Readiness for Ministry Exit Seminar (MC850)
Fall 2015 and Directed Study Syllabus

October 2 – 3
October 30 - 31
December 4 -5

Dr. Steven Klipowicz, Professor

I. Course Description

This course focuses on integrating key aspects of seminary education with Christian ministry to prepare graduating students for vocational ministry. The course goals are to exegete the concept of pastoral ministry and integrate these findings into a personal statement of ministerial practice displayed in three core projects. The course will provide an opportunity for critical reflection for the student’s vocational preparation. A synthetic approach will be used to develop interdisciplinary perspectives on the nature of the ministerial identity, calling, life, and practice. Issues related to ministerial ethics, congregational leadership, and personal formation will be examined. Multiple perspectives from biblical, theological, historical, ministerial studies and the social sciences will be introduced through guest lecturers, readings, and case studies. Student reports, research, and discussions will also provide significant input into the seminar context. As outcomes for the course, students will develop for themselves a clear doctrinal statement, a cogent philosophy of ministry, and a comprehensive model of pastoral care and practice presented in the Readiness for Ministry presentation.

II. Course Relationship to Curriculum

MC850 is a core course in the Master of Divinity degree under the current catalogue. It serves as a capstone course for the Practical Theology sequence. This course acts in conjunction with the Readiness for Ministry presentation as the final component of the Mentored Ministry program (MM 640).

III. Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Identify and exegete key biblical passages regarding their pastoral ministry and relate the findings to a personal statement of pastoral ministry.
2. Describe various historical and theological models of the pastorate and show
how they relate to contemporary ministry.
3. Articulate key elements of their ecclesiology as a context for understanding pastoral ministry.
4. Discuss issues pertaining to ministerial authority and ethics within the congregation setting.
5. Explain various models of leadership and how they relate to one’s personal ministry vision.
6. Determine how an individual’s personality traits and individual characteristics influence ministry practice and style.
7. Develop a comprehensive personal doctrinal statement.
8. Compose a personal philosophy of pastoral ministry.
9. Create a Rule of Life reflecting personal calling, mission, and values.

IV. Course Requirements

• Attend all weekend class sessions.
• Complete required reading and study assignments.
• Produce a comprehensive, annotated doctrinal statement.
• Create a philosophy statement delineating key values for the practice of ministry.
• Prepare and present a three-hour Readiness for Ministry presentation.

All written course work will be due one week before Students’ Readiness for Ministry Presentations.

V. Course Textbooks and Required Reading

The following books are required reading for the class. Due dates for the readings are posted in the assignments. Books are available through the bookstore, online sources or on the reserve library shelf:


In addition, 500 pages of additional reading will be required from the listed bibliography at the end of the syllabus. **Students will be required to submit a one page summary statement for each book read from the extra reading sources.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignments</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment (hrs.)</th>
<th>Student’s Actual Time on Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Readings</td>
<td>40 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>33 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrine Paper</td>
<td>25 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Ministry</td>
<td>20 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness for Ministry</td>
<td>25 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report, as above, with their actual hours spent on each task listed in the last column of the table.

VI. Class Projects and Activities

Personality Testing

**All students must take the WorkPlace Big Five Profile and have it scored for the class. This powerful personality test will be administered online. Dr. Klipowicz will provide directions on the first class weekend. The testing will cost $35 per student. Directed study students are exempt from testing.**

1. Personal Doctrinal Statement

The student will develop a doctrinal statement that reflects the current state of the student’s theological understanding of his or her faith. The paper will be at least 18 pages in length and cover the following major areas of belief:

- Prolegomena describing epistemological basis for theology
- Doctrine of Scripture
- Doctrine of God (Theology)
- The Person of Christ (Christology)
- Doctrine of Humanity (Anthropology)
- Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)
In addition to the above main topics, the doctrinal statement should address the student’s views regarding the following key theological issues:

- The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible
- The Nature of the Trinity
- Openness of God or Free-will Theism
- The Nature of the Fall and Its Effect upon Humanity
- Election
- The Nature and the Extent of the Atonement
- The Uniqueness of Christ as the Way of Salvation
- The Work of the Holy Spirit
- Eschatological Distinctions

The doctrinal statement should be succinct and confessional in content. The student should provide a concise commentary to the doctrinal statement that discusses relevant sources, pertinent issues, relation to creeds, key biblical support, and a discussion of personal changes and theological development over the course of the student’s seminary experience (these should be italicized). The commentary should include discussion of areas of tension or personal struggle whenever applicable. This commentary should accompany the doctrinal statement in the form of footnotes or endnotes.

