Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Hamilton
MC 701 - Introduction to Pastoral Ministry
Syllabus: Fall, 2015
Tuesday - Thursday (9:35-11:00)

Dr. Jim Singleton
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Office – Library 119
Office Phone – 978-646-4093
Email – jsingleton@gcts.edu
Byington Scholar – Abby Miller (amiller5@gordonconwell.edu)

I. Course Description
This course examines the roles, function, and theological considerations for the practice of pastoral ministry. Ministry identity, call, and foundational pastoral tasks will be examined.

II. Course Relationship to the Curriculum
The course in Pastoral Ministry (MC 701) is best taken by students who are nearing the end of their seminary studies (If you are more than a year from graduation you should take it later). The course is a “capstone” type of course in that it takes into consideration all of the studies in exegesis, theology, history, ethics, education, counseling, preaching and polity—and challenges students to consider how their studies actually are applied in practical ministry.

III. Course Objectives
The purpose of this course is to provide general information about pastoral ministry in order to help students: (1) understand the personal and relational dynamics of pastoral ministry, (2) to develop a biblical and theological vision for pastoral ministry, (3) to clarify calling and identity as a pastor, (4) understand the micro and macro-contexts in which we do ministry; (5) to be acquainted with specific tasks of pastoral ministry, (6) to engage with issues, challenges, and obstacles toward faithful and effective pastoral ministry, and (7) to be better prepared to engage in the practice of a biblically-based and theologically driven ministry. Emphasis will be made on the practical matters of ministry.

Items presented include the following: Identity, Roles and Expectations of the Pastor; Church Culture and its relation to the larger Culture; Worship and Liturgy; Baptism (children and adults) and Child Dedication; Lord’s Supper; Weddings; Funerals and Grief Work; Pastoral Care; Visitiation; Church Finances; Personal Finances; Church Discipline; Clergy Ethics; Sexual Ethics and Behavior; Staff Relationships and Evaluation; Conflict Management; Leadership Development (encouraging lay ministry); and other issues in pastoral ministry.
IV. Course Textbooks


Recommended:


*The Book of Common Prayer or The Book of Common Worship*

See also the “Pastoral Ministry Bibliography” below.

V. **Course Requirements and Grading**

1. Attendance is expected at *all classes and case study sessions*. Further, it is expected that all students *will contribute* in class. You are training to be pastors and you will be leading and
contributing. So I expect you to participate in class. 10% of your grade comes from this area. Further, students are expected to be on time for class. For the rest of your life you are going to be a pastor and need to be highly responsible. (10% of Final Grade)

2. Students will read a minimum of 1,500 pages from all required texts and supplemental reading. Students will submit an annotated bibliography with three or four paragraphs reflecting on each book or the completed portion of a book. Summarize briefly the content of the book, but then reflect on how you interacted with the material in terms of questions raised, insights gained, areas to be explored further biblically and theologically, etc. The report is to be typed (double-spaced, 12 point type). You are free to read fewer pages, but the percentage less will come from the base grade. 10% fewer (150 pages) would mean 18/20 on this as a base. Inadequate discussion of the book would result in additional points taken off. But remember you have a life beyond the classroom. Sometimes the best decisions in life relate to choosing what not to do. Due: First half (750 pages read and those portions discussed in annotation), Tuesday, October 20, 2015, and the final full document (including part 1), Tuesday, December 22, 2015 (4 p.m.) December Graduates – Friday, December 11, 2015 (4 p.m.). (20% of Final Grade)

3. Write a brief two-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. Include what are your fears or concerns, etc. If married, comment on the kind of support you receive from your spouse. This paper will be treated with utmost confidence and is intended to help the student process his/her call (and can be a part of to the usual paper required in the ordination process for most denominations). The report is to be typed (single-spaced, 12 point type). This paper is not “graded,” but required. You will be asked to comment on this in your final exam. Due: September 17, 2015 (in class)

4. First form case study groups among your classmates, which will take place beyond class time. Students will choose one of the cases they will discuss from one of the Swetland casebooks (more cases available in the supplemental Swetland book). Several of the cases are on Sakai and can be downloaded, including the first assignment - “Snot-Nosed Pastor.” Case discussions will last at least 45 minutes per case with at least three people in each group. The second case study is the choice of the group from the Swetland book. The third case study will come from an issue in the church in which you are doing Mentored Ministry, or the church which you are attending. The discussion group will listen to a description by each student – but the writing will be on your case study. Spouses are welcome to participate in the discussion if desired. Each student will write a two-page (single-spaced, 12 point type) reflection on each case (total: three, two-page papers). 1) Begin with brief comments on the composition of the group as well as when and where the discussion took place. 2) Write a brief summary of the case. 3) Then describe the critical issues that emerged in your discussion. 4) Finally, suggest any possible solutions which you see, and pick your best conclusion as a pastoral leader if you were really there. You may use the questions at the end of each case as a guide for the group discussion. The quality and depth of interaction will
determine your grade. These case study discussions replace class attendance during exam week. Due: **September 29, October 27, and November 24. (30% of final grade)**

5. Students will prepare a detailed order of service plus sermon notes on **Four (4) Pastoral Events:** Write an Order of Service for each of the following services: (1) Maundy Thursday (including the celebration of the Lord’s Supper); (2) Easter Sunday; (3) Wedding, and (4) Funeral/Memorial Service (including burial). Please Note: On each paper, **include all words you and congregation will say** - such as call to worship (including Scripture references), hymns (titles only) and songs (words if they are less familiar), responsive readings (refer to the Scripture selection only – text does not need to be typed out), full prayer of confession, pastoral prayer, benediction, etc. For the Lord’s Supper portion, please type all introductory statements which you might make, and the full prayers around communion and the words of institution. For the sermon portion of the service, state the textual reference and offer an outline of the proposed sermon. The Four (4) Pastoral Events paper: Due: **October 22, 2015 (20% of final grade)**

