

CG525

Congregational Care and Formation

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Appointments can be scheduled via email

Tuesdays / 8:00 am to 10:50 am / Room NW232

Course Description:

This course introduces students to concepts and practices in the care and formation of persons, families, and congregations with attention to diversity within cultures, ecclesial traditions, and generations. Attention will be given to paradigm shifts in the practice of ministry from classical models to clinical/professional models, and now to communal, contextual and intercultural models of care and formation, so that students have historical frameworks to develop a wholistic vision for ministry. Integrating theological and social scientific resources and engaging contemporary issues and challenges in the world, this course will offer students a framework for care and formation that involves listening (to God, to neighbor, and to self), interpreting pressing challenges in care and formation, and developing effective responses for leading ministries of care and formation in a variety of settings

Connection to theological rationale, program outcomes, and student vocation

A few of the relevant sentences from the curricular documents which guide our convictions in this class:

“Communities are a central component of learning, and students and their formation are the central focus of Luther Seminary's learning community. Students come to seminary having been affected by constructive and destructive forces of human community. Therefore, Luther Seminary walks with our students in the multi-dimensional realities of their lives, as they prepare to lead and live in communities of faith and love.”

“Neighbors engage us in God’s continually creative and good activity. God is continually active in the world and comes to us and encounters us in surprising ways. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we meet neighbors and they meet us in differing ways. In these meetings, we recognize that both suffering and sin exist in the world, in our neighbors, and in ourselves as neighbors. Neighbors offer their disruptive and generative presence to us

and bring us to self-reflection as persons in relationship, who live in both brokenness and grace. Through the Holy Spirit we ourselves also become neighbors meeting others who need love, care, healing, justice, and peace. Pedagogically and theologically the curriculum is committed to communal inquiry about God's promises for the world that come with, for, and from the neighbor.”

We believe this course is most directly pointed at the following program outcomes. Although you will not fully achieve all of these in just this one class, you should be able to make significant progress in each of them:

(PO1) You will understand the dynamics of systems and institutions and work creatively in the midst of them. You will be able to lead through change and conflict, to foster healthy community, and to thrive in the midst of change yourself.

(PO1) You will be able to invite all people into Christ's reconciliation and cultivate new communities of faith and love.

(PO2) The stories and characters of the Bible will help you see yourself, your neighbor, and your world differently.

(PO2) You will be able to host meaningful conversations around the Bible

(PO2) You will invite people to approach the Scriptures with their own hard questions about God, life, death, meaning, ambiguity, identity, community, and the Bible itself.

(PO3) Your ministry will foster in people you serve an ability to speak meaningfully about their faith. You will be able to help people come to faith in Jesus Christ. The people you serve will be able to hear the groans of a broken creation and speak of God's promise to meet us in our suffering and God's work to redeem and renew a broken creation.

Within the framework of the curricular promise and the program outcomes, we will work on the following specific learning outcomes for this class:

By the end of this course students will be able to

- Articulate a biblical and theological vision for communal and contextual models of care and formation that integrates the still important claims and conclusions of the classical and clerical/professional models. (PO2, PO3)

- Demonstrate self-awareness regarding the ways in which your experiences, assumptions, and beliefs impact your capacity--both positively and negatively--to listen to God, self, and neighbor, and engage in authentic relationship with the neighbor. (PO4)
- Demonstrate self-reflexivity and well-being as a leader in caregiving and teaching. (PO4)
- Identify the history and trajectories of care-giving and faith formation, particularly in the their primary denominational/faith community context, so as to be able to articulate an ecclesiology, assess a specific context, and develop communal practices of care and catechesis. (PO1)
- Develop the theological and interpersonal skills to help faith communities reflect on and respond to pressing care or formation challenges in ministry. In particular, students will be capable of engaging at least one of the following challenging issues: denominational pluralism, interfaith dialogue, social media and media culture, environmental pressures, socio-political unrest, peace and justice issues, etc. (PO1, PO3)

Textbook & Materials

Required

Books:

Clothed in Nothingness: Consolation for Suffering, Leonard Hummel (Fortress, 2003). [156]

Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley (Jossey-Bass, 1998). [204]