This doctrinal statement should prove to be a valuable exercise for the student to compile a summative theological framework for ordination and ministry. The student will be graded on quality of synthesis, clarity of expression, strength of commentary support and the ability to demonstrate mature theological reflection underlying the statement of faith. The student is expected to use proper grammar, punctuation, and style.

2. Philosophy of Ministry Paper

The student will complete a thorough description of his or her current philosophy of ministry. The paper should be at least 15 pages in length. The statement should present the core values and beliefs that shape current ministerial practice. It should clearly express what you do in ministry and why you do it. When completed, it will provide an important component to the Readiness for Ministry Presentation. The paper should include a discussion of the following:

- Definition of pastoral ministry (or definition of the particular ministry student is pursuing)
• The role of women in ministry
• Exposition of current ecclesiology and its impact on personal ministry
• Core values and beliefs undergirding ministerial practice
• Ethical guidelines for ministry in areas of divorce-remarriage, personal ministry ethics, etc.
• Views of church governance and polity
• Key biblical passages shaping one’s view of ministry
• Pastoral authority and leadership
• Personal Calling
• Impact of the student’s personality, style and preferences in ministry
• One page Rule of Life designed to shape future ministry

3. Readiness for Ministry Presentation

This three-hour long event will provide students with an opportunity to present a synthesis of personal and vocational development through their seminary experience to a convened group of interested and engaged reviewers from their local church or ministry. Complete guidelines to the presentation are listed on pages 24-28 of the Mentored Ministry Manual (2013 edition). The student is responsible to schedule a time for the Readiness for Ministry presentation. Students should take the initiative to schedule this event as soon as possible to secure a time that will be available for faculty to attend. An outline of the event is due one week before the presentation.

VII. Class Schedule and Assignments:

Class Session One: October 2 -3

Calling and Ministerial Identity

Readings and Assignments:

• The Reformed Pastor
• The Call (Complete Book)
• Preventing Ministry Failure (1-99)
• Are you Ready Exercise (See Appendix at end of Syllabus)

Class Introduction

• The Changing Nature of the Call
• Defining Ministry
• Role Identity
• Biblical Perspectives on Ministry
• Historical Perspectives on Ministry
• Transitions in Calling

Class Session Two: October 30 -31

Character and Ministry

Readings and Assignments:

• Ministerial Ethics, pages 1-117
• The Pastor (complete book)
• Rule of Life (complete book)

The Role of Ministry

• Personality and Ministry
• Character and Leadership
• Writing Theology and Ministerial Philosophy
• Writing a Rule of Life
• Maintaining Spiritual Vitality

Class Session Three: December 4 -5

Finishing Well

Readings and Assignments:

• Ministerial Ethics, pages 118-214
• The 21st Century Pastor (entire book)
• Preventing Ministerial Failure (Rest of Book)

Well-Being of the Minister

• Ministerial Ethics and Boundaries
• Sexual Ethics
• Personal Intimacy in Ministry
• Financial Planning and Accountability
• The Readiness for Ministry Presentation

VIII. Grading

Class grades will be given for each of the three class projects. The final grade of the course will be compiled at the conclusion of the Readiness for Ministry Presentation. Grading criteria for each assignment are included in the project descriptions.
Breakdown of class grade is as follows:

- Class Reading and Assignments: 10%
- Doctrinal Statement: 30%
- Philosophy of Ministry Statement: 30%
- Readiness for Ministry Presentation: 30%

IX. Attendance Policy:

Students must attend all class sessions. If you will miss 3 hours or less of class, please discuss this with the instructor ahead of time to determine make-up procedures. Missing a complete class session will result in an automatic one grade reduction.

X. Suggested Readings

The following are suggested supplementary readings for this course. Students may elect other books to read with the permission of the course professor.


Hands, D. R., & Fehr, W. L. *Spiritual wholeness for clergy: A new psychology of intimacy with God, self, and others.* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1993).


Laniak, Timothy, *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Reflections on Biblical Leadership.* (Self-Published, 2007).


