Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
130 Essex St., South Hamilton, MA 01982

Syllabus  
MC 701 Pastoral Ministry  
Fall Semester 2011  
Mondays 1:15 – 4:30 pm

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KEEP THE SYLLABUS HANDY FOR REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE.

Course Objectives: The purpose of the course is to provide general information about pastoral ministry in order to help students (1) understand the dynamics of pastoral ministry, (2) be acquainted with specific tasks of pastoral ministry, and (3) be better prepared to engage in the practice of ministry. Emphasis is on practical matters. Although the course is designed for students who will be solo pastors, students intending to enter staff positions in churches or in other ministries will find the material helpful.

Schedule: In keeping with the new requirements of the Seminary (in light of new regulations of the Department of Education) the class will meet on 12 Mondays from 1:15 – 4:30 pm beginning September 12 and ending December 12 (required class during exam week but no exam), except for the 2 Mondays of Reading Weeks October 10 and November 7. There will be a 15 minute break at the mid-point of each class, but since the class is required to meet for a full 3 hour block each week, note that the class time is 1:15 – 4:30 which allows for a 15 minute break.

Topics to be covered include: (NB: Not necessarily in the order listed)
- Identity, Roles and Expectations of the Pastor
- Baptism, Dedication of Children, New Members
- Communion
- Weddings
- Funerals and Grief Work
- Public (Civil/Community) Services
- Visitation
- Finances: Church and Personal
- Church Discipline
- Professional Ethics
- Sexual Ethics and Behavior
- Staff Relationships
- Marriage and Family
- Conflict Management
- Stress Management
- Ordination
- Worship
- Leadership Development
- Interviewing and Candidating
- Terminating
Required Textbooks:

1. Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (abridged edition; ISBN: 978-146095-1699); OR read from the Church Fathers (e.g. Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose, Chrysostom), or pre-Reformation or Reformation leaders (e.g. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Owen, Bunyan), (at least 75 pp.)


Additional recommended (not required) readings will be identified during various class lectures.

Requirements:

1. **Attend class sessions and participate in discussions.** Submit an attendance report on the form provided noting reasons for any absences. NB: Students who miss more than 3 classes will fail the course even if all reading and written work is completed satisfactorily.

2. **Read 1,200 pages from the required books and supplemental reading.** The professor’s approval is not required for your selection of supplemental reading, but all reading must relate in some way to pastoral ministry. Journal articles may be counted as 2 to 4 pages. Audiotapes or CDs may be counted as 30 pages of reading per hour of tape/CD with an upper limit of 4 hours (120 pages). Reading done in connection with writing the papers counts in the total reading. Minimum reading from each of the required textbooks must be done or a penalty will be assessed. Also, reading less than 1,200 pages will result in a penalty. If you have read from the required books in another course, please note this on the reading report; you do not need to read the books again, but if you do, you may count the pages. In any case, 1,200 pages of reading for this course must be read for full credit.

3. **Submit a Reflection Paper on your reading,** with at least three or four paragraphs of comments on each article or book read. Do not report on the content of the item, but rather reflect on how you interacted with the material in terms of questions raised, insights gained, areas to be explored further, etc. Give the bibliographic reference to the work at the beginning of each work cited, then make your comments, followed by noting the total pages read from each work. On the last page of the report give the total pages of all materials read for the course. The
report should be 6 to 8 pages in length, and should reflect quality more than quantity. Grading is based on how deeply and personally you interact with the material.

4. **Paper on 4 Pastoral Events**: Write an Order of Service (1 to 2 pp. for each service) for each of the following services: (1) Baptism, (2) Lord’s Supper/Eucharist, (3) Wedding, and (4) Funeral (including interment). On each paper, include details such as call to worship (reference to Scripture selection only [not the text written out] or brief litany), hymns and songs (titles only), responsive reading (refer to the Scripture selection only [not the text written out]), gist of pastoral prayer, benediction, etc. For the sermon part of the service, state the textual reference and provide an outline or summary of the sermon. **NB**: The Order of Service must be the complete worship service, not just the particular event.