Misunderstanding Stories, Melinda McGarrah Sharp (Pickwick, 2013). [185]

Pastoral Care in Context. John Patton (Westminster John Knox, 1993) [274]

Transforming Church Conflict, Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger, Theresa Latini (WJK, 2013). [200]

Chapters (available via e-reserve):

Part 1: "History, Theory and Practice" in *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* by Emmanuel Y. Lartey (London; New York : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003) pp. 21-79

"Pastoral Care" Leonard Hummel, in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, edited by Daniel Patte and Cristina Grenholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

"Formation Amidst War and Peace: Strategies for Theological Integration in the Borough and Battlefield of Gettysburg," by Leonard Hummel, Teaching Theology and Religion 15:2 (April, 2012).

primary texts as catalyst for exercises (also available via e-reserve)

Chapters Two and Four, *Pastoral Bearings: Lived Religion and Pastoral Theology*, by Maynard, Hummel and Moschella, (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010). [20, 16]

"Heinz Kohut and Empathy: A Perspective from a Theology of the Cross," Word and World 21 (Winter, 2001): 2-20. (Hummel)

Recommended:

Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Christian Formation, Brown, Dahl and Reuschling (Baker, 2011). [175]

Finding God in the Graffiti, Frank Rogers (Pilgrim Press, 2011). [212] (moved here so that we can add some NVC readings to the required list -- Bev and Dynna are working on which ones)

Injustice and the Care of Souls, Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook (Fortress, 2009). [352]

Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach, Jane Vella (Jossey-Bass, 2002). [263]

Pastoral Bearings: Lived Religion and Pastoral Theology, Maynard, Hummel and Moschella (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010). [298]

To Know As We Are Known, Parker Palmer (Harper, 1993). [130]

Chapter 12, "Therapeutic presence," in *Healing Moments in Psychotherapy* by Daniel Siegel and Marion Solomon (Norton & Co., 2013), pp. 248-260.

Course Schedule:

September 2nd / Week one: God's story and our stories

Orientation to each other and to the course, an introduction to congregational and community care (introduction to shift that includes three models of pastoral care), an introduction to faith formation and simple forms of nonviolent communication

September 9th / Week two: Hearing our personal stories

Exercises in listening, definitions of vocation connected to *Learning Leader* work, basic principles of nonviolent communication

Read: *Transforming Church Conflict*, Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger, Theresa Latini, Chaps 1 to 4

Read: *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* (Anderson & Foley), Chaps. 1 -3

(first paper due at beginning of next week)

September 16th / Week three: Pastoral caring in the history of the church

Theological foundations, presentation on the shifts from classical/professional to communal/contextual/intercultural models for pastoral caring

Paper #1 due today.

Read: Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 10, Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care (Patton)

Chapter two of *Clothed in Nothingness* (Hummel)

"Pastoral Care" Leonard Hummel, in The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity, edited by Daniel Patte and Cristina Grenholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Part 1: "History, Theory and Practice" in *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* by Emmanuel Y. Lartey (London ; New York : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003) pp. 21-79

September 23rd / Week four: Faith formation in the history of the church

Theological foundations, presentation on shifts in models of faith formation and pressing challenges (context collapse, popular religiosity, etc.)

Read: rest of *Clothed in Nothingness* (Hummel)

September 30th / Week five: Learning to listen, learning to care; Learning to listen, learning to teach

Part one: Initial forays into the practices of focused listening in relation to specific case studies (individual persons)

Part two: Initial forays into the practices of shaping learning in relation to those same case studies through the lens of the larger congregation

Optional reading: *Finding God in the Graffiti* (Rogers)

October 7th / Week six: Deepening our learning, resources from psychology

An introduction to resources from psychology for the purposes of congregational care and formation.

Read: Chapter Nine of *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, (Patton)

"Heinz Kohut and Empathy: A Perspective from a Theology of the Cross," Word and World 21 (Winter, 2001): 2-20. (Hummel)

October 14th / Reading Days: No class

October 21st / Week seven: Deepening our learning, resources from sociology

An introduction to resources from sociology for the purposes of congregational care and formation.

