

Courses

BL300 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.

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BL310 Biblical Hebrew I

An introduction to biblical Hebrew in its cultural context for those who seek to interpret the Bible faithfully and fully. Using multi-sensory and interactive approaches, students will learn the basic vocabulary, grammar, syntax and world view of the Old Testament.

BL311 Hebrew Translation and Interpretation

A continuation of BL110 which more fully engages interpretive and devotional approaches to Old Testament texts. Using multi-sensory and interactive approaches, students will learn the basic vocabulary, grammar, syntax and world view of the Old Testament. Prerequisite: BL310

BL320 New Testament Greek I

An introduction to New Testament Greek vocabulary, grammatical forms, and sentence structure with a view to New Testament Greek as a resource for ministry.

BL321 New Testament Greek II & Interpretation

Continues BL320, with special emphasis upon syntax and translation. Greek Interpretation introduces the tools and principles required for the exegesis of the New Testament in its own linguistic, historical, and canonical context, as a foundation for interpreting the New Testament in a contemporary context. Prerequisite: BL320

BL120 Biblical Interpretation for Ministry

This course explores biblical interpretive methods and online study tools and their application towards ministry settings. No language prerequisite.

BL490 Biblical Capstone

This capstone course explores how our biblical hermeneutic, i.e. the approaches we bring to interpreting scripture, affects the way we engage our Christian life and ministry.

BL505 Ecological Hermeneutics & Ministry

This course explores the field of ecological hermeneutics and the application of ecological interpretive approaches in ministry settings. Biblical scholars interpret the Bible's teachings concerning the relationship between humans and creation in a variety of ways. Different interpretive approaches result in different applications. Students will be challenged to develop their own ecological hermeneutical approach to Scripture and to seek ways to apply their interpretations in their own ministry and life settings.

BL506 Prophetic Narratives

This course will explore the artistry, drama, and theology of Israelite storytelling within the prophetic tradition, with particular emphasis on the ministries of Samuel, Elijah and Elisha in the books of Samuel and Kings. We will consider the cultural, historical, and theological context out of which these dramatic stories arose. We will explore the power of story in shaping belief and practice and consider how it shows (as opposed to tells) us how to embody Kingdom values in the face of corruption, apathy, violence, and lust for power.

BL508 Revelation

This course studies the book of Revelation within its historical, political, and literary contexts. Particular emphasis is placed on the apocalyptic nature of the work within the first century C.E. Additionally, it studies the impact this book has had on contemporary views on eschatology. Students will examine the variety of ways Revelation can be used in the church, including preaching, liturgy, and pastoral care.

BL509 Conflict in the Created Order

This course will explore how the conflict between the ordering word of God and the disordering waters of the deep in the creation story is recapitulated in the narrative, prophetic, and wisdom literature. We will explore why Western Christians have tended to overlook this conflict, and how a deeper understanding of it can revitalize Christian communities.

BL511 Isaiah

Isaiah's prophecies speak just as well about judgment and justice as they do about hope and comfort. That range makes this book extremely relevant for our day. These ancient words speak to us as individuals, congregations, and as human beings on a fragile planet. In this course we will pay careful attention to the original contexts of these words so that we can better understand what they meant to their original audience. But we will also look at how they have been re-contextualized for different times—including the early church as they tried to understand their experience in Jesus Christ.

BL513 Studies in Prophets

This course will explore the role of prophets in Israelite society, their theology, and their impact on Western culture.

BL516 Days of Elijah and Elisha

We will take a deep dive into the Elijah and Elisha cycles in I & II Kings and will consider them in the light of the larger historical context of the Israelite monarchy into which these early prophets enacted, embodied, and articulated the Word of the Lord. The course will explore the artistry, drama, and theology of Israelite storytelling generally but with focused attention on these prophetic narratives. We will consider the cultural, historical, and theological context out of which these dramatic stories arose and will discover their transforming power through performance.

BL521 Ruth and Esther

This course offers a literary and theological exposition of Ruth and Esther—two small books that offer large insights for today. Emphasis is on becoming more careful and responsible readers of Scripture. This course offers examples of how to engage an Old Testament book via in-depth exegesis, using a variety of critical tools.

BL523 Joshua and the Paradox of Grace

Explore the book of Joshua as an entryway into the historical and theological issues surrounding Israel's struggle to claim its God-given inheritance in the Land of Canaan. We'll seek distinctive ways to read this book as the Church and discover ways to live into this biblical story of incorporation and exclusion, hopelessness and salvation, apostasy and grace.

BL525 Art of the Sabbath

In this course we will explore the biblical and theological context of the Sabbath and its historical development throughout the Old and New Testaments as well as in Jewish and Christian practice up until today, with a view toward how Sabbath practice can inform and shape Christian living and ministry. Topics will include Sabbath time, Sabbath practices and spiritual formation, Sabbath-keeping and Christian identity, the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of the Sabbath, Sabbath and Sunday, and more.

BL526 Psalms and Wisdom Literature

An exegetical study of selected psalms in the context of both the Old Testament and the larger canon of Scripture. Attention is given to the role of the psalms in the liturgical, devotional, and theological life of the church. The Wisdom Literature of the Bible explores the forms, vocabulary, and concepts of wisdom in the Bible, emphasizing Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes.