- Be concise. Complete sentences are not necessary, but cover the service from beginning to ending.
- Students who follow a Book of Order for these events (e.g. *Book of Common Prayer*, or *PCUSA Book of Order*) may note the section to be used in the paper, but should (1) fill in any details of how they might personalize the service as well as (2) give more details on the sermon outline/summary.
- Students not intending to enter pastoral ministry may substitute a similar project for 1 or more of the 4 events—e.g., leading a retreat, conducting a teacher-training session, planning a missions conference, etc. Permission for the substitution must be granted by the professor.

5. **Case Study Assignment and Report**: Select 1 case study of interest to you from *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church* and spend an hour with 1 to 3 other people in the class discussing the issues portrayed in the case. Spouses are welcome to participate in the discussion if desired. Write a 2-page reflection paper on the case, beginning with brief comments on the composition of the group as well as when and where the discussion took place. Primary focus should be on critical issues raised in your discussion; use the questions at the end of each case as a guide for the discussion. Be sure to comment on how you would handle the situation as a pastoral leader if you were involved in the case as portrayed. Quality and depth of interaction will determine the grade.

**Requirements for ALL written work:**

- Do not put papers in any kind of binding or use a title page.
- Put your name, box number, and preferred email address at the top of page one & clip or staple the pages.
- Single-space within a paragraph, and double-space between paragraphs.
- Footnotes are not needed.
- Use 12-point type; do not use a *sans serif* font.
- Submit each paper in a **9 x 12 envelope** with your name and box number on the outside, which will be used to return the paper to you. If the paper is to be returned to you by mail off campus, please include the correct postage on the envelope.
- No written work may be submitted as email attachments.

**Due Dates for Written Work:**

- **M, Oct. 17** Case Study Report
- **M, Nov. 14** 4 Events Paper
- **F, Dec. 20 (F, Dec. 9 for Jan. grads)**: (1) attendance report; (2) annotated reading report

**NB**: Written work may be submitted on the due date (or earlier) in class, or placed in my campus box 261 or on my desk in my cubicle in AC338.
NB: No work may be submitted after the dates of Dec. 9 for Jan. grads or Dec. 20, 2011 for continuing students without written approval from the Registration Office. No exceptions can be made to this Seminary policy. This is a school policy, not the professor’s policy.

**Grading:**

- 10% - attendance and participation in class discussion
- 20% - paper on case study
- 30% - paper on 4 pastoral events
- 40% - reading total and reflections on the reading
- 100% - The maximum total of points is 100.

NB: A failing grade will result if a student misses more than 3 class sessions but completes all other work satisfactorily since class discussion is an important dynamic in the course.

**Point Scale:**

98 - 100 A+; 94 - 97 A; 91 - 93 A-; 88 - 90 B+; 84 - 87 B; 81 - 83 B-; 78 - 80 C+; 74 - 77 C; 71 - 73 C-; 68 - 70 D+; 64 - 67 D; 61 - 63 D-; below 60 F.

In keeping with the grade scale defined in *The Student Handbook*, a grade of A is given for high excellence, B for exceeding minimal achievement, C for attaining a basic understanding of materials, D for a low passing mark indicating below basic mastery of material, and F for failing the course.

NB: Plagiarism is usually not an issue in this class, but if you are interested in seeing a document defining plagiarism and giving examples, the faculty of the seminary recommend students access the information on the Indiana University website: [http://indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html](http://indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html)

**Family Members Attending:** Spouses or special friends are welcome to attend the class as non-participants as their schedule permits. A courtesy request of the professor is expected in such cases. It is not appropriate for children of students to accompany their parent to the class, however, because of the nature of some of the topics to be discussed.

**Recording of Class Sessions:** Students may record a given class for use by a fellow student who may be absent at that class or for their own personal use only. No duplication of the recording or distribution to others is to be done.

**Appointments:** Normally I will be available for appointments on Wednesdays to discuss issues arising from classroom discussions or topics pertaining to pastoral ministry. Either email me or speak to me after class to set up an appointment.