Appendix One

Readiness Assessment Exercise
MC850

Formal theological education should present a “season” or opportunity for students to pursue development as a whole person-in-ministry. In addition to academic preparation, students should intentionally address spiritual and character formation issues, vocational development, and connection with a faith community over their course in seminary. In a sense, students need to see themselves as responsibly working with God and the faith community to “author” this new chapter in their lives by integrating seminary education into a “meta-curriculum” of holistic preparation for leadership in God’s Kingdom.

This exercise provides you the opportunity to reflect on your current ministry readiness from a variety of perspectives. Please use the following prompts to complete a 2-3 page, written assessment of your current condition in the various development areas indicated below:

1. Spiritual formation
2. Relational health
3. Integrity of character
4. Personal health and well-being
5. Vocational experience and competency
6. Ecclesial connections

Provocative Prompts

The following thoughts and questions are meant to be suggestive of possible ways to assess and your life in various areas and aid you in your development plan. Please do not think you are obligated to respond to all of these or that you are limited to these prompts.

Spiritual Formation

What is the nature and quality of your relationship to God? How consistent and vital are your times of intimacy with the Lord? What seems to be lacking and why? How varied and comprehensive are your approaches of spiritual formation? What models of spiritual development and formation guide your devotional practices? How can accountability relationships or spiritual friendships foster your involvement in personal and corporate spiritual disciplines? What are you doing to enhance the spiritual growth of others? What can you do to insure that seminary life does not erode your walk with God? Who do you pray with on a regular basis? Whom should you be praying with? How does your faith help you to trust God in difficult situations, to do things out of your comfort zone?

Relational Health

Do you have close friends? Are you satisfied with the quality of your relationships? Do you have anyone that you can confide with about your deepest concerns and struggles? Why not? Are you involved in Christian community (small group fellowship) and to what degree? What is the quality of your relationship to your family and wife (if married)? What can you do to enhance intimacy in your relationship with your spouse or children? Do you have healthy boundaries in your relationships? Do you have problematic relationships? What can you do to reconcile these? Do you have Christian colleagues with whom you can be vulnerable? What will you do to establish and maintain current relationships?

Integrity of Character

In what areas of your life do you feel a lack of integrity or personal honesty? Do you have a history of problem with a life controlling behavior such as addiction to sex, substances, money, etc.? What behaviors or attitudes do you feel shame? Do you owe people money? Do you cheat on your finances and taxes? Do you struggle with issues of sexuality or gender preference that might compromise your vocation? Are you who you publicly present yourself to be? What behaviors or attitudes do you feel you have that are not consistent with your sense of calling and vocation? What can you do to change? What kind of support or assistance will you need to improve?

Personal Health and Well-being
What concerns or issues has testing revealed about your personality and temperament? Do you have problems with anxiety, depression, impulsivity, or anger? Do you see a counselor or therapist? Are you on medication? Do you feel well most of the time? What problems do you have with your energy levels? Do you sleep well? Do you sleep too much? Not enough? Are you significantly overweight? Do you get enough exercise? Do you have any health problems that may interfere with your ability to do ministry? Do you have a health condition that could be remedied by medical intervention but have not done anything about it? If you could have an elective medical or dental procedure, what would it be? What do you do recreationally? Do you take enough days off? Why not?

Vocational Experiences and Competency

In what areas of ministry do you lack experience? What are you going to do to gain more ministry experience? Do you have a ministry mentor? If so, is this relationship personally helpful and satisfying? If not, what can you do to improve it? What other developmental relationships can you foster to facilitate your growth in ministry? What are your current ministry avenues? What new types of ministry would you like to try? What do you to refresh or improve your performance of ministry or leadership? What cross-cultural ministry opportunities have you had? What types of cross-cultural ministry would you like to do? What keeps you from them?

Ecclesial Connections

What is your current faith community? Are you satisfied with this relationship? If not, why not? Are you thinking about changing denominational affiliation? Why? What are you doing to solidify your professional status with your faith group (license, ordination)? Do you have a mentor or relationship with someone who can develop denominational connections for you? Where will you be serving God in five years? Ten years? How satisfied is your faith group with you and your current ministry? What doctrinal concerns or issues are you currently struggling with? How would these influence your identification with your current faith group?

Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other
corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy**
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the end date for the semester as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required in this case. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the stated date. Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

**Returned Work**
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self-addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.
Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.