BL529 Gospel According to Matthew

An overview of the theology and narrative shaping of the first gospel, using close

readings of selected texts. Particular attention is paid to Matthew's vision for discipleship, the church, and Christian life and witness.

BL530 Letter to the Romans

Introduction and overview of the letter, together with exegetical study of selected portions in Greek.

BL532 Gospel According to John

An overview of the theological and narrative shaping of the first gospel, using close readings of selected texts. Particular attention is paid to Matthew's vision for discipleship, the church, and Christian life and witness.

BL533 Gospel of Mark

An exegetical exploration of the gospel of Mark which examines the structure of the gospel; the main lines of the story, places and times; the relationship of the characters; the function of the questions; and what the narrator really wants to say through his story. Key passages will be translated.

BL535 Interpreting the Parables

A survey of recent approaches to interpreting the parables of Jesus provides the context for considering hermeneutical issues in preaching and teaching the parables.

BL540 Corinthian Correspondence

An exploration of Paul's First and Second letters to the Corinthians, with particular attention to the interaction between pastoral engagement and theological reflection.

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.

BL552 Scripture and Human Sexuality

This course explores a variety of ways of reading the Biblical text, particularly with a view to interpreting how Scripture speaks to the role and responsibilities of Christians with different sexual attractions in relation to the Church. Contrasting perspectives will be presented in the class (some via guest speakers), and students will be invited to deepen their capacity for constructive dialogue, discerning common ground amidst difference, and integrative thinking on these challenging questions. 1.5 cr

BL612 Greek Reading/Performance

Using memorization and movement as the primary tools of exegesis, students engage with one New Testament

narrative deeply for 14 weeks. This course builds on BL300, BL301 deepening students' engagement with the Bible. Pass/fail, 1.5 cr

BL614 Hebrew Reading/Performance

Using memorization and movement as the primary tools of exegesis, students engage with one Old Testament narrative deeply for 14 weeks. This course builds on BL310 and BL311, deepening students' engagement with the oral nature of the Hebrew Bible. Pass/fail, 1.5 cr

BL616 Christianity and Literature

A study of the biblical and theological motifs in selected literature by both classical and contemporary authors. Emphasis is on the use/study of such works in ministry settings, as well as their relevance for those involved in leadership roles in the church.

BL617 Ordination of Women: Exploring Biblical Authority and Church Order

In-depth biblical exegesis and focused theological and hermeneutical reflection around the ordination of women—in an attempt both to assist students to clarify their understanding of this particular issue and to provide handles and tools for wrestling with the use of Scripture in the ordering of the church's life more generally. A full range of views on the topic will be explored. 1.5 cr

BL618 Advanced Biblical Hebrew

Advanced interactive learning in the language and theology of the Old Testament. Students develop a deeper understanding of grammar, syntax, and interpretation through hearing, speaking, and reading Hebrew, as well as memorizing and enacting biblical stories. This course is held off-site as a 10 ½ day overnight retreat experience. Pre-work includes grammar review, translation and creative exegetical project. Post-work involves a dramatic analysis paper. Prerequisite: BL310 & BL311

DM850 Orientation Seminar

Gives an introduction to the major administrative and academic components of the program, as well as to the specialized track (theme) that identifies the particular focus of the cohort. Course descriptions vary depending on the faculty and cohort topic. The course description will be available in the syllabus. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM851 Orientation Seminar

A continuation of DM850. Students identify a challenge, opportunity, or topic that needs to be addressed in their ministry setting. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM860 Research Seminar

Provides tools and skills to develop and strengthen academic research and writing. Students learn to structure and format an academic professional paper, providing a model for their project proposal and guidance for their practicum. Students will critically reflect on the practices of ministry and learn to interpret those practices within an academic theological framework. Course descriptions vary depending on the faculty and cohort topic. The course description will be available in the syllabus. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM861 Research Seminar

A continuation of DM860. Students determine what needs to be changed or achieved in their ministry to address the challenge, opportunity or topic they have identified. Students design a thesis project proposal. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM870 Thesis Seminar

Equips students with tools required for the completion of their D.Min. thesis. Course descriptions vary depending on the faculty and topic. The course description will be available in the syllabus. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM871 Thesis Seminar

A continuation of DM860. Includes a one-week in-person seminar (some professors may choose to combine the seminars into two consecutive weeks per year). 6 cr

DM940 Thesis Project

The student demonstrates his or her ability to design and conduct a project that is biblically and theologically grounded, supported by the literature, and relevant to the practice of ministry. Students write a five-chapter scholarly paper that introduces, develops, and assesses the effectiveness of the project. The various chapters focus on the need and rationale for the project, the biblical and theological texts/theories that undergird the project, the issue the project addresses, and the results of what they learned following completion of the project. The doctoral project phase of the D.Min. program takes an additional year to complete and concludes with the presentation and defense of the thesis project before the faculty advisor and project readers. 0 cr

MN111 Missional Preaching

Public speaking is more than preaching, and preaching is more than public speaking. This class takes a deeper look at the theory and practice of preaching and communication in missional contexts. We will ask: what does the "fourth wall" mean

and when/how should you break it? In what ways does preaching engage the heart? How do we develop and steward oratory skills for the sake of gospel transformation? How do we avoid abusing our hearers through our rhetorical style? How do we preach the gospel to diverse 21st century audiences? Participants will gain confidence in their ability to speak publicly, be equipped to understand how verbal and nonverbal communication works and be given an opportunity to develop and deliver content.

