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

Syllabus
MC 701 Pastoral Ministry

Fall Semester 2008 Weekend Course
Sept. 12-13; Sept. 26-27; Oct. 24-25
Fridays 6-9 PM; Saturdays 9-12, 1:30 – 4:30

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Please 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 will find the material helpful.

Schedule: The class will meet for 3 weekends as noted above. Brief refreshment breaks will be scheduled during each 3-hour block. The course encompasses 27 hours of classroom time, plus 2 hours of small group discussion on case studies (cf. below).

Class Sessions and Topics: Topics listed will be covered (some more thoroughly than others) either in the lecture/discussion class sessions or in the printed materials in the packet.

- Introduction to the course
- Identity, Roles and Expectations of the Pastor
- Baptism, Dedication of Children, New Members
- Weddings
- Funerals and Grief Work
- Public (Civil/Community) Services
- Communion
- Visitation
- Finances: Church and Personal
- Church Discipline
- Professional Ethics
- Sexual Ethics and Behavior
- Marriage and Family
- Conflict Management
- Stress Management
- Ordination
• Worship
• Music
• Interviewing and Candidating
• Terminating
• Leadership Development
• Programming
• Time Management; Record Keeping; Business Meetings; Parliamentary Procedures

Required Textbooks:

1. **Packet of materials** (all)
2. **Baxter, The Reformed Pastor** (abridged edition); **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.)
4. **Hansen, The Art of Pastoring**, Inter-Varsity (at least 75 pp.)
5. **Purves, The Crucifixion of Ministry**, Inter-Varsity (at least 75 pp.)
6. **Stott, The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor**, Inter-Varsity (at least 75 pp.)
7. **Swetland, Facing Messy Stuff in the Church: Case Studies for Pastors and Congregations**, Kregel (at least 2 cases)
8. **Wilson** and **Hoffmann, Preventing Ministry Failure**, Inter-Varsity (at least 100 pp.)

Additional recommended (not required) readings will be identified during various class lectures. Bibliographies addressing specific topics are included in the reading packet.

Requirements:

1. **Attend class sessions and participate in discussions.** Submit an attendance report noting reasons for any absences. May be typed or hand-written. Submit with final reading report by Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008, 4 PM (Friday, Dec. 5 for January grads). **NB:** Because of the intense nature of a weekend course, students who miss more than one 3-hour block will fail the course even if all reading and written work is completed satisfactorily.

2. **Read 1,500 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 5 hours (150 pages). Reading done in connection with writing the papers counts in the total reading as does the reading packet. Minimum reading from each of the required textbooks must be done or a penalty will be assessed. 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, 1,500 pages of reading for this course must be read for full credit.
3. **Submit an annotated reading report**, with at least two or three 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. No reflection needs to be done regarding the reading packet although reading the whole packet must be done for full credit. No notes need to be done on the case studies either since a separate report is required for the case study assignment. Due Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008, 4 PM (Friday, Dec. 5 for January grads).

4. **Write a brief 2-page paper on your sense of call to ministry**. Describe what you see as God’s leading in your life for ministry vocation, including circumstances, affirmation from others, whether the call is firm or loose at this point, options, fears or concerns, etc. If married, comment on the support you receive from your spouse. This paper will be treated with utmost confidence by the professor and is intended to help the student process his/her call (and can be a prelude to the usual paper required in the ordination process for most denominations). Due at the beginning of the 2nd weekend class Friday, Sept. 26.

5. **Case Study Assignment and Report**: Select 2 case studies of interest to you from *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church* and spend at least one hour on each case with 1 to 3 other people in the class discussing the issues portrayed in the case. If you or other students in your group are married, spouses are welcome to participate in the discussion if desired. Write a 2-page reflection paper on each case (4 pages total), beginning with brief comments on the composition of the group and the schedule followed. 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. Due by 4 PM Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008 (Friday, Dec. 5 for January grads).

**Requirements for all Written Work:**
- Do not put papers in any kind of binding or use a title page.
- Put your name and box number at the top of page one & clip or staple the pages.
- Use single-space within a paragraph, and double-space between paragraphs.
- Foot notes are not needed.
- Use 12-point type.
- 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 mailed to you off campus, please include the correct postage on the envelope.
- No written work may be submitted as email attachments.

**Summary of Requirements and Due Dates:**
1. Attendance report (typed or hand written): Dec. 16, 2008, 4 PM (Dec. 5 for January grads)
2. Reading 1,500 pp., including minimum number of pages from required books
3. Annotated bibliography, 6-8 pp.: Dec. 16, 2008, 4 PM (Dec. 5 for January grads)
4. Paper on call to ministry, 2 pp.: Friday, Sept. 26 at beginning of class. Grade reduction will apply if paper is late.
5. Case study report, 4 pp. (2 pp. on each case study): Dec. 16, 4 PM (Dec. 5 for January grads)

NB: No work may be submitted after the dates of Dec. 5 for January grads or Dec. 16 for continuing students without written approval from the Registration Office. No exceptions can be made to this Seminary policy.

**Grading:**
- 10% - attendance and participation in class discussion
- 10% - paper on call to ministry
- 30% - paper on case studies
- 50% - reading total and annotated bibliography
- 100% - The maximum total of points is 100.

NB: A failing grade will result if a student misses more than one 3-hour block 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 if 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.