

Course: Spiritual Formation in Ministry Seminar  
**IS525 Module 5 “Prayer and the Practices of the Sacramental Life”**

Dates & Time: Fall 2015, September 12, 2015 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Instructor: Professor Virginia Ward, DMIN, [vward@gcts.edu](mailto:vward@gcts.edu)  
Office hours: Tuesdays 2 pm – 4:30 pm, Wednesdays 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm or by appointment

**Faculty Facilitator:**

Professor Dean Borgman

**General Description**

The Integrative Seminar addresses the spiritual life of the Christian in the context of preparation for ministry. This Seminar, comprised of 5 modules spread out over five semesters fulfills a non-credit **graduation requirement** across all Boston Campus degree programs. Students entering in fall 2013 and subsequent semesters will take 5 modules; other students will attend the seminars for the duration of their studies. ***Every semester students register for classes you should also register for a Seminar module.***

The “Articles” of the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary Mission Statement are embedded in the themes of the course, organized into distinct but overlapping streams of Christian Spirituality:<sup>1</sup> the Word-centered life, the compassionate life, the virtuous life, the prayer-centered life, the Spirit empowered life, and the Sacramental life.

**Seminar Objectives**

This course aims to encourage students to engage in meaningful study and praxis of spiritual formation. After completing five modules students should will have: 1) explored the diverse spiritual traditions of the church 2) engaged in various experiential spiritual formation practices in and outside the classroom, 3) demonstrated in the ability to integrate theology and spirituality with everyday life and 4) gained a framework for understanding how people thrive spiritually and apply that to ministry settings. (MDIV goal 4/MA goals 2, 6)

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<sup>1</sup> Six “streams”, or spiritual traditions, guide the work of **Renovare**, a church resource for understanding and promoting the breadth of Christian practices within Christianity historically and cross culturally.

## **Module 5: Prayer and the Practices of the Sacramental Life**

In this module we will work on discovering practices for the Sacramental life, or, making present and visible the reign of the Spirit in everyday life. Prayer binds together all of the spiritual disciplines introduced in this seminar. Prayer, as conversation with God, allows us to enter into the Spirit's presence all around us in everyday life.

**Seminar facilitator, Dean Borgman** will meet with students for 90 minutes in the afternoon of the opening day of the semester. There will be time for individual reflection and small group interaction. The seminar will conclude with corporate participation in the Eucharist (Lord's Table) with the students, faculty and staff of GCTS.

**Module design:** This module is divided into two components: 1) opening day seminar and 2) student reading and reflection throughout the semester. Our theme is introduced during the Convocation and the seminar is held after lunch with a faculty facilitator.

### **Readings for Module 5:** (posted on Sakai)

Students are asked to complete the readings and encouraged through weekly class devotions to experiment with the spiritual practices recommended by Calhoun.

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. Downers, Grove, IL: IVP, 2005. ISBN-10: 0830833307. \$16.99

Part 1: Worship and Celebration, pages 25-28; Holy Communion, pages 32-34.

Part 7: Pray, p. 203, Centering Prayer, pages 207-210

### **Writing Assignment** (Grading is "credit"/"no credit" only)

*If you attended* the seminar at convocation you should complete the following assignment using your notes. Feel free to listen to the audio portion of the seminar and review the power point slides posted on the Boston Campus Current Students webpage under the section marked Orientation/Convocation/Formation as a reminder.

*If you did not attend* the seminar you should listen to the audio portion of the seminar and read through the power point slides posted on the Boston Campus Current Students webpage under the section marked Orientation/Convocation/Formation for context prior to writing the reflection.

**Written reflection** - Your requirement is to turn in a (1-2pp) personal essay reflecting on the following:

- a) **What questions do you have about Dean Borgman's presentation of the Sacramental life?**
- b) **How do you define and understand your own Sacramental Life?**
- c) **What spiritual disciplines from the seminar presentation and your readings do you tend to disregard, diminish or slight in your own spiritual formation?**
- d) **What from the seminar presentation and your readings have you found helpful in your work/ministry to others?**
- e) **What spiritual practice have you implemented during this semester's emphasis on the Sacramental Life?**

All students should **submit their reflective essay** via the SAKAI website (**IS 525**) to receive credit toward the graduation requirement. **DUE December 11, 2015.**

Professors may also accept submission of this work to be considered for extra credit in their class. The process for submission will be decided upon by the faculty member of the course.

**Participation:** Students will receive credit toward the completion of the Seminar for attendance at the Module as well as the completion of personal reflection assignments.