MN112 Multiplying Churches

Over the centuries, the church has grown as a multiplying movement from house to house, family to family, city to city, nation to nation, and continent to continent. The mission of the Church is the mission of God - an expansive vision where all people receive God's Kingdom, live under God's compassionate care, and receive the full and free life that Jesus offers, while being empowered by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Church is to join God's mission in spreading the word (being witnesses) to God's work. This is a mission of multiplications ... as Jesus says, when a seed is planted in the ground, it produces more seeds, more fruit, more life. This is the Kingdom of God. In this course, we will explore the biblical and theological foundations for multiplications, the work of contextualization, how to multiply disciples and leaders, and examine some of the contemporary issues and methods in multiplication today.

MN301 Practice of Preaching

Presuming a foundation in homiletics, this course will help students to further develop the skills they will need to prepare and deliver sermons that proclaim God's good news, both in the pulpit and out of it.

MN335 Foundations of the Christian Life

An introductory course for all MDiv and MA students, this course invites students to explore 1) God's story through an introduction to the story of Scripture, 2) our stories through an exploration of our callings to be disciples with particular vocations in the world, and 3) cultural stories through acknowledging the cultural contexts in which we live out these callings and exploring specific contemporary cultural dynamics and realities.

MN336 Christian Interior Life

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.

MN350 Worship Foundations

This course is an exploration of the biblical and theological foundations of Christian worship. These foundations are explored with an eye, an ear, and especially a heart for planning and leading worship richly pastorally. Occasions of worship explored include weekly communal worship, sacraments, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, communal daily prayer, weddings, and funerals.

MN351 Preaching Foundations

This course explores and grasps a biblical and Reformed vision of preaching. Includes a sermon preparation workshop and a "lab" in which written and preached sermons are carefully analyzed by faculty and peers. Significant homiletical concerns are presented, discussed, clarified, and applied to the task of preaching.

MN361 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 person with disabilities. *Required for GCDM, elective for other programs.*

MN390 Worship Practicum I: Stewardship of Daily Chapel

Students taking this course will be part of a team that assists other students, staff, faculty, and guests in planning and leading daily worship. Course meets each week for 1.5 hours to plan and reflect on past services. Course 1 of 2. 1.5 cr

MN391 Worship Practicum II: Stewardship of Daily Chapel

Students taking this course will be part of a team that assists other students, staff, faculty, and guests in planning and leading daily worship. Course meets each week for 1.5 hours to plan and reflect on past services. Course 2 of 2. 1.5 cr

MN412 Christian Life & Mission

An introduction to the church's self-understanding as a missional and eschatological community formed by the good news of Jesus Christ and made to be its living witness. The course seeks to cultivate a biblical-theological rationale for the existence of the church and for its mission, an appreciation for the historical, cultural, and contextual rootedness of the church, an understanding of the dynamic interaction between the gospel and human cultures, and a vision for what missional faithfulness requires of any church in its own time and place.

MN415 Practice of Counsel and Care

In this introductory course, students explore giving counsel and offering care as ministers of Word and sacrament. They develop an understanding of the fundamental principles of pastoral care and acquire basic skills required for giving counsel and offering care. Numerous pastoral themes are addressed in lectures, learning labs, and small group interaction. Students will be encouraged to develop their own pastoral presence in offering counsel and care.

MN490 Leading Christian Communities

An introduction to the theory and practice of Christian leadership from a missional and theological perspective.

MN503 Global Leadership Summit

This course is in partnership with the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit (GLS). The purpose of this course is to appreciatively and critically engage The Global Leadership Summit, seeking to explore, question, and develop the skills, practices, and habits for leading Christian communities. Participants work online July and August and attend the GLS at or a location near the student. Attendance is required. The West Michigan group will meet in person the evening before and the evening of the last day of the conference. Those outside West Michigan will meet virtually. Tuition covers entrance to the GLS.

MN506 By Christ, Washed and Well Fed

Word and Sacrament are gifts by which Christ himself gives us life—*his* life. With these gifts, Christ refreshes and sustains us in that life, communally and personally. This course will be a robust theological, pastoral, missional and liturgical exploration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We'll listen for the Spirit to discover how we—each according to our calling and context—might set forth the gifts of God for the people of God faithfully and well.

MN508 Writing/Reading for the Pastoral Life

Ecclesiastes 12 says there is no end to the making of many books, and in the pastoral life there is no end to the writing and saying of many words. Words have enormous power—after all, it was with words that God spoke his creation into being. This course helps students choose and use words with care and thoughtfulness. We will work toward becoming better writers (and readers), and in the process become better preachers, teachers and pastors. 1.5 cr

MN513 Basic Clinical Pastoral Education

A pastoral ministry practicum that integrates the theory and practice of ministry in a clinical setting with special attention given to the person in ministry. A basic practicum accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Must be taken with PR413 and PR414.

