

## SENIOR SEMINAR: SPRING 2020

### Theme: Attention

Mondays 1:30-4:20

Schlegel Hall 120

Instructor: J. Bradley Wigger, Ph.D ([bwigger@lpts.edu](mailto:bwigger@lpts.edu))

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### Senior Seminar description

The Senior Seminar focuses on an area of theological study related to the practice of ministry, providing M.Div. students in their final year of study an opportunity to integrate the various elements of their theological education in a way that contributes to the ongoing discernment of their vocation. Students will produce a substantial essay or project that brings the methods of theological study to bear on problems and opportunities in ministry and that expresses the student's theological vision. The topic for the Spring 2020 seminar is *Attention*.

### Course: Attention

Theologians and scholars across disciplines affirm the importance of paying attention. It is intrinsic to the way we communicate and experience care, to praying and learning, to artistic endeavors and the sciences. We are created to tend and attend to the created world. In this seminar we will explore the role of attention across various realms and contexts of ministry – for example, attending to people and situations, to biblical and theological texts, to cultural knowledge and political conditions, and attending to the presence of the Holy. Along the way, aesthetic and ethical dimensions of attention will be important, that is, the relationship between attention and what or who is valued. Who is rendered invisible? What is beautiful? What matters to the body of Christ? In all we will be considering the ways in which faith itself may be a kind of attention giving rise to ways of attending in the life of faith.

### Course goals

This course will provide an opportunity for senior students to integrate theological study with pastoral practice and build their capacity for contextual theological-ethical interpretation and analysis. The instructors will work with students to create a space for free, creative, and collaborative theological experimentation/play and discovery. Students will

1. Bring their passions for ministry and theological reflection into productive conversation with religious and cultural traditions,
2. Gain practice in collaborative theological methods,
3. Refine their skills of constructive theological and ethical reflection and expression,
4. Work towards a deeper understanding of the role of attention in the practices of ministry and the life of faith,

5. Continue processes of vocational discernment that are theologically grounded, ethically informed, and that draw on several theological disciplines (biblical studies, historical and constructive theology, ethics, practical theology).

### **Course requirements**

1. *Preparation and participation:* Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings, read all assigned material, and enter into thoughtful discussion of the matters the class takes up. Students are partners to one another in their work for this course, so conscientious preparation for each seminar meeting is essential.

2. *Senior Seminar essay or project.* The culminating project of the seminar will focus on an area of interest that relates in some way to the seminar topic. The project's theme should emerge from the student's own theological interests and passions. The final version may be expressed in the writing of a substantial essay (about 20 pages). It may also be a performance, a particular practice of ministry, a liturgical project, curriculum, or a work of art, in which case the project submitted would include some demonstration of the practice (where applicable) together with an interpretive reflection. The final determination of the project, its scope, and resources necessary to produce it will be the work of the student together with the instructor, in collaboration with the seminar as a whole. Students, thus, will have an opportunity to draw on the perspectives of their colleagues as the project is conceived and undertaken. To serve this end is the following work.

A. *Topic description:* Students will be prepared to introduce the topic on which they will work Week 2, with revised descriptions to follow.

B. *Draft Presentation and Bibliography/Resources:* Students will present to the seminar their work in progress (Weeks 8-9), submitting five days in advance of the presentation a written summary (4-6 pages) for all to read and come to class prepared to discuss. In addition, students will prepare a brief annotated bibliography/resource list.

C. *Final presentation of final project:* in class (Weeks 10-12).

### **Examples of previous projects**

Book chapter with the design for a whole book (food and faith)

Dance project (video recorded)

Original music (several songs for a CD)

Curriculum (of all kinds)

Research Paper (for possible grad school application)

Art projects

"Mourning bench" (actual bench decouped with representations of grief)

Voice recital with themes and drawings reflecting work in a children's hospital

Poetry collection

Legislation (submitted to KY House)

Liturgical banners (reflecting each confession of PCUSA)

## **This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.**

### *Electronic Technology Policy (in class)*

This is a low-to-no technology course during class time. There will rarely, if ever, be a need for using laptops, tablets, phones, or any other technology that takes attention away from the classroom. Please turn off and stow phones so they are neither visible nor accessible. For more information and research regarding the ways even the visible presence of a phone inhibits learning see Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation* (Penguin, 2015). You may however bring an electronic book version of required reading. For note taking, a paper notebook will be sufficient, if not better. See the research by Mueller, P. and Oppenheimer, D., "The Pen Is Mightier than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science*, June 2014 vol. 25 no. 6 1159-1168. [Link](#). If there is an overwhelming need for use of a laptop, please request permission from the professor.

### Required texts:

Lawrence, Jacob. *Harriet and the Promised Land*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997 edition.

