Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry

Required Courses:

BL103 Old Testament Foundations
An introduction to the content, history, and theological dynamism of the writings of the Old Testament, with a view to appropriating the message of the Old Testament for today. 3 cr

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TH113 Systematic Theology I
This first course of the two course Systematic Theology sequence explores four major Christian doctrines: the doctrines of God, creation, humanity, and Christ. These expansive headings include many other matters of theological importance, including Trinity doctrine, divine attributes, creation, humanity, the image of God, sin, providence, covenant, Israel and the significance of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Readings will range from early church to contemporary sources. 3 cr

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

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

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. 1.5 cr

OR:
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

Disability Related Courses:
(not available all years)

MN581/MN581-DL
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. 1.5 cr

Disability and Theology in the Christian Tradition
What is disability? How has disability been understood 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. 1.5 cr

Disability, Bible and the Pastoral Imagination
What do people with disabilities find when they try to find themselves in 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. 1.5 cr

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. 1.5 cr

We All Worship: Disability and Worship
Course description tba. 1.5 cr

Disability and Community Supports (IR only)
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. 1.5 cr

**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. 1.5 cr

**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. 1.5 cr

**Deaf Theology and Ministry**
Course taught by Kirk Van Gilder, Assistant Professor of Religion, Gallaudet University 1.5 cr

**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. 1.5 cr

**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. 1.5 cr