Read: Chapters Two and Four, *Pastoral Bearings: Lived Religion and Pastoral Theology*, (Maynard, Hummel and Moschella)

“Formation Amidst War and Peace: Strategies for Theological Integration in the Borough and Battlefield of Gettysburg,” by Leonard Hummel, *Teaching Theology and Religion* 15:2 (April, 2012).

October 28th / Week eight: Deepening our learning, resources from ethnography, anthropology and post-colonial theorizing

Your 2nd paper due at beginning of this session

An introduction to resources from ethnography, anthropology and post-colonial theorizing for the purposes of congregational care and formation.

Read: *Misunderstanding Stories* (Sharp)

November 4th / Week nine: Group projects on pastoral, congregational and community care formation

November 11th / Week ten: Group projects on pastoral, congregational and community care formation

November 18th / Week eleven: Group projects on pastoral, congregational and community care formation

December 2nd / Week twelve: Group projects on pastoral, congregational and community care formation

December 9th / Week thirteen: Concluding rituals and enduring understandings

(final paper due)

Possible project topics:

The advent and event of parenting (fertility, infertility, miscarriage, birth, adoption, etc.) /
Baptism (Didache)

Sharing life long commitment and engaging sexuality (marriage, infidelity, abuse, etc.) /
Marriage (Leiturgia)

Aging, approaching death, disability, resilience / Anointing or Funerals (Kerygma)

Racism, gender discrimination, class oppression, torture / (Martyria or Diakonia)

Health challenges (disabilities, chronic illnesses, addictions) (all)

Immigration, refugee status, missionary or military family life / (Koinonia or Advocacy)

Assignments:

1. BILDUNG (FORMATION) for community and congregational care and learning; a 2-3 page paper which responds to the elements below, due at the beginning of week three, 10% of grade

(1) *“The first element of Bildung [tradition] . . . underscores the limited historical nature of human beings. It is a way of saying that the thoughts and actions of human beings are shaped by immediate historical circumstances and by all that has come before. No one, for Herder, becomes a human being alone. We are all connected with parents, teachers, and friends, with all the circumstances of our life and with our culture” (Marcia J. Bunge, “Herder and the Origins of a Historical View of Religion” in Revisioning the Past: Prospects in Historical Theology, ed., Mary Potter Engel and Walter E. Wyman, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), 178.*

(1) “Human experience is structured in time and narrative. We comprehend our lives not as disconnected actions or isolated events but in terms of a narrative. We conceive of our lives as a web of stories -- a historical novel or a miniseries in the making. We think in stories in order to weave together into a coherent whole the unending succession of people, dates, and facts that fill our lives. ... narrative ... is a human necessity. Stories hold us together and keep us apart. We tell stories in order to live.” (*Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 4.

Reflect on some of the friends or family or teachers or ideals or traditions to whom you are connected in your developing vocation as a pastoral leader, and from whom you have learned. How are you connected to them?

(2) *“[T]he process of Bildung has a second principle, ‘organic powers.’ These are the powers that human beings possess to receive and convert into their own natures what has been transmitted to them by tradition. These powers apply tradition to the needs of the present*

situation. Without such powers, history would be an endless imitation of what has already been" (*Ibid*).

(2) "Our stories are related to but not determined by factors such as events beyond which we have no control, other actors to which we are in relation, and traditions that we appropriate or resist." (Chopp, quoted in Anderson&Foley) 12.

As you are developing in your vocation as a pastoral leader, how have you received, transformed, and shared the ideals and traditions that have been handed on to you?

(3) "*Herder also claims that Bildung is guided by a universal purpose—humanity It expresses the notion that all human beings share a common purpose and direction and is based on the conviction that all human beings are made in the image of God. Herder often equates humanity with religion, claiming that it gives direction to human development in all its diversity*" (*Ibid*).

(3) "Each individual life narrative is an individual creation achieved largely through improvising rather than pursuing a vision already defined or living out someone else's narrative. And yet each narrative is composed of many stories with many coauthors. For persons of faith, God is understood as one of those authors." (Anderson&Foley), 19.

Building on your answers to questions one and two, what do you understand to be at this time the purpose and direction—that is, the future—of your pastoral leadership?