Lawrence, Jacob. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: HarperCollins 1992.

Nesbett, Peter. *Jacob Lawrence: The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*. Seattle: Francine Seders Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 2005 Paperback edition.

Odell, Jenny. *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. Brooklyn, Melville House, 2019.

Other required reading assignments are indicated (\*) in the calendar, below and are available on library reserve (either shelf or CAMS)

## **School Policies (Excerpted from the *Faculty Handbook*)**

### **1. 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. See for further assistance, <http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>.

### **2. 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 the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the course may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

## CALENDAR

### Preliminary Meeting: November 20

#### Week 1: February 10

##### **Creating Something Beautiful**

Crafting good projects  
Attending to sacred texts  
Devotions

##### Resources:

- Booth, Wayne C.; Colomb, Gregory G.; and Williams, Joseph M. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago, 1995/2003.
- Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2000.
- Epperly, Bruce, and Epperly, Katherine Gould. "Creating something Beautiful for God." Alban Institute: *The Alban Weekly*, 2008.
- Lawrence, Jacob. *Harriet and the Promised Land*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997 edition.
- PBS News Hours: Andrew Goldsworthy  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsezrORBFj0>
- Zinsser, William. *Writing to Learn: How to Write – and Think – Clearly about any Subject at All*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

#### Week 2: February 17

##### **Attending to God and Neighbor**

- \*Dykstra, Craig and Gardner, Freda. "Attending to the Presence of God," in *Presbyterian Outlook*, (Vol. 171, No. 16), April 24, 1989, 12-13.
- \*Weil, Simone. "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God," in *Waiting for God*. (trans. by Emma Craufurd). New York: Capricorn, 1951. [Link](#)
- \*Peluso-Verdend, Gary. *Paying Attention: Focusing Your Congregation on What Matters*. Herndon, Virginia: Alban Institute, 2005. (selections: Introduction and Chapter 2.)

##### Resources:

- Aleshire, Daniel O. *Faithcare: Ministering to All God's People Through the Ages of Life*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia, 1988.
- Bien, Thomas. *Mindful Therapy: A Guide for Therapists and Helping Professionals*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006.
- Brady, Mark (ed.) *The Wisdom of Listening*. Somerville, MA: 2003.
- Boff, Leonardo. *When Theology Listens to the Poor*. (Robert Barr, trans.) San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.

- Gerkin, Charles V. *The Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode*. Nashville: Abindong Press, 1984.
- Jackson, Cari. *The Gift to Listen: the Courage to Hear*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2003.
- Justice, Emma J. *Hearing Beyond the Words: How to Become a Listening Pastor*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. New York: Hyperion, 1994.
- Talvacchia, Kathleen T. and Pak, Su Yon. "Attentive Teaching in Diverse Communities and Lifelong Faith Formation," in *Lifelong Faith*, (Volume 2.3, Fall 2008)
- Wigger, J. Bradley. *The Power of God at Home: Nurturing Our Children in Love and Grace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003. (Especially Chapter 1, "Paying Attention.")
- Wood, Charles M. and Blue, Ellen. *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2008.

### Week 3: February 24

#### **Resisting the Attention Economy**

- \*Odell, Jenny. *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. Brooklyn, Melville House, 2019.
- \*Summaries of projects (under 200 words each)

#### Resources:

- Borgman, Albert. *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Gopnik, Alison. "What Is It Like to Be a Baby?" in *The Philosophical Baby*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009, especially chapter 4.
- Iyer, Pico. "The Joy of Quiet," *The New York Times*, 1.1.12. [Link](#)
- Jackson, Maggie. *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus. 2008.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Reclaiming Conversation*. New York: Penguin, 2015.
- Vendantam, Shankar. *Hidden Brain Podcast* (with Tim Wu), 1.1.18. [Link](#)

### Week 4: March 2

#### **Attention and Aesthetics – the art of Jacob Lawrence**

- \*Kidd, Richard, and Sparkes, Graham. "Jacob Lawrence: The Beauty of Struggle," in *God and the Art of Seeing: Visual Resources for a Journey of Faith*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2003.
- \*Lawrence, Jacob. *Harriet and the Promised Land*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997 edition.
- \*Lawrence, Jacob. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

\*Nesbett, Peter. *Jacob Lawrence: The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*. Seattle: Francine Seders Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 2005 (Paperback edition).

