

Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry

Required Courses: (10.5 or 12 credits)

MN105 Pastor as Person

This course explores the ways in which a minister's life history, spiritual growth, and vocation intersect and shape his/her personal and professional identity. Students will reflect on their own psychological and spiritual development and their opportunities for personal growth. They will develop their own particular plans for self-care. (requires campus intensive) 1.5 cr

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MN102 Practice of Discipleship

Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples. In this course, learners explore how Christian practices have shaped them into disciples and learn how to use these practices in the making of 21st century disciples. The course includes the opportunity to practice these skills in a teaching church or the studio setting of a learning lab. 3 cr

MN116 An Introduction to Disability and the Church

Introduces different conceptions, definitions, and expressions of disability in the United States. Gives general

overview of the history of disability in the U.S. and introduces students to innovative practitioners who paved the way for today's disability theology. Covers service systems and advocacy groups that support persons with disabilities. 3 cr

BL551 Disability, Bible and the Pastoral Imagination

What do people with disabilities find when they try to find themselves in our biblical texts? This course addresses some of the issues, hermeneutical and pastoral, that people with disabilities encounter when reading the Bible. The class will read interpretative texts written by persons with a variety of disabilities and consider how their insights can support our pastoral imagination. 3 cr

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BL102 New Testament Foundations

An introduction to the content, history, and theological dynamism of the writings of the New Testament, with a view to appropriating the message of the New Testament for today. 3 cr

TH565 Disability & Theology in Christian Tradition

What is disability? How has disability been understood theologically in the Christian tradition? This course examines theologies of disability with the aim of helping students to comprehend and articulate their own working theology of disability. 3 cr

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TH114 Systematic Theology II

This course explores the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, salvation, church and sacraments. Exploring these expansive topics will include an examination of the work of the Spirit in the believing community, scripture and divine revelation, justification, sanctification, and the final judgment, as well as the theology of Word and Sacraments in the church. Readings will range from early church to contemporary sources. 3 cr

Disability Related Courses: (select four courses, 12 credits) (not available all years)

MN581 Ministry and Margins

Explores the boundary-crossing ministry of Jesus, in particular how he redefined the margin and the center with a Kingdom perspective. The class will consider ways in which ministry to and with those who are often marginalized in our society can amplify the witness of our congregations. People groups that are underserved include, but are not limited to, the elderly or homebound, people suffering from dementia, people in group homes, people struggling with literacy, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, immigrant communities, and people without homes. 3 cr

MN582 Ministry, Aging and Dementia

Aging presents us with both pastoral challenges and important gifts for individuals and the body of Christ. How do we walk well with and learn from those who are in the final stage of their earthly journeys? One increasingly common aspect of aging that acutely

challenges the faith, hope, and love of all of us is dementia. Together we will explore theological and pastoral resources for dealing faithfully with those who suffer from dementia, and those who care for them. 3 cr

MN583 We All Worship: Disability and Worship

Many people with disabilities have spiritual needs that are not being met and gifts that are not being exercised in the context of congregational worship. This course explores worship as the focal point of our shared Christian identity, the power center of our myriad gifts for building up the body of Christ, and the launching pad for our multifaceted witness in the world. 3 cr

MN586 Disability and Community Supports

Inclusive faith communities have the power to touch the lives of people with disabilities and their families in multiple

ways but often have a difficult time talking and working with "secular" agencies, providers and advocacy groups. This course explores the spiritual foundations in current issues in disability services and supports, the potential roles of faith communities to address them, resources from other perspectives that congregations can use, and effective strategies for dialogue and partnership with non-faith based agencies and organizations. 3 cr

MN587 Living into Community: Friendship House (IR only)

A course for those who want to deepen their pastoral sensitivities, leadership skills, and friendship with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. How can Friendship House and Western Theological Seminary develop into a community that is known for our invitations, remembered for our hospitality, and marked by our friendship with people with disabilities? This course is intended for residents of Friendship

House but is open to other interested students with the professor's permission. 3 cr

MN588 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability Travel Seminar

The vision of the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability is to expand the depth and breadth of theological inquiry and resources that address and include the gifts, needs, and contributions of people with disabilities and their families to theological learning and religious practice. Event is four days and has included faculty such as Stanley Hauerwas, Hans Reinders, John Swinton, Amos Yong, Candida Moss, and Erik Carter. 3 cr

MN590 Deaf Theology and Ministry

We will explore biblical narratives through Deaf perspectives to develop a Christian theology of ministry that is with, of, by and for the Deaf. Students will discern how to model a Deaf ministry that is focused not on the difference from being hearing, but upon being Deaf in the image of God. 3 cr

MN591 Strategies for an Inclusive Church

Although we affirm that the Church is incomplete without people with disabilities and their families, congregations often struggle to welcome well and fully include this segment of their community. This course addresses practical strategies and promising pathways for moving beyond proclamations of inclusiveness

and toward practices of invitation, hospitality, and belonging. Students will learn about effective starting points, supports, and strategies for enabling people with disabilities and their families to participate deeply in congregational life and experience belonging within a church community. 3 cr

MN592 Practicing the Presence of People: Jean Vanier and the Ministry of Nurture

This course explores the unique vocation of practicing presence. Christians are called to the practice of God's presence, but we in turn become that very presence to the other—the spouse and the stranger, persons with disabilities and the disenfranchised—whoever the “other” may be. In this course, we will explore the unique ministry of presence through Jean Vanier and L'Arche, communities of people with disabilities around the world. We will come to understand what “presence” means, how to identify obstacles to presence (in ourselves and in communities), and how to nurture a loving attentiveness to the other. 3 cr

MN595 Intellectual Disability and the Church

This course focuses on ministry in the context of what is commonly, but not exclusively, termed ‘intellectual disability’—although it is imperative that we acknowledge the broader, multi-faceted human experience of disability

within which the experience associated with intellectual disability and the secular and theological scholarship that attaches to it to find expression. The course explores both the complexities of theological perceptions and practices in relation to intellectual disability, and the ensuing challenges for persons with intellectual disabilities and those who live in close relationship with them, within the contemporary Church. Theological assumptions about the nature of faith, participation and ministry will be examined in light of the lived experience of intellectual disability and of our understanding of God, His mission and engagement with human beings, leading to potential transformation of practice. 3 cr

MN596 Trauma and Disability

This course provides a biblical, theological, and pastoral introduction to trauma and care of trauma survivors. We will particularly focus on contemporary intersections between the experiences of disability and trauma. Acknowledging the extensive experience of trauma across our society, we will also attend to practices of “trauma stewardship” in this course—navigating secondary traumatization in our vocational callings as well as negotiating any of our own trauma backgrounds as we are formed as pastors, teachers, and caregivers. 3 cr

Total credits for certificate: 22.5 or 24