2. MUTUAL CONSOLATION: receiving and giving, participating in care and [MH1] formation/6-8 pp., paper due at beginning of week eight, worth 30% of grade

The intent of this exercise is to reflect on an occasion when you primarily have received care, on another occasion when you primarily have given care, in the process of Christian formation. We would like you to compare these two occasions, and observe what you are learning in the process of doing so. An occasion of care may have involved a single encounter or several encounters. The object of care may have been a minor disturbance, a chronic problem, or a major problem. This paper will have three sections; in all of them, critical perspectives derived from readings, class lectures, class discussions or class exercises should be used. Bits of verbatim material may also be employed. In the first section of the paper, describe the occasion when you received care, commenting on its social dimensions, its psychological dimensions, and its theological dimensions. In the second section of your paper, describe the occasion of your having provided care, commenting on its social, psychological, and theological dimensions. In the third section of the paper, describe any awareness that you have about the similarities and differences

between the care you received and the care you provided. Do you have any awareness of what these similarities and differences say about who you are as a person and as a pastor?

As a variation on this assignment, you may choose to describe a single occasion in which you both gave and received care.

Papers will be evaluated on the basis of their 1) coherence and clarity, 2) use of resources, 3) originality and creativity.

3. GROUP PRESENTATIONS, scheduled as appropriate throughout the final weeks of the course, constituting 30% of the grade (see below for more information)

Students will examine cases of communal and individual suffering, and construct pastoral responses for these cases. More details will be shared during our initial weeks in the course. In general, group presentations will provide an occasion for students to present on some particular topic in or some particular occasion of congregational care formation.

Case studies also may be derived from the care provided by students during their supervised clinical ministries and/or internships, and from their own surveys of the contemporary church and world (e.g., consolation in the Wichita, Kansas congregations of either the confessed BTK murderer or the murdered Dr. George Tiller, religious and secular responses to the 2004 Tsunami, coping in the congregation of Saint Mark, New York after the sinking of the General Slocum on June 15, 1904), but they will draw on the communal/contextual elements of the situation and suggest specific kinds of learning for the congregation, as well as for the individual.

Case studies must include media beyond print media (images, music, video are to be encouraged). Each group will have approximately 70 minutes in which to make their presentation.

Small groups will gather/be formed around topic choice.

4. FINAL PAPER

3-4 pages. Paper due on at beginning of week thirteen, constitutes 10% of the grade. The intent of this paper is to develop capacity in pastoral theological reflection through the analysis of the case study of the provision of congregational care and faith formation which your group worked on. Propose theological, educational, social, and psychological dimensions of possible pastoral response drawn from further reflection and study following your group presentation. Feel free to alter aspects in the case-study to fit various

cultures and contexts. Feel free to use your imagination to fill in details and to propose ways of providing care. This paper will be evaluated on the basis of its 1) coherence and clarity, 2) use of resources, 3) originality and creativity.

Assessment strategy and criteria:

Please see the rubrics below and the two others which are attached for the various papers and projects.

Formation Paper: 10% of total grade

Mutual Consolation Paper: 20% of total grade

Group Presentation: 30% of total grade

Final Paper: 10% of total grade

In Class Participation: 30% of total grade

Instructional Methods:

What you need to know about this course

This course will proceed through ongoing reflection and engagement with stories: God's story, our own personal stories, and the stories of communities and persons. We will do that reflection through small group in-class exercises, through large group discussion, through faculty presentation, and through outside reading and writing.

Mary and Leonard both appreciate and agree with Stephen Brookfield's "course caveats":

"As a student, I very much appreciate the chance to make informed decisions about the courses I take. I want to know who the educator is, what his or her assumptions are, and what he or she stands for before I make a commitment to spend my time, money, and energy attending the class. So let me tell you some things about me and how I work as an educator that will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether or not you wish to be involved in this course.

I have framed this course on the following assumptions:

1. That participating in discussion brings with it the following benefits:

- It helps students explore a diversity of perspectives.
- It increases students' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity.

- It helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions.
- It encourages attentive, respectful listening.
- It develops new appreciation for continuing differences.
- It increases intellectual agility.
- It helps students become connected to a topic.
- It shows respect for students' voices and experiences.
- It helps students learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse.
- It affirms students as cocreators of knowledge.
- It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ideas and meaning.
- It develops habits of collaborative learning.
- It increases breadth and makes students more empathic.
- It helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration.
- It leads to transformation.