Resources:

- Dillenberger, Jane. *Image and Spirit in Sacred and Secular Art*. New York: Crossroad. 1990.
- Edwards, Cliff. *Van Gogh and God: A Creative Spiritual Quest*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 1989.
- Eusden, John Dykstra, and Westerhoff, John III. *Sensing Beauty: Aesthetics, the Human Spirit, and the Church*. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998.
- Farley, Edward. *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2001.
- García-Revera, Alejandro. *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics*. Collegeville, Minnesota: 1999.
- McEntyre, Marilyn Chandler. *The Color of Light: Poems on Van Gogh's Late Paintings*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007.
- Miles, Margaret. *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture*. Boston: Beacon, 1985.
- Nesbett, Peter, and DuBois, Michelle. *Jacob Lawrence, Paintings, Drawings, and Murals (1935-1999)*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000.
- Plantinga Pauw, Amy. "Broken Beauty" in *Mosaic of Louisville Seminary: The Intersection of Art and Theology*. Vol. 14, no. 1. Spring, 2007.
- Tillich, Paul. *On Art and Architecture*. New York: Crossroad. 1987.
- Jacob Lawrence: An Intimate Portrait* (VHS). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1993.

**Week 5: March 9**

**Prophetic Vision**

\*Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Prophets (Vol 1)*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.  
(Selections: chs. 1-2)

\*\_\_\_\_\_ "Awe and Reverence," in *Between God and Man: An Interpretation of Judaism*.  
New York: Free Press. 1959, pp. 51-54.

\*NBC Interview (1972): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEXK9xcRCho> (37 mins)

Resources:

- Alves, Rubem. *The Poet, the Warrior, the Prophet*. Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing, 2003.
- Abraham Joshua Heschel Remembered* (VHS). Radio & Television Dept., Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993.



Carvalhaes, Cláudio. "The Poor Don't Have Sex: The Blind Spots of Bodily and Sexual Discourses in the Construction of Subjectivity in Latin American Liberation Theology" published in *Margens*, Postmodern Religious and Theological Studies in Brazil, Year 2, Number 1. (May, 2006)  
[www.margens.org.br](http://www.margens.org.br) Forthcoming as a chapter in *Theology and Sexuality in Brasil*, Editora Maud, Spring 2009.

West, Cornel. *Prophecy Deliverance*. Louisville: WJK, 2002.

### ***Research and Study: March 16-20***

#### **Week 6: March 23**

##### **Poetic Vision**

\*Selected poems drawn from below.

\* Cook, Carol J. "Emily Dickinson: Poet as Pastoral Theologian." *Pastoral Psychology* 60, no. 3 (June 2011), 421-435.

##### Resources:

Angelou, Maya. *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*. New York: Random House, 194.

Berry, Wendell. *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998.

*Coal Black Voices: a documentary featuring the Affrilachian Poets* (VHS). Media Working Group, 2001.

Finney, Nikky. *Rice*. Toronto: Sister Vision, 1995.

Johnson, James Weldon. *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. New York: Viking Press, 1927.

Lorde, Audre. *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches*. New York: The Crossing Press, 1984.

Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldua, eds. *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Kitchen Table: women of Color Press, 1983.

Oliver, Mary. *New and Selected Poems, Volume One*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Oliver, Mary. *New and Selected Poems, Volume Two*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.

Oliver, Mary. *Thirst*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

Walker, Frank X. *Affrilacha*. Lexington, Kentucky: Old Cove, 2000.

#### **Week 7: March 30**

##### **Attention and Wonder in the Community of Creation**

Possible Field trip: *The Falls of the Ohio*



- \* Jürgen Moltmann. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. San Francisco: HarperCollins. 1985. (selections: Chapter 1)
- \*Parker-Pope, Tara. "Natural Settings Help Brain Fatigue," *The New York Times*, October 27, 2008. [Link](#)
- \*Richtel, Matt. "Outdoors and Out of Reach, Studying the Brain." *The New York Times*, August, 16, 2010. [Link](#)
- \*TBA

Resources:

- Berry, Wendell. "Christianity and the Survival of Creation" in *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C: Counterpoint. 2002.
- Berry, Wendell. *A Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems 1979-1997*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998.
- Carson, Rachel. *The Sense of Wonder*. HarperCollins, 1998 edition. Photographs by Nick Kelsh.
- Dillard, Annie. "Seeing" in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York: Bantam Books, 1974.
- Eisley, Loren. *The Immense Journey*. New York: Vintage. 1959.
- Eiseley, Loren. "Science and the Sense of the Holy," in *The Star Thrower*. New York: Harcourt. 1978.
- Kingsolver, Barbara: *Small Wonder: Essays*. Harpercollins. 2002. (Especially "Fist in the Eye of God.")
- Paterson, Katherine. "In Search of Wonder," and "The Invisible Child," in *The Invisible Child*. New York: Dutton Children's Books. 2001.
- Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

Week 8: April 6                      Short presentations

Week 9: April 13                     Short presentation

Week 10: April 20                   Final presentations

Week 11: April 27                   Final presentations

Week 12: May 4                      Final presentations