

Spring Semester 2009 Practical Theology in Congregations

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

FOCUS of the Spring Semester: Participants will explore significant dimensions of congregational life.

Required Books

The books for reflection for the semester are:

Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. Plan on having this book read by the March Festival of Theology where Dr. Bass will lecture.

David Sawyer, *Hope in Conflict: Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*. A number of chapters of this book will be used on March 11.

Continue reflecting theologically in your notebook on readings, class presentations and discussions, field education experiences, etc. Notebooks will be submitted to your small group leader on March 11 and May 13.

Assignment for February 11 (Blackboard)

Kwon, Kim, and Warner, eds. *Korean Americans and their Religion*, chapt. 3 (pp. 55 – 69)

African-American Article, Robert M. Franklin, *Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis*, Chpt. 2, (pp. 29 – 52). If you are turned on, read on to chapter 3.

Reflections, Yale Divinity School, Who is My Neighbor? Facing Immigration, Fall 2008 (pp. 9 – 21)

Multi-Cultural Article: Charles R. Foster, *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations*, Chpt 3, (pp. 21 – 48)

Write **Case Study I** on a congregational situation in which you have dealt with difference and diversity. The difference can be in gender, race, culture, theological perspective, etc. Please use the form you were given when Dianne presented the case. It is posted on Blackboard. Three case studies are required this semester. Each student will present one of their case studies for discussion by their small group. However, every student will write three cases and give each to their small group leader on the day the cases are due. The leaders will return it with comments. Small group leaders will ask three students to present on February 11. Others will sign up on February 11 for presentation either on April 1 or April. 15.

February 11 Diversity around the Table

Worship: Dianne: “Many Lamps, One Light”

Plenary: Presentations on our different traditions: Who is your community? What are the hopes and fears of your self-understanding? What are the gifts and challenges that your community brings to the table?

Korean	Alex Hwang
Hispanic	Maria Bas-Delgado
African-American	Lewis Brogdon
Multi-cultural	Garnett Foster

Small Groups: Case Study I – presentations by three students of their case. Other students will hand their case in to their small group leader.

Assignment for February 25 (Blackboard)

Robert Wuthnow: *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, Chpt. 8 (pp. 230 – 258) and Chpt. 10 (pp. 286 – 314)

R. Stephen Warner, “Coming to America: Immigrants and the Faith They Bring,” *Christian Century*, (February 10, 2004), (pp. 20-23)

February 25 Who is my Neighbor: Public Ministry in an Interfaith World

Worship:

Plenary: Presentation by Jim Lewis on American Christianity since 1965 with a focus on new immigrants and pluralism/interfaith realities.

Video: Who is my Neighbor?

Small group: Video discussion

What do I believe that I could articulate in a dialogue situation at the interfaith table?

In what ways am I able to affirm bridges between my faith and that of another while acknowledging the differences?

Assignment for March 11

Read the Preface and Chapter 3 of David Sawyer’s book:

Hope in Conflict: Discovering Wisdom in Congressional Turmoil.

- Study the structures and definitions on pp 44-45.
- Review the symbols for mapping on p 47, and using the map of Bluff City Church as a model, draw a map of the structures of the congregation you are serving. It would be helpful to discuss your map with your supervisor and other leaders of the congregation.
- Based on the section “Hunches about the Keys to the Mystery of Conflict” (pp. 21–23), be prepared to show how these exercises of looking at

structures help you see the process in your congregation as an interconnected whole, a “living ecosystem” (p. 8), or what is elsewhere called “a living, dynamic, organic unit” (p. 166).

2. Read Dean K. Thompson, “Praise for Hope in Conflict,” *Presbyterian Outlook*, July 16, 2008. (Blackboard)

Wednesday, March 11 The Process of a Congregation: Looking at a congregation as a System

Worship:

Plenary: Presentation by David Sawyer

Turn in notebooks to small group leaders

Assignment for April 1

How has a specific congregation formed you as a person of faith and as one engaged in ministry? (2 – 3 page reflection in notebook)

Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People*, Chpt. 3 (pp. 55 – 74) (Blackboard)

Write **Case Study II** on a teaching or equipping for ministry experience you have led or participated in for laity

Attend the lectures of the Festival of Theology, especially the Diana Butler Bass lectures, March 15 – 18. Plan to have read the Butler Bass book prior to the lectures. Respond in your notebook to Bass’ understanding of congregational ministry.

Wednesday, April 1 Community Formation & Empowering the Laity

Worship:

Plenary: Dianne Reistroffer

How do clergy relate to laity?

Pastoral care – a congregation’s responsibility, not just a pastor’s responsibility

Evangelism – various models and perspectives

Maria Harris model: *Kerygma, diakonia, didache, koinonia, leiturgia*

Small group: Case Study II - presentations by three students of their case. Other students will hand their case in to their small group leader.

Assignment for April 15:

Heifetz: *Leadership without Easy Answers*, “Mobilizing Adaptive Work,”
pp. 69 - 100 (Blackboard)
Carroll, *God’s Potters*, chpt. 5 “How do pastors lead?”
Write **Case Study III** on a situation where change is involved.

April 15 (Supervisors Present) How does Change Happen In a Congregation

Worship:

Plenary: Panel of supervisors on bringing about change in the congregation

Small Group: Case Study III - presentations by three students of their case. Other students will hand their case in to their small group leader.

Assignment for April 29

Carroll, *God’s Potters*, Chpt. 7, “A Manner of Life Worthy of the Gospel: Excellence in Ministry,” and chpt. 8, “Strengthening Pastoral Leadership and Nurturing Excellence”

Guidelines for the Dissolution of the Relationship between Pastor and Congregation in the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky (Blackboard)

April 29 Leadership: Who am I as a Pastor? (circle back to where we began – with added depth) (Dean gone)

Worship:

Plenary: Garnett

Small Group:

Exit Issues: How do I terminate in a healthy way from my field ed position?

Planning for future growth

Large group evaluation

Due on May 13

Notebooks

Reflection Paper on the Semester/Year

In light of the readings, class experience, and your work in a congregation, where do you see your strengths for pastoral leadership in a congregation (or other type ministry). What are your growing edges? What are your hopes and fears as you examine your vocational identity? How have you learned to receive feedback on your ministry from both supervisor and congregation? (5 – 7 pages)