MN517 Faithful and Effective Response to Domestic Violence

This course explores the theories, resources, and strategies of pastoral and congregational care to respond faithfully and effectively to the issue of domestic violence based on theological understandings of God and human experience. This course draws upon the insights of psychology, sociology, and theology to guide pastoral and congregational care into a more faithful and effective praxis. The course draws from scriptural, theological, socio-scientific, and experiential resources and invites students to engage those resources in ways that enhance their ability to offer care and to lead communities of care in response to the issue of domestic violence.

MN524 Faith, Forgiveness, and Healing

In this course, students study the theory and methods relevant to integrating health and wellness, forgiveness and reconciliation into the life of the Christian public leader, the congregation, and the larger community. Physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual issues related to forgiveness and healing are explored. Special attention is given to how biblical, theological, and pastoral perspectives on forgiveness and healing inform the task of interpreting and confessing the gospel in situations of conflict and suffering. 1.5 cr

MN526 Ministering to the Toughest People to Love

The church is not immune to trauma, abuse, narcissism, conflict, and addictions of all kinds. Ministering to the so-called "difficult" people can be exhausting, confusing, and lead to burnout or an early exit from ministry. This course will explore stories and symptoms commonly seen across a range of ecclesial traditions. We will explore a theology that views every human, even difficult people, as image-bearers, yet elaborate on troubling relational and systemic dynamics of sin that lead to chaos and confusion in the church. We will discuss what pastors need to do for their own self-care, trauma resilience, and continued resourcing beyond their seminary education.

MN533 Justice, Discipleship, and the Church

This course explores how the church can form disciples with a vision of justice. It engages the biblical and theological roots of Christian commitments to justice and places contemporary interest in social justice within a larger biblical, theological, and historical context. Students will have the opportunity to articulate a biblical theology of justice and explore how the church can shape disciples with a life-long commitment to justice. 1.5 cr

MN534 Preaching as Pastoral Care

This course is designed to provide the opportunity to think deeply, practically, and with complexity about the mysterious relationship between preaching and pastoral care. In this course, we'll lean on the wisdom of preacher/pastor Eugene Peterson. In his book, *Five Smooth Stones of Pastoral Work*, he says, "Pastoral work begins at Pulpit, the Font, the Table; it continues in the hospital room, the family room, the counseling room, the committee room. The pastor who leads people in worship is companion to those same people between acts of worship."

MN538 Transforming Conflict from the Inside Out

This course explores multiple layers of conflict—intrapersonal, interpersonal, and communal—as opportunities for transformation. Students will develop a theology of compassion and learn the skills of compassionate communication as a means of connecting to God, self, and others in the midst of difference, disagreement, and conflict. The course seeks to enhance specific competencies in speaking honestly, listening empathetically, responding to criticism, staying in dialogue, dealing with guilt and grief, and using restorative circles for community-wide crises. Experientially based; includes case studies, role plays, journaling, and small group work.

MN539 Living the Christian Life According to Pop Christian Culture

Through generous and critical engagement with recent best-selling Christian books, this course will explore the different visions of living the Christian life that emerge. We will look at authors "people in the pews" are reading, like Francis Chan, Bob Goff, Sarah Young, Rob Bell, Shane Claiborne, and Ann Voskamp. We will engage with some theological, classical, and non-traditional Christian voices to explore their visions of the Christian life. Students will be invited to practice reading with discernment, to articulate their convictions about living the Christian life and to imagine how to encourage faithful living in their current and future ministry settings.

MN540 The Mindful Life

Recent developments in interpersonal neurobiology reveal more clearly than ever the relational nature of human beings. This conversation intersects with growing interest in Eastern forms of meditation, research on shame and wholeness, new therapeutic models for growth and change, and renewed Christian interest in contemplative practices. This course employs a biblical/theological lens as it explores current developments theoretically and practically for Christians and skeptics alike who long to flourish in a broken world. 1.5 cr

MN549 Preaching in the Dark

We will consider a range of ways of thinking about the relationship between the gospel and our culture(s) and will practice ways of faithful and fruitful preaching from the Word on the cultural issues confronting the church in the early part of the 21st century. Special attention will be paid to the growing number of "Millennials" who self-identify as "NONES"—whatever they believe and however they practice it, the local church is not necessary to them.

MN550 Keeping and Talking the Word

A course designed to provide each person with the time and space to explore and exercise certain primal spiritual disciplines of the people of God, namely Scripture contemplation/memorization/interiorization, spiritual reading, silence and mutual encouragement and pastoral performance. In alternating rhythms of the same, we will listen carefully to the witness of faithful brothers and sisters who have gone before us and to one another, as well, in an attempt to ready ourselves for "a long obedience in the same direction."

MN555 Presbyterian Confessions/Polity

Study of the Confessions and Book of Order of the PC(USA) is intended to give students good knowledge of the confessional tradition, directory of worship and form of government of the PC(USA). This course will help students to prepare for ordination exams. 1.5 cr

MN556 Psychology and Christian Spirituality

There is a strong tradition of psychological wisdom with the contemplative Christian tradition. In fact, the contemplative tradition provides a kind of framework for self-reflection, for healthy intimacy, and for genuine spirituality. Looking at resources from Augustine and Calvin, Evagrius and Theresa, we'll see that contemporary ministry, pastoral care, and mission can all be aided by a rich and deep understanding of Christian spirituality.

