I. Course Description
This course focuses on bridging the world of the seminary with the world of the local congregation. **The goal of the course is to unpack 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 vocational preparation of the student. An interdisciplinary approach on the nature of the ministerial identity, calling, life, and practice will flow together in the course. Issues related to ministerial ethics, congregational leadership, and personal formation will also 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.

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 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 ecclesiology as a context for understanding pastoral ministry.
4. Discuss issues pertaining to ministerial authority and ethics and the congregation.
5. Examine various models of leadership and how they relate to one’s personal ministry vision.
6. Determine how personal characteristics and traits influence personal ministry style.
7. Develop a comprehensive personal doctrinal statement.
8. Compose a philosophy of pastoral ministry.

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. 
  (Attend at least 1 or 2 presentations for other students in the class)

All written course work will be due one week before the student’s Readiness for Ministry Presentation.

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 or on the reserve library shelf:


Further Resources – Helpful for purchase for your libraries, but not required


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.**
VI. Class Projects and Activities

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 15 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)
• The Nature of Redemption (Soteriology)
• The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)
• The Church and its Mission (Ecclesiology and Missiology)
• The Final Things (Eschatology)

The doctrinal statement should include a presentation of the student’s views regarding the following key theological issues:
• The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible
• The Trinity
• Openness of God or Free-will Theism
• The Nature of the Fall and Effect upon Humanity
• Election
• The Nature and the Extent of the Atonement
• The Uniqueness of Christ
• The Work of the Holy Spirit
• Eschatological Distinctions

The doctrinal statement should seek to be succinct and confessional in content. The student should provide a concise commentary to the doctrinal statement that discusses relevant sources, creeds, key biblical support, and a discussion of personal changes and theological development over the course of the student’s seminary experience. The commentary should include discussion of areas of tension or personal struggle. This commentary should accompany the doctrinal statement in the form of footnotes or endnotes. This 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, 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
• The role of women in ministry
• Exposition of current ecclesiology and its impact on personal ministry
• Core values and beliefs under girding 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
• Calling
• Impact of personality, style and preferences

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. 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:
September 6-7

Calling and Ministerial Identity and Practice
Readings and Assignments:
Kim, 7 Lessons
Tripp, Dangerous Calling
Swetland, Hidden World
(Familiarity with Worship Resources)

Class Introduction
What is a Call to Ministry?
Defining Ministry
Biblical Perspectives on Ministry
Historical Perspectives on Ministry
Role Identity
Transitions in Calling

Pastoral Tasks: Worship Leadership
Pastoral Tasks: Pastoral Care
Class Session Two:  
October 5-6

**Character and Ministry**
Readings and Assignments:
Osterhaus, *Thriving Through Ministry Conflict*
Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring*
Are you Ready Exercise (See Appendix at end of Syllabus)
(Administration Resources – like Berkely)

Pastoral Tasks: Teaching
Pastoral Tasks: Administration

The Roles of Ministry
Personality and Ministry
Character and Leadership
Conflict and Resolution
Ethical Issues
Writing Theology and Ministerial Philosophy
Maintaining Spiritual Vitality
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.

Baxter, Richard, *The Reformed Pastor.* (Banner of Truth Publisher, 2005)


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


Sentilles, Sarah. *A Church of Her Own: What Happens When a Woman Takes the
Tidball, Derek, Skillful Shepherds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).
Trull, Joe and Carter, James, Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders. (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2004).
Wilson, Michael T. and Hoffmann, Brad, Preventing Ministry Failure, (IVP, 2009).

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
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 money to people? 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