

Practicing Our Faith
Spring 2017
T/R, 1:30-2:50 p.m.
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Schlegel Hall 121

Faculty:

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Course description

In this course we will survey recent literature on Christian practices, focusing on the historical and ecumenical insights this approach to the Christian tradition offers. We will also explore how an emphasis on Christian practices informs contemporary ministry and spirituality, including educational ministries in and beyond congregational settings.

This course meets a 3-credit area B general elective requirement for MDiv, MA, and MAS students as well as the teaching ministry requirement for the MDiv. Introduction to Theology and Ethics (ITE) is a prerequisite.

Goals and objectives:

1. Students will gain familiarity with Christian practices in both historical and contemporary settings.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to relate the study of practices to their own ministry contexts, vocation, and spiritual formation.
3. Students will deepen their understanding and appreciation of the practices of their own religious tradition and to explore points of convergence and difference with other communities and traditions of faith.
4. Students will imagine and reflect upon the role of practices in religious educational settings.

Required Books (also on library reserve):

Bass, Dorothy, ed. *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, 2nd ed., San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.

Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989.

Raboteau, Albert J. *A Sorrowful Joy*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.

Volf, Miroslav and Bass, Dorothy, eds. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Resource Books for Teaching Sessions (on overnight reserve):

- Bass, Dorothy. *Receiving the day: Christian practices for opening the gift of time*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000.
- Bass, Dorothy, Briehl, Susan R., eds. *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2010.
- Bass, Dorothy, and Richter, Don, eds. *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2002.
- Hicks, Douglas. *Money Enough: Everyday Practices for Living Faithfully in the Global Economy*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.
- Long, Thomas G. *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into being Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004.
- Long, Thomas G. *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*. Louisville: WJK, 2009.
- McFague, Sallie. *Super, Natural Christians: How we should love nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Paulsell, Stephanie. *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002.
- Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Saliers, Don, and Saliers, Emily. *A Song to Sing, A Life to Live: Reflections on Music as Spiritual Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005.
- Webb, Stephen H. *Good Eating*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.

Additional Reserve Items:

- Armstrong, Thomas. *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2000.
- Bass, Dorothy, and Richter, Don. *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*. Nashville: Upper Room, 2002.
- Campbell, Linda; Bruce Campbell; and Dee Dickinson. *Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences*, 3rd edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003.
- Dykstra, Craig. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*. Louisville: Geneva, 1999.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1981.
- Fulkerson, Mary McClintock, and Marcia W. Mount Shoop, *A Body Broken, A Body Betrayed: Race, Memory, and Eucharist in White-Dominant Churches*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015.
- Harris, Maria. *Teaching and Religious Imagination*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.
- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Gushee, David P. *The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Lifelong Faith: Faith Formation in Christian Practices*, Vol. 2.2, (Summer, 2008).
- Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Tye, Karen. *Basics of Christian Education*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2000.

Wimberly, Ann. *Soul Stories: African-American Christian Education*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Other Reserve Items:

Videos

Weapons of the Spirit. Pierre Sauvage Productions, 1989.

Theologians under Hitler. Vital Visuals, 2006.

On CAMS

“Apartheid and the Belhar Confession” (PCUSA resource)

Note: full version is available at:

<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belharstudyguide.pdf>

Baldwin, James. “A Talk to Teachers,” *The Saturday Review*, December 21, 1963, reprinted in *The Price of the Ticket, Collected Non-Fiction 1948-1985*, Saint Martin’s, 1985. <http://www.richgibson.com/talktoteachers.htm>

Daneel, Marthinus. “African Earthkeeping Churches”

Dykstra, Craig. “A Way of Seeing,” *Christian Century* (April 8, 2008).

Plantinga Pauw, Amy. “Graceful Practices” 2005 Covenant Network Plenary

Plantinga Pauw, Amy. *Church in Ordinary Time* excerpt.

Practicing Our Faith Website: <http://www.practicingourfaith.org/>

Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013, pp. 75-100.

Smith, Ted A. “Theories of Practice,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012).

Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997, pp. 38-58, 93-119

Walker, Joyce MacKichan. “The Art of Asking Good Questions: The Role of Questions in Discussion,” *The Thoughtful Christian*.

“What are Christian Practices?” available at

http://www.practicingourfaith.org/pret_what_are_practices.html

Wigger, J. Bradley. “Learning as We Teach: Christian education is about Teaching Mysteries,” *The Thoughtful Christian*.

Wigger, J. Bradley. “Multiple Intelligences: Understanding the Many Ways We Learn,” *The Thoughtful Christian*.