2. That students attending will have experiences that they can reflect on and analyze in discussion.

3. That the course will focus on the analysis of students' experiences and ideas as much as on the analysis of academic theories.

4. That the chief regular class activity will be a small group discussion of experiences and ideas.

5. That I as teacher have a dual role as a catalyst for your critical conversation and as a model of democratic talk.

So please take note of the following "product warnings"!

If you don't feel comfortable talking with others about yourself and your experiences in small groups, you should probably drop this course.

If you don't feel comfortable with small group discussion and think it's a touchy-feely waste of valuable time, you should probably drop this course.

If you are not prepared to analyze your own and other people's experiences, you should probably drop this course." (*Taken from Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms*, by Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc., 1999, pp. 60-61.)

Rubric for Assessing Paper #1	Superior	Good	Sufficient	Failure
Argument & Analysis	<p>Clear statement of their personal narrative. Narrative is well documented. Highly accurate and elegant. The argument is coherent, compelling and elegant. Clearly responds to the assignment's prompts.</p>	<p>Narrative is obvious but not clearly articulated; the narrative is descriptive and appropriate to the prompts.</p>	<p>Narrative is present but must be discovered, and is only somewhat relevant to the prompts. Integrates some of the prompt questions but other connections are muddy.</p>	<p>There is no coherent narrative. Essay has no clear organizational pattern. Essay does not connect to written prompts.</p>
Elements	<p>There is a clear description of the specific ideals and traditions being engaged, and an elegant exposition of how they have been formative and transformed.</p>	<p>There is a description of the specific ideals and traditions being engaged, and some exposition of how they have been formative.</p>	<p>There is limited description of the specific ideals and traditions being engaged, and no clear sense of how they have been formative.</p>	<p>There is no description of the specific ideals and traditions being engaged, and no sense of how they have been formative.</p>

Clarity and Style	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper clearly has been spell-checked AND proofread, and contains no errors.	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper clearly has been spell-checked AND proofread, and contains no more than a few minor errors, which do not adversely affect the reader's ability to understand the essay.	A few sentences are grammatically incorrect or not clearly written. Several words are misused. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper contains several errors. Reader's ability to understand essay may be compromised by these errors.	Paper is full of grammatical errors and bad writing. Many words are misused. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. No evidence that the paper has been spell-checked or proofread, and contains numerous errors. Reader has a difficult time understanding essay because of errors.
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Please note that there are rubrics for the second paper, and for the group presentation, available at MyLutherNet (they were in a format that was not easily included in this print version of the syllabus).

Rubric for Final paper	Superior	Good	Sufficient	Failure
Argument & Analysis	Clear statement of the thesis and main conclusion of the paper. Thesis is well documented. Highly accurate and elegant. The argument is creative, compelling and	Thesis is obvious but not stated; the summary description is fairly accurate and has textual support. The argument is interesting and relevant.	Thesis is present but must be discovered, and is only somewhat relevant. The conclusion does little more than restate the problematic introduction. Integrates some	There is no coherent thesis. Essay has no clear organizational pattern. The argument is unclear, unsupported, and has inaccurate statements. Parts simply reflect

	elegant. Clearly breaks argument into relevant parts.		parts but other connections are muddy.	personal opinion rather than a reasoned argument.
Sources	Evidence is used from a wide range of sources, including lectures and course readings. Student also consults multiple scholarly books, websites, journal articles, etc. not explicitly discussed in class.	Evidence is used from many sources, but author relies heavily on a more limited set of sources. Effort has been made to go beyond material presented in class.	Uses only a few of the sources provided in class. If outside sources are used, they are primarily non-scholarly (i.e., intended for a general audience) and/or web-based.	Poor use of sources in general; only minimally uses sources provided by instructor, and/or relies exclusively on non-scholarly outside sources.
Clarity and Style	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper clearly has been spell-checked AND proofread, and contains no errors.	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. All information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper clearly has been spell-checked AND proofread, and contains no more than a few minor errors, which do not adversely affect the reader's ability to understand the essay.	A few sentences are grammatically incorrect or not clearly written. Several words are misused. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. Paper contains several errors. Reader's ability to understand essay may be compromised by these errors.	Paper is full of grammatical errors and bad writing. Many words are misused. Not all information is accurate and up-to-date. No evidence that the paper has been spell-checked or proofread, and contains numerous errors. Reader has a difficult time understanding essay because of errors.