6. Final Exam – short answer essays that will pull together material from the semester. On the exam will also be a set of questions about the name and background of the other students in the class. Part of a pastor’s job is quickly learning the names of the flock and their life stories. So begin learning about each other at every opportunity. Take home exam or sitting by **December 15, 2015 (9:35-11) (20% of the Final Grade)**

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>attendance and participation in class, plus completion of the call paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>papers on case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4 pastoral events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>reading total and reflections on the reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>The maximum total of points is 100.</td>
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**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 recommends students access the information on the Indiana University website: [http://indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html](http://indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html)

**VI. Written Work**
Please Note: Requirements for ALL written work:

- Do not put papers in any kind of binding or use a title page.
- Put your name on the upper right hand corner
- Always put pages numbers on your assignments
- Please staple the pages of assignments.
- Formal Footnotes are not needed.
- Use 12-point type; do not use a sans serif font.
- Make a copy of everything you turn in, just in case something gets lost
- Papers may be handed in during class or under the door of my office (Library 119). I prefer a hard copy of your work, but in an emergency you can attach it to an email.

VII. Course Calendar

Read Ahead: Hansen, 7-45  
Kim, 11-24  
Robinson, Gilead

September 15, 2015 - Introduction to the Class and to Each Other 
Review of the Syllabus  
The Importance of Names  
Reflections on the Sense of Call and the Practice of Pastoral Ministry  
Discussion of Hansen and Kim and Gilead  
Michael Lindvall Reading

Write: Call Paper (due September 17, 2015 – in class)  
Read: Berkley, 23-74

September 17, 2015 – The Stories of Our Calling  
Sharing of Call Stories in Groups  
Clarity, Sustainability, Vulnerability  
Calling and Personality  
Internal and External Sense of Call

Read: Berkley, 129-139

Take: Profiles of Ministry Part II (Mentored Ministry students in their final year)

September 22 and 24, 2015 – Pastoral Identity in Various Contexts  
Types of Pastoral Callings  
Context - Christendom/Attractional/Missional  
Congregational Size  
Congregational History
Emotional/Relational Intelligence and Leadership Gifts  
Leading Change

Overview: Brink and Witvliet, eds. *Worship Sourcebook*  
Book of Common Worship or  
Book of Common Prayer  
Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4-5  

Meet: Group Discussion  
Write: Case Study #1 (Turned in at the beginning of class on September 29)

**September 29 and October 1, 2015 – Shaping the Worship Life of a Congregation**

**Brief** Process of Case Study  
Call Story and Ministry of Rev, Doug Pratt

Biblical Norms for Worship  
Theological Norms for Worship  
Historical Roots – Modern Practice  
Reflections upon the Church Year  
Reflections upon Audience

**Read:** Swetland, “Snot-Nosed Pastor” (61-69 or on Sakai)  
Read: Hansen, 100-113  
Begin to Prepare: 4 Worship Bulletins (Turned in on October 20, 2015)

**October 6 and 8, 2015 - Worship Discussion of Weddings and Funerals**

Discussion of Weddings and Funerals  
Practice in Weddings and Funerals

**See:** Berkley, Handbook on Preaching and Worship  
**Read:** Hansen, 46-99, 114-160  
Read: Kim, 25-40  
**Read:** Sample Weddings and Funerals on Sakai

**October 13 and 15, 2015 (1st Reading Week)**

**Read:** Swanson, 9-186  
Kim, 93-105

**October 20 and 22, 2015 – The Nature and Practice of Sacraments**

Lord’s Supper Theology and Practice  
Brief Discussion of Worship Bulletins (Turn in at conclusion of class)

**Meet:** Case Study Group - #2 (Group Choice from Swetland)  
**Write on Case Study** (Due October 27, 2015)
Read: Swanson, 9-87

October 27 and 29, 2015 – Care of Souls – Pastoral Care
Case Study Discussion
Ministry is About People
Crisis Situations
Abuse
Mental Illness
Referrals to Other Professionals
Systems of Care

Read: Swanson, 91-186
Prepare: 1st Half of Reading Report (Due, November 3)

November 3 and 5, 2015 – Pastoral Care Visits
Listening
Empathy
Use of Scripture and Prayer
Ministry Around Death

November 10 and 12, 2015 – 2nd Reading Week

Read: Berkley, 215-234

November 17 and 19, 2015 – Care of Souls – Conflict
Where Does It Happen Among God’s People?
What Part Will You Contribute?

Meet: Discuss 3rd Case Study – from your Congregation (Due, December 1)

November 24, 2015 – Leadership in Ministry
3rd Case Study Discussion

Read: Berkley, 235-300

November 26, 2015 (Thanksgiving Day)

December 1 and 3, 2015 – Pastoral Identity and the First Steps
Profiles in Ministry Part II Discussion
The Relational Web
Time Management
Family in Ministry
Transitions
Read: Berkeley, 449-53
Kim, 59-75

December 8 and 10, 2015 – A Theology of Administration and Finance

   Church Budgets
   Personal Budgets

   Ethical Issues – Money, Sex, and Power

December 15, 2015 – Final Exam (9:35-11) (Take home exam due by this date and time)

Please note: topics and times may change from day to day

VIII: Pastoral Ministry Bibliography

   __________.  *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church: A Guide for Every Member.*  San


Douglas, Philip D. What is Your Church’s Personality?: Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008).


Gibson, Scott M. Preaching for Special Services (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).


__________. *Values-Driven Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: 1996, 2004

__________. *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture*. Grand

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