MN558 Worship Renewal in a Changing World

The renewal of God's people—in scripture and in the church's history—nearly always begins with a renewal of its worship. This course looks at some of the principles and practices that God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is using to accomplish worship renewal in the body of Christ in our fast-changing world. Reading, discussion, and exercises will be guided by core convictions articulated by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW). We will be especially attentive to this fraught cultural moment colored by the pandemic and an increasing awareness of racism in our country. Key learning will take place at the renowned CICW Symposium for Worship, which will be entirely online with panels, podcasts, livestream worship, webinars, etc

offered throughout the month of January 2021. We will "attend" and process this event together, but because the events go to January 26, students should plan on work for this course extending into the first week of the Spring semester.

MN559 Pastoral Imagination

Pastor. A word we toss around freely. A word that evokes a myriad of images and reactions (from intrigue to boredom to dread). But what does it mean to be a *pastor*? How do we see the pastoral vocation with new eyes? How do we honor this ancient work and guard its essence as we navigate the possibilities and upheavals of a new world? How do we see the places and the people where we are called to love and live with a holy, Spirit-infused imagination?

MN562 Liturgical Shenanigans: Ritual Theory and Christian Formation

Rituals are enacted everyday by humans in all cultures—at theaters and stadiums, libraries and marketplaces, bathrooms and fire pits, as well as places of worship. They are one of the most important ways we both express and shape our understanding of the meaning of life. The course will have three primary learning modes: 1) we will observe ritual activity in culture (our own and others') that either fits or fights the gospel; 2) we will engage readings at the intersection of cultural anthropology and practical theology; and 3) we'll experiment with liturgical shenanigans—attending to the work of the Spirit in and through our holy play in the neighborhood of symbol, performance, embodiment, and transcendence.

MN564 Practice of Evangelism

The term "evangelism" is often perceived as a four-letter word, freighted with negative connotations in our society and even in church. In this course students will overview the biblical foundations of evangelism, consider different theologies and practices of evangelism across time periods, cultures, and Christian traditions. Students will also explore and evaluate theologies of conversion. Finally, students will develop and articulate a context-dependent theology of evangelism and will participate in the practice of evangelism. 1.5 cr

MN569 Christian Education and Dismantling Racism

This course analyzes institutionalized racism and proposes a series of frameworks for engaging and dismantling racism and for supporting multicultural congregational learning. We will explore the dynamics of human responses to differences. We will focus on developing "humble curiosity," deepening our willingness to move toward rather than away from differences, and on managing anxiety in the face of the unknown or unfamiliar. Our work together

has the potential for tremendous impact on individuals, congregations, and communities, enabling us as Christian leaders to empower the disenfranchised and create environments characterized by grace, love, solidarity, peace, and justice. 1.5 cr

MN570 Worldview and Lifeview

We and our congregations are experience-oriented people. Because of this, we often relegate "vision" and "worldview" into the unused part of our leadership tool kits, marginalized by the active stuff of hands-on ministry and the consuming demands of Sundays that show up with amazing and unforgiving regularity. But, as Kouzes and Posner have brilliantly shown through four decades of research, two of the five things that good leaders do are "challenging the process" and "inspiring a shared vision." These prophetic and kingly pastoral leadership tasks require a thoughtful worldview that rises above the experiences to see the meaning. We will read three books (an autobiography, a biblical worldview primer, and a social worldview critique) that will help us build and clarify the contours of our Christian vision and carry on conversations that will hone our congregational leadership skills.

MN573 The Practice of Youth Ministry

Students will be introduced to various models of youth ministry and will become familiar with the theological and social scientific resources that will aid them in evaluating and reforming the practice of congregational and para-church ministry. Students will consider theories of development, articulate a theological foundation for youth ministry, and develop an appreciation for the potential impact of peer-to-peer ministry. They will also explore some of the challenges faced by youth ministers and consider how technology factors into discipling networked youth.

MN574 Foundations of Youth Ministry

This course provides the foundational concepts and best practices to prepare the student for ministry to adolescents in both a church and non-church settings. The course will provide a basic understanding of adolescent development, contemporary culture, and incarnational witness. The course is designed to help the student to think and respond theologically to the needs and expectations of adolescents and provides practical tools enabling the student to design a theologically sound youth ministry program suitable in any context. 1.5 cr

MN575 Theology and Philosophy of Youth Ministry

This course seeks to understand the philosophical theories as well as how Biblical principles have been examined and applied historically to Youth Ministry. Attention will be given to how to implement the discipleship process & cultivate faith development.

MN577 Imagining a New Future: Biographies of Resistance and Hope

Enjoying the biographies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, and Fannie Lou Hamer, we will delve into the lives of ordinary Christians living in extraordinary times, women and men who peered through a bleak reality and imagined God's New Day.

MN580 Healing Ministry of the Church

What is healing? What does it mean to be healthy? What does Jesus' life and ministry model for us about how God defines health and offers healing? How does one's definition of health and healing influence one's understanding of faithful ministry on the whole? Through dialogue around questions like these, students will be invited to: (1) gain an overview of how the Church has historically understood what it means to heal and be healed; (2) critically engage existing understandings of health and healing alongside a close reading of key biblical texts (with particular attention paid to the healing ministry of Jesus); and (3) construct their own practically actionable theology of healing.