CASE STUDY INFORMATION

A case study is a conscious retelling of an experience of “ministry in practice” which may be presented to a group for analysis and evaluation. In this class we are using case studies as a way to focus our research and inquiry, and as a way to collaborate with each other. Writing a case study as a group can be difficult, so we offer below some basic guidelines. We are happy to be in conversation with your small group as you begin to work on this project.

Begin by discussing with your group how they understand the specific cluster of issues you are working with. What is the topic at hand? How does each member of your group see this topic as you begin? What kinds of personal experiences have group members had in relation to this topic?

Next, carefully select an event, critical incident or conversation which when brought to our class will be real for your group. It is often most effective to choose something which has actually happened in the arena in which your group is working. That is, if you are working with issues of addiction, try to choose an incident or moment which has at least some connection to your lives. You might consider a moment or event in which something has been puzzling, has caused deep concern, and/or has continued to impact the ministry of someone in the group. Please consider whether it would be appropriate to use pseudonyms for people and/or organizations involved in this case. It is important to be as detailed and honest as possible, in order to facilitate the most effective learning.

WRITING A CASE

Background and description (what)

This is your opportunity to set the event in context: Where did it occur – describe both the immediate context (church, nonprofit, home) and the larger context (geographic area, faith context, race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.)? Who was involved? What can you say about how and why were they involved? What happened? What did the people involved in the moment/incident/event do?

Include essential facts, neither more nor less than needed. Include as much detail as possible, balancing that with an attempt to stay as brief as is reasonable. Try to use vivid detail, but also make clear where you are reporting on the situation (who, when, where, why, how) and when you are adding your own feelings and perspectives (“I felt,” “It appeared that she felt,” “I wonder if perhaps...”).

This is a moment in the case presentation when you can bring to bear the theological, psychological, sociological and anthropological theories we have been discussing to offer a vivid *description* of the case.

Analysis (so what)

Identify the issues and relationships that were apparent as you viewed the situation. What was happening? Are these issues apparent in your written version of the situation? Who and how was someone(s) leading in this situation? How was God evident or absent?

This is the point in the process in which it is crucial to do thoughtful research from the wider literature. In order to do a literature review of the topic, for instance, you need to be sure that the literature on that topic is not too big, not too small, but just right for the purposes of your case, and the time your group will have for your presentation. You may need to adjust the topic you review if you find: (1) there's too much literature for you to review and summarize—the problem here is the difficulty in reviewing the best and most appropriate literature; (2) there's too little literature—the problem here is making a meaningful conclusion about that research.

We anticipate that you will include a bibliography with your case that has at least four or five book length resources, and 15 to 20 article length resources.

Here are some hypothetical examples:

(1) "Drug use among religious adolescents." Here you would scan data bases using a variety of Boolean searches (e.g. drugs and religion and adolescents). You'd want to research this with a question like "What are the characteristics of religiously practicing adolescents who use drugs" and come to some kind of conclusion.

(2) "AIDS and African-American religious communities." Here you would scan data bases using a variety of Boolean searches (e.g., Church and Blacks and AIDS, Church and African-Americans and AIDS, AIDS and African-Americans and religious), to determine what's been researched. You'd want to review this research with a question like "What kinds of support are or are not offered by African-American religious communities to AIDS victims" and use what you come up with in your analysis.

Please do not hesitate to be in conversation with us as you work on this research.

Evaluation (now what)

Here is the moment in the case project when your group will offer some proposals by way of response to the case. You will need to prepare two kinds of responses. The first will be focused on pastoral support for the persons immediately involved in the case. The second will be focused on leading congregation-wide learning on the broader issues.

For the first response, consider the persons involved. Try to estimate their effectiveness in

the event. Did they function appropriately? Why? Why not? Did they do what they set out to do? What factors or forces emerged which they did not anticipate? What questions would your group like this class to discuss that might be helpful in engaging this case?

