writing that you've been wanting to read.

### **School Policies (excerpted from The Faculty Handbook)**

#### **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.

#### **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*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

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*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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

### **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. Missing 1/4 or more of the course may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### **(Working) Calendar**

#### **I (Monday a.m.) *Course introduction: In the Beginning...***

Freewriting, Character, and Setting  
Writing and Sharing

#### **II (Monday p.m.) *Attending like a writer***

Sense and Imagination  
Plots and Scenes

#### **Homework for Tuesday:**

Freewrite (10 mins)

Write: a letter to someone (alive or dead) who has been significant for your faith. Let them know how they have mattered to you.

Identify: Your “broccoli” and bring to class (if possible) something that represents it.

#### **III (Tuesday a.m.) *Of Poems and Prayer***

Writing and Formation  
Poems of God  
Project Dreaming

#### **IV (Tuesday p.m.) *Writing as a Means of Grace?***

Writing for Educational Situations and Ministry  
Writing for Children  
No More Clichés!

#### **Homework for Wednesday:**

Freewrite about your project (again)  
Outline the project  
Imagine and describe the opening scene/book cover

**V (Wednesday a.m.) *Narrative/Creative Nonfiction***

Scenes and Information  
Dialogue

**VI (Wednesday p.m.) *Playing with Poetry***

Poetry as “No Big Deal”

**Homework for Thursday:**

Choose one: 1) If you’re willing to present your project Friday, work on your project. Or,  
2) If you’re not ready or are undecided, freewrite about it until you know what you will  
do for a project.

**VII (Thursday a.m.) *Jedi Mind Tricks***

Rules to Play By  
Book Reviews  
Verb Power

**VIII (Thursday p.m.) *Editing***

General Review  
Letter to the Editor

**Homework for Friday:**

Freewrite (10 mins)  
Work on your project (minimally provide an outline)  
Prepare your Notebook for turning in (reading log; assignments, class exercises, project  
outline)

**IX (Friday a.m.) *Publishing 101***

Ideas and Presentations

**X (Friday p.m.) *Writing a Blessing***

Ideas, Presentations, and Benedictions

**Friday: turn in Notebooks**

**Friday, Feb. 15:**

**Turn in (the equivalent of) 10 pages of a final project.**  
**Turn in 10 paged Book Review of three books on writing (imagine the context).**