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.

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.

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.

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.

MN587 Living into Community: Friendship House

In this course students will spend time critically reflecting upon what it means to live into community as an act of mutual discipleship. Students will engage questions such as: What is discipleship? What is a Christian community? What is the difference between a Christian community and a social group? And, what does it mean to belong to, rather than simply be included in, a Christian community? Intended for residents of Friendship House but is open to other interested students. In Residence only.

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. Attend this unique week-long gathering of theologians, academics, ministry leaders, people with disabilities, and others to explore the intersection of faith and disability. Event has included presenters such as Stanley Hauerwas, Hans Reinders, John Swinton, Amos Yong, and Candida Moss. Erik Carter, Bill Gaventa, and Ben Conner, who have taught in the Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry, are on the faculty of the SITD.

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.

MN591 Strategies for an Inclusive Church

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.

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 con-temporary 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.

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.

MN597 Mental Health and Ministry

This course will explore the interface between theology and mental health with a particular focus on what it is that Christian ministry brings to the conversation that other disciplines do not. This course will focus on the experience of people with mental health challenges and the ways in which their insights can shape and transform our practices.

MN614 Discerning Congregations: Discovering God in the Neighborhood

The congregation is a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the Kingdom of God, even with its imperfections, divisions, and difficulties. Students will read in the areas of ecclesiology and mission and will learn the skills of applied ethnographic fieldwork. Students will then work in pairs to adopt a local congregation and engage in conversation discerning God’s mission in local communities. Students can expect to understand how Christian leaders, pastors, and laity can form

and lead congregations as participants in God’s mission.

MN620 Generous Leadership

Leaders need to align financial resources when forming churches/ministries. This course surveys biblical generosity and philanthropic practices and teaches skills to develop relationships with donors, clarify ministry vision, and join donor resources.

MT210 Orientation Seminar

This seminar orients incoming students to the Th.M. program, to life at Western Theological Seminary, and to the larger academic world of the theological disciplines. Forms a “community of scholars” in which scholarly reflection on intercultural issues is engaged. Creates new configurations of self-understanding for theological reflection in community and introduces the philosophy, format, and thesis requirements of the Th.M. program. Meets annually during the last two weeks in August. 1 cr

MT220 Research Design

Assists the Th.M. students in the preparation of a thesis proposal by introducing the basics of academic research and writing. By the end of the course the student 1) will be able to construct a well-designed research proposal; 2) will be familiar with basic strategies and tools for research and academic writing; and 3) will plan a research strategy for writing a Th.M. research paper or thesis. 1.5 cr

MT235 Seminar in Theological Method

What makes one statement, opinion, or argument better or wiser than another in the fields of theology, biblical studies, ethics or practical theology? How does one best understand how scripture, tradition, reason, experience, context, and future function as authorities or factor into our understandings? We take up these difficult methodological questions and come to provisional answers, drawing from both trusted traditional understandings and contemporary discussions.

MT250 Seminar in Intercultural Hermeneutics

Explores and applies methodologies for the interpretation of Scripture in intercultural contexts and addresses the interaction of gospel and culture in intercultural dialogue. 1.5 cr

MT254 Preliminary Exam

A faculty advisor and a faculty colleague, in consultation with the candidate, assign discipline and research-related bibliographies which reflect major contributors, methodological issues and current questions within a particular discipline and research topic. This directed study culminates in the preliminary exam.

MT260 Thesis

A major research paper, which builds upon and extends in a focused area the

knowledge and critical ability gained in the basic divinity degree and includes the Th.M. coursework. The topic and plan are subject to the approval of the Th.M. Committee. The candidate's Faculty Advisor, in conjunction with a Second Reader, provides guidance for the research. 6 cr

MT261 Research Paper

A major research paper, which builds upon and extends in a focused area the knowledge and critical ability gained in the basic divinity degree and includes the Th.M. coursework. The topic and plan are subject to the approval of the Th.M. Committee. The candidate's Faculty Advisor, in conjunction with a Second Reader, provides guidance for the research.

- PR341 Dual Track Cohort Group 1**
- PR342 Dual Track Cohort Group 2**
- PR343 Dual Track Cohort Group 3**
- PR344 Dual Track Cohort Group 4**
- PR345 Dual Track Cohort Group 5**
- PR346 Dual Track Cohort Group 6**
- PR347 Dual Track Cohort Group 7**
- PR348 Dual Track Cohort Group 8**

Students in the M.Div.-MSW Dual Track program meet bi-weekly during all of the years of the Dual Track program, except years one and two of the M.Div. distance learning format. 0.5 cr each

- PR401 Abbey 1**
- PR402 Abbey 2**
- PR403 Abbey 3**
- PR404 Abbey 4**
- PR405 Abbey 5**
- PR406 Abbey 6**

The Abbey, a 0.5 credit course held for six semesters, invites students into intentional relationships with faculty and fellow students to explore spiritual disciplines, engage in vocational discernment, and integrate their classroom learning with their life of faith. As part of the Abbey, students will also engage in the practice of preaching outside of the classroom and be invited to reflect upon their experience of and sense of call to preaching. 0.5 cr each

