D-907:  God, Congregations, and Contemporary Culture

Christian Theological Seminary
Intensive Seminar: 8/18-22/2008

Professor: Felicity Kelcourse
Office Phone 317-931-2354
Email: fkelcourse@cts.edu

Purpose:
This is the first seminar in the Doctor of Ministry program at Christian Theological Seminary. Its purpose is to help students reflect on their experience in ministry as it comes to focus in their evolving understandings of God in relation to three interrelated contexts of ministry: congregational life, specialized ministries of pastoral care (counseling, chaplaincy, etc.) and contemporary culture. In this seminar students will: (1) situate their experience in ministry within a broad overview of congregational life today; (2) assess their own current strengths and weaknesses in ministry; (3) assess the strengths and weaknesses of the congregations (or other forms of religious association) in which they are involved; (4) understand the impact of contemporary culture on congregational life and theological reflection; and (5) develop a projected path through the D.Min. program based on the above.

Required Reading:
In the two weeks before the course begins you are encouraged to complete as much of the assigned reading as possible. You will also have time to read and complete assignments during and after the seminar week.

Please focus on reading the following books BEFORE the seminar if possible:

Butler, Octavia, *Parable of the sower* (This is a novel – reads well – start here! 295 page turner)
Caputo, John, *On religion*. (Also a good read, just 141 pages)
Wink, Walter, *The powers that be: Theology for a new millennium* (200 pages, accessible)

We will read and discuss the following books during and after the seminar (after via e-mail).

Ammerman, Nancy, *Pillars of faith* (277 pages of text)
   [Chapter 1 and 3 additional chapters to be read during the seminar chosen based on your interests]
Hunsinger, Deborah Van Deusen, *Pray without ceasing: Revitalizing pastoral care*. (221 pp.)
   [Chapters 1-4 to be read during the seminar]
Cooper-White, Pamela, *Many voices: Pastoral psychotherapy in relational and theological perspective*. (248pp.)
   [Introduction through chapter 3 to be read during the seminar]
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Evaluation:

(1) Two in-seminar presentations—10% each – (total 20% of course grade).
(2) Three two page précis’ and one two page paper due 8/19-22 – 5% each (20% total)
(3) Seminar participation – during the seminar – 5%
   - after the seminar by e-mail – 5% (10% total)

(4) Write a 15 page paper at the conclusion of the seminar addressing this question: What are the central practical theological challenges in my ministry? Using the readings from this seminar, the paper should develop a critical perspective on your current context of ministry, the strengths and limitations of your community’s theological resources (including your own) to address that context, and your sense of your role as a current or future leader and/or caregiver/minister/healer in your current or imagined future context(s).

First draft due September 19th. Final draft due October 13th - 50% of course grade.

Course Outline

Monday, August 18
9:00 - Gathering/Breakfast Provided – Opening prayer
9:30 – Jason – IT, then - Orientation to the D.Min. program in general and course requirements
in particular (D.Min project handbook + syllabus) – 60 minutes
10:30 - Journeys in Ministry – Tree of Life exercise
12:00 - Lunch with Brian Grant
1:00 - View power point (Octavia Butler)
3:00 - Break
3:15 – Discussion – of readings to date
4:00 - Evening meditation – FK

Evening: Evening: Write two page, single-spaced paper on The parable of the sower. What does it suggest about the life of faith? What responses do you have to it out of your own experience?

Read: Chapter one from Ammerman; Hunsinger chapter 1, Cooper-White Introduction. Prepare for presentations.

Tuesday, August 19
9:00 - Morning meditation led by ____________________________
9:10 - 11:00- Discuss possible presentation and/or thesis topics
11: 00 - Presentation of issues in Butler novel (based on short papers)
12:00 - Lunch with Suzanne Coyle
1:00: - Orientation to CTS library and research resources.
2:00- 3:00 – Research for presentations
3:00 & 3:30 – Individual meetings for advising (others read and research)
4:00 - Evening meditation led by ____________________________

Evening - Assigned preparation for Wednesday’s work: each student writes a two page single-spaced paper, based on a chapter of your choice from the assigned readings: Chapter of your choice from Ammerman, Chapter 2 of Hunsinger, chapter 1 of Cooper-White or one of the chapters read earlier from Caputo, Wink or Keller.
Wednesday, August 20
9:00 - Morning meditation led by ______________________________________
9:10 - Presentation of précis'/Discussion of chapters as assigned above.
10:00 - Discussion of Caputo
11:00 - Presentation by Mary Frohs, current D.Min student re: thesis development
12:00 - Lunch together with Mary
1:00 - Discussion of readings assigned for Tuesday evening
2:00 & 2:30 – Individual meetings for advising – Others read, research)
3:00 - First presentation by ___________________________________________
4:00 - Evening meditation led by ______________________________________

Evening: Continued preparation for presentations. Read an additional chapter of Ammerman
(your choice); Hunsinger chapter 3, Cooper-White chapter 2.

Thursday, August 21
9:00 - Morning meditation led by ______________________________________
9:10 - Discussion of Keller
10:00 - Bill Novak – local pastor
11:00 - Presentation of précis'/Discussion of chapters as assigned above
12:00 - Lunch (on your own or with D.Min students, counseling faculty)
1:00 – 2nd presentation by ___________________________________________
2:00 – 3rd presentation by ___________________________________________
4:00 - Evening meditation led by ______________________________________
6:00 – Picnic supper

Evening: Read an additional chapter of Ammerman (your choice), Hunsinger chapter 4,
Cooper-White chapter 3. Preparation for final presentation

Friday, August 22
9:00 - Morning meditation led by ______________________________________
9:10 - Discussion of Wink
10:00 - Presentation of précis'/Discussion of chapters as assigned above
11:00 – 4th presentation by ___________________________________________
12:00 - Lunch together
1:30 - The CTS D.Min. and You – Looking ahead: Planning paper topics, thesis proposals,
successful completion of the program, etc.
4:00 - Parting meditation led by ______________________________________

NB: Please plan to arrive Sunday night if possible so that we can gather first thing Monday
morning. If you need overnight accommodation during the seminar, please contact Reecie White
(317) 931-2359 or cwhite1@cts.edu no later than August 11th.

To prepare: Read all of Butler (see Monday evening assignment) and as much of Caputo,
Keller and Wink as possible. If you think you will have difficult keeping up with the additional
readings during the week, consider preparing one or two of the précis’, or the two page paper on
Butler, in advance. Each précis should be no more than two single spaced pages, summarize the
main points of the chapter and conclude with your own reflections on the reading. Include your
name, date, and the complete citation for the chapter.
To begin preparing for your presentation, do the following: 1) think about a likely thesis topic, something you care about deeply, want to know more about, etc. If the topic interests you it will be interesting to others!, 2) plan a 50 minute presentation using handouts, power-point and/or a structured discussion format. Plan your presentation so that it is informative and include time for questions and discussion.

After the seminar: You should leave the seminar with a topic in mind for your paper. Focus on the readings you plan to use. Additional references may be used but at least 4 of the books assigned for the course must be referenced. Note that you are required to submit an initial draft which you will then revise for final submission.

I look forward to our gathering on August 18th! In the mean time feel free to contact myself or Caprecia (Reecie) White.

Enjoy your course preparation!

Felicity Kelcourse