Course Requirements

1. (40%) Students will keep up with reading and weekly written assignments (normally turned in on Tuesdays), attend all class sessions, and participate actively in class discussions. In addition, the class will engage in an ongoing prayer practice rooted in the Psalms.
2. (30%) Students (in groups of 3-4) will teach one of the practices to the rest of the class. The teaching sessions will address key features of the practice historically as well as its potential for new life in contemporary settings. Teachers will look for ways to help the class learn about the practice by participating in the practice.

- Lesson plans will be developed for the sessions by the group. A reflection on the teaching session will be written individually.
3. (30%) Students will write two papers (approximately 1500 words each).
 - i) *Contrasting views of practice in James K.A. Smith and Kathryn Tanner* (due March 20)
 - ii) *A Spirituality of Practice* (due May 11) Seniors need to submit this paper by May 9.

For all assignments, more detailed guidance will be provided in class.

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.

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. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: ALL LIBRARY RESERVE READINGS ARE PRINTED IN SMALL CAPS

Thursday, February 2 *Course Introduction*

February 7-9 *Sorrowful Joy*

Read: Raboteau, all.

Assignment: Describe the way iconography reflects key moments or deep themes in Raboteau's life (250-300 words).

All readings and assignments to be completed on Tuesdays of each week.

February 14-16 *Weapons of the Spirit*

Read: Bass, *Practicing Our Faith*, all.

Assignment: Write a Haiku for each of the twelve practices reflecting its core as the author describes it.

February 21-23 *Practices and Grace*

Read: Pauw, Jones, and Coakley (in Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*);

Amy Plantinga Pauw, "Graceful Practices," 2005 Covenant Network Plenary (on

CAMS)

Assignment: Why are self-righteousness and legalism a persistent temptation with Christian practices? (250-300 words)

Be ready to sign up for teaching group

February 28-March 2 ***Practices and Education***

Read: Wigger, “Multiple Intelligences” (on CAMS)

Assignment: TBD

March 7-9 ***Different Understandings of Practices***

Read: Ted A. Smith, “Theories of Practice,” 244–54 (on CAMS)

Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 38-58, 93-119 (on CAMS)

James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 75-100 (on CAMS)

Amy Plantinga Pauw, *Church in Ordinary Time*, excerpt (on CAMS)

Assignment: Why is what Ted A. Smith calls a “cultural turn” important for ministry? (250-300 words)

March 14-16 ***Research and Study (no class)***

March 21-23 ***Social and Political Dimensions of Practices***

Read: Williams, Pohl, Bond, and Bedford (in Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*);

PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED*, CH. 2.

Assignment: Paper (1500 words)

James K.A. Smith emphasizes that church is a community with a shared *habitus* (*Imagining*, p. 81). Kathryn Tanner emphasizes that a culture is never a consistently unified whole (*Theories*, p. 45). Show the contrast between Smith and Tanner’s views of church as a community of practice. Then show how their contrasting views make sense (or don’t) of musical practices in a church community you know well.

March 28-30 ***The Corruption and Renewal of Practices***

Read: MARY MCCLINTOCK FULKERSON AND MARCIA W. MOUNT SHOOP, *A BODY BROKEN, A BODY BETRAYED: RACE, MEMORY, AND EUCHARIST IN WHITE-DOMINANT CHURCHES* (Chs. 1 and 2)

“Apartheid and the Belhar Confession” (on CAMS)

BELL HOOKS, “ENGAGED PEDAGOGY,” IN *TEACHING TO TRANSGRESS* (CH. 1)

Marthinus Daneel, “African Earthkeeping Churches” (On CAMS)

Watch: Wangari Maathai, “Planting the Future,” interview with Krista Tippett (*On Being*) [link](#) (about 50 minutes)

Assignment: Choose one:

- 1) Plant a tree. Share with the class your experience of planting the tree and any connections you see to the reading.

- 2) Write a liturgy for a tree-planting that you could use if you were to plant trees as a faithful practice.

April 4 *The Corruption and Renewal of Practices (cont.)*

Read: GUSHEE, *THE RIGHTEOUS GENTILES OF THE HOLOCAUST*, CH. 6 (PP. 117-148)

April 6 *Teaching Session 1*

Read: TBD

April 11 *Teaching Session 2*

Read: TBD

April 13 *Easter Break (no class)*

April 18 *Teaching Session 3*

Read: Dykstra, Craig. "A Way of Seeing," *Christian Century* (April 8, 2008) (on CAMS)

April 20 *Teaching Session 4*

Read: Wigger, "Learning as We Teach" (on CAMS)

April 25 *Teaching Session 5*

April 27 **Open (TBA)**

May 2 *Teaching Session 6*

May 4 *Review and Wrap Up*

Final Paper: May 11 (May 9 for graduating seniors)

For this paper on "A Spirituality of Practice," you may find it helpful to read Amy Plantinga Pauw, Introduction to Part 3 of *Church in Ordinary Time* (on CAMS).