- PR411 Practice of Ministry: Internship 1**
 - PR412 Practice of Ministry: Internship 2**
 - PR413 Practice of Ministry: Internship 3**
 - PR414 Practice of Ministry: Internship 4**
- This 4-course sequence in the M.Div. program provides a place for students to practice ministry and engage in theological reflection on their experiences. Through contextual learning, it offers students the opportunity to integrate theory and practice while they engage in vocational discernment and grow in ministerial identity. Students enter a ministry setting under the guidance of a supervisor-mentor and with the support of a mentoring team who will do their best to foster a nurturing, yet challenging learning environment. WTS course work complements and enriches the student formation and learning taking

place in students' ministry sites. Ministry settings for each student are identified through a careful process that involves vocational discernment and reflection in conversation with the associate director of formation for ministry. 1.5 cr each

PR450 Intercultural Immersion

Provides cognitive and experiential knowledge of the global character of the church's witness and mission in North America and around the world, with concern for the problems and opportunities posed by cultural differences, secularism, social fragmentation, religious pluralism, and ecumenism.

TH102 Introduction to Theological Research

A study of research methodology, library use, and basic reference works for theological research.

TH110 Theology for Ministry

Every believer is doing theology. We all reflect on who the Triune God is, how God relates to us and all that God has made, and how we relate to God and others in response. This course offers an overview of key Christian doctrines to deepen our thinking and help us to make richer connections between what we believe and how we go about our callings.

TH126 Capstone Project

The task of the summative examination is to address a contemporary issue deeply and competently in a way that demonstrates integrated reflection on Scripture, theology and Christian practice. *This course is only for the Master of Arts program.*

TH300 Church History I

The first course is a two-part sequence, this course explores the life and witness of the church from the New Testament era to the Protestant Reformation.

TH301 Church History II

The second course in a two-part sequence, this course explores the life and witness of the church from the Protestant Reformation to the present.

TH310 Systematic Theology I

The first course in a two-part sequence, this course explores four major Christian doctrines: the doctrines of God, creation, humanity, and Christ. Exploring these expansive topics will include an examination of the doctrine of the Trinity, the divine attributes, creation, humanity, the image of God, sin, providence, and the significance of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Students will be exposed to both current and historical perspectives on these themes.

TH311 Systematic Theology II

The second course in a two-part sequence, this course explores the doctrines of the Holy Spirit, salvation, church and

sacraments and eschatology. 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.

TH440 Christian Life and Ethics

This course explores how the theological vision of the Christian community expresses itself in specific intentions, practices, virtues, and actions and how Christian communities can grow in moral discernment. Both ethical theory as well as contemporary ethical issues will be examined.

TH451 RCA Standards and Polity

(recommended for RCA candidates)

This course introduces students to the standards and polity of the Reformed Church in America. Students learn about the history and content of the Book of Church Order and the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Belhar Confession, and apply these documents to life in the church today.

G TH490 Credo

In this senior seminar, students will write a paper of approximately 25-35 pages in which they will give an account of their personal theology by articulating their beliefs concerning the central *loci* of Christian teaching, in conversation with their respective denominational traditions, and in language that can be understood by an educated church layperson. Prerequisite: MN412, TH310, TH311.

TH505 Creation Calling

Creation is loved into being and sustained by the Triune God, who also has a glorious eschatological future for it. Human beings are called to keep it in ways that are consonant with God's purposes, but instead, creation calls out in protest at having to bear the consequences of our alienation from God. Through readings, film, guest speakers, and field trips, this course will help us to think with scriptural and theological wisdom about the doctrine of creation and 'creation care' issues and will also help us to discover ways to act well towards the rest of creation in our various ministry settings.

TH518 Eschatology: Christian Hope and the Last Things

Eschatology (the study of the "last things") concerns Christian hope for the future consummation of all of God's promises and purposes and what this means for Christian living today. Drawing on biblical scholars and theologians past and present, as well as art, music, and literature, this course will explore scripturally-founded contours for thinking wisely about the "last

things,” and help us to recognize the impact of our eschatological views on our discipleship now.

TH526 Seminar in Contemporary Theology

In this seminar we will read, discuss, present on and write about an important work or works in contemporary theology. It is an opportunity to go deeper into important theological issues and texts in a small seminar setting. Prerequisite: TH311

TH532 Augustine of Hippo: His Life and Thought

This course explores the life and thought of Augustine. Students will engage this North African Christian living on the margins of the crumbling Roman Empire in his own words, reading both selections from classics like *Confessions* and *On the Trinity* and lesser-known texts stemming more directly from Augustine’s pastoral ministry. We will consider some major streams of thought important for understanding Augustine’s work (Manicheism, Platonism, Donatism, Pelagianism) as well as exploring the key features of his theology.

TH533 From Africa to Anatolia: Mothers and Fathers of the Church

This course introduces students to early Christian theology. Parents and place of origin shape a person. This seminar engages our mothers and fathers in the faith, whose perspectives, developing in diverse contexts from urban hubs such as Carthage and Alexandria to the high plain of Cappadocia, have so profoundly shaped our own.

TH536 What Does It Mean to be Human? Help from the Early Church

In this course, we will explore early Christian conceptions of the human being, covering the topics of the nature of the soul, divisions of the human person, willing and thinking, gender, the nature and role of the passions, and death. We will focus on the fourth and fifth centuries and discuss how different models of ascetic life in this period involve anthropological assumptions.

TH537 Christ in the Early Church

In this course we will explore early Christian understandings of Christ. Our focus will be intensive reading and discussion of primary sources, which will demonstrate the breadth and richness of early Christian treatments of this theme. To complement and inform this close reading, we will also engage significant secondary sources on the topic and observe how various perspectives are situated, both in relation to differing perspectives of the time, and in the larger story of the development of the church’s understandings of Christ’s person and work.

TH544 20th Century Theology: Major Figures and Theological Currents

Close readings of some of the “classic” works of 20th century theology by theologians such as Barth, Bonhoeffer, Cone, Gutiérrez, Lindbeck, Jones, deLubac, von Balthasar, Zizioulas and Hauerwas. We will highlight the place of these works in larger theological and cultural currents that shaped Christian thought in this tumultuous century.

TH546 War, Peace, and Peace-Making

“Peace” is a central goal of God’s plan for all of creation, and yet throughout the history of the Church, there has been much disagreement concerning how best to understand the full witness of scripture regarding war and peace, how to integrate scripture’s vision of peace with justice, and what the implications of this vision are for Christian discipleship and practice. In this course those questions of war, peace, and peacemaking are explored in three movements: (1) Biblical/Theological Foundations (2) Peacemaking within and outside the Church, and (3) Restorative justice.

TH552 Karl Barth: Life and Theology

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Barth’s theology for contemporary Christian thought. Our course will include an overview of Barth’s life and the forces that shaped it and his theology, and close readings of selections from his theological works. The student will gain a good overview of Barth’s theological vision, his major contributions to theology and typical critiques of his thought.

TH557 Church and State in America

This course examines the relationship between church and state in America from the colonial era to the present. Along the way we will treat such topics as marriage, medicine, education, and civil religion.

TH558 A Prophet Denied: Theology, Life and Work of W.E.B. DuBois

Born during Reconstruction and dying on the eve of the March on Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois was a scholar and activist who accurately identified racism as “the problem of the 20th Century”. He became a foundational figure in sociology, criminology, and international relations. This course provides an overview of Du Bois’ life, scholarship, activism, spirituality, and will explore his continued relevance today. 3 cr

TH559 Contemporary Theological Views of Humanity

What does it mean to be a human being? Students will explore this question through a deep engagement with David Kelsey’s *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology*. Kelsey’s groundbreaking work places a Barth-inspired and post-liberal theology in conversation with the best of recent biblical scholarship and

contemporary research about humanity from the social sciences. Wrestling with what it means to be a human in this day and age and tracing out the implications of that for both faith and practice are crucial and exciting theological tasks.

TH561 History of the Black Church

Galatians 3:28 beautifully asserts “there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ.” Even so, early in the history of the United States, African Americans found it necessary to establish the Black Church. This course examines the events and conditions necessitating that development and how the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and persistent racism have impacted the theology and worship of the Black Church into the 21st century.

TH565 Disability and Theology in the 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.

TH585 Christianity in China

Time magazine reporter David Aikman’s book *Jesus in Beijing* points to the importance of this topic in its subtitle: “How Christianity is transforming China and changing the global balance of power.” We will study Chinese Christianity from its earliest appearance to its contemporary expressions, learning about its history, theology, and impact. Along the way we will deal with issues such as enculturation, missions, politics, and gender.

TH590 Reading the Bible with the Dead: Retrieving Pre-modern Biblical Interpretation

This course explores the way in which reading the Bible in the company of interpreters from earlier eras can benefit the life and ministry of the church today. After examining the basic features of pre-modern approaches to scripture, the course explores key and controversial biblical texts (*e.g.*, creation, Hagar, Psalms of cursing, slavery), in conversation with patristic, Reformation-era, and American antebellum sources, toward the end of helping us proclaim all of scripture as God’s word.

TH593 God of the Gospel

Some of the most basic questions about God probe deeply into contemporary issues in the Christian life and ministry: Who is God? What are God’s attributes? How do we come to know God? Is the Triune God made known in Jesus Christ the same as the God known through creation and through the religious practices and cultures of non-Christians? This course explores how the

biblical witness to God's work in Israel and in Jesus Christ relates to these complex questions. Through the works of Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), Kwame Bediako (1945-2008) and Kate Sonderegger (1951-) we will explore contrasting, yet overlapping, responses to these questions raised by the doctrine of God.

TH618 Theological German I

Inductive study of basic German grammar and syntax and of selected texts in contemporary German theology. (on request) 1.5 cr

TH619 Theological German II

A continuation of learning modern theological German for reading and research. (on request) 1.5 cr

TH632 Introduction to the World's Religions

An introduction to the origins, beliefs, and practices of the major religions of the world. Students will be invited to develop a deeper understanding of how the world's other major religions relate to the Christian faith, how various religious texts inform religious practices, and develop tools for

engaging in fruitful interreligious dialogue as Christians called to make disciples. Students will begin with the oldest known monotheistic religion (Zoroastrianism) and trace religious history into post modernity (considering New religious movements such as Baha'i, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("Mormons"). 3 cr