Here are some questions that might help your group to brainstorm about the personal elements of the case. Not all of the issues listed below may be relevant to your case study, but the questions are worth pondering and may ignite others. There may be, for instance, elements of the case in these questions that you hadn't previously considered.

(1) Why might you bring this case study to class? What are you hoping for in engaging it?

(2) Finish these sentences, in light of the case:

Everything would be OK for the people in this case if_____.

The real problem in the case is _____.

What we're really worried about in this case is _____.

It would be wonderful if_____.

(3) What fears or anxiety does this situation raise for your group? How might you respond to those fears? Could you possibly be reacting to this situation as you are because it is close to another experience in life that someone in your group has had? Is there anything about this case that you are avoiding or want to avoid?

(4) In what ways do you trust God in this situation? In what ways can you see people placing their trust in God or each other?

(5) What do you fear God may ask of you in a similar situation?

(6) Where do you see evidence of Christ-like love in this situation? Where do you see faith and hope? Where are God's promises and ways being lived out?

(7) Where is sin alive?

(8) How are people's well-being impacted by the situation?

(9) What dreams are they – or you, for that matter – nourishing in this situation? Are there dreams it might be better for the people involved to let go of? Are they in some way putting hope in a dream or a mischaracterization of God, rather than in the God your group confesses?

(10) Are the people in the situation thinking of themselves more than is helpful? Or

perhaps less than they ought?

(11) How do think this situation might be impacting the self-acceptance of people involved with it, both in terms of accepting their own strengths, as well as their weaknesses?

(12) Is anyone in this situation not 'finishing well' because they do not believe God will do what God says God will do?

(13) Who could be a resource to anyone in this situation as they are seeking resolution of the situation?

Now, for second response, consider the congregation(s) or community organization(s) involved. Try to estimate their effectiveness in the event. Did they function appropriately? Why? Why not? Did they embody their stated missions? What factors or forces emerged which they did not anticipate? What questions would your group like this class to discuss that might be helpful in engaging this case?

In particular, what kinds of learning events and resources do you wish had been in place prior to the case situation, or perhaps that you would recommend that the congregation or community organization implement after such a situation?

Here are some questions that might help your group to brainstorm about the congregational learning elements of the case. Not all of the issues listed below may be relevant to your case study, but the questions are worth pondering and may ignite others. There may be, for instance, elements of the case in these questions that you hadn't previously considered.

(1) What learning elements of this case study can you bring to the class? What are you hoping for in engaging the case on this level?

(2) Finish these sentences, in light of the case:

The situation might not have arisen for this congregation or community organization if_____.

The long term learning challenge in this case is _____.

From a teaching/learning perspective, what we're really worried about in this case is _____.

It would be wonderful if_____.

(3) What fears or anxiety about congregational/community group formation does this

situation raise for your group? How might you respond to those fears? Could the congregation or community organization possibly be reacting to this situation as they are because it is close to another experience that they have had, or which they have seen another congregation or community organization undergo? Is there any wisdom in the situation, any theological conviction or pastoral commitment that they might be avoiding or wanting to avoid?

(4) In what ways do you imagine God as the primary agent of teaching and learning in this situation? In what ways can you see people placing their trust in being a disciple of God? In what ways have they been caught up in narrow understandings of expertise instead of wisdom?

(5) What do you fear God may be asking of the congregation or community organization in this situation?

(6) Where do you see evidence of Christ-like love in this situation? Where do you see faith and hope? Where are God's promises and ways being lived out at the congregational or community organizational level?

(7) Where is sin alive? How is that sin impacting learning to be a "community of truth" in this situation?

(8) How is the congregation's or the community organization's well-being impacted by the wisdom – or lack thereof – which is being shared in this situation? How might you bring such wisdom *proactively* into a congregational or community organizational system so that it is available when necessary?

(9) What dreams are they – or you, for that matter – nourishing in this situation? Are there dreams it might be better for a congregation or community organization to let go of? What might be a better focus for proactive learning on a congregational or community organizational level in this kind of situation?

(10) Are the people in the situation thinking of about congregation or community organization more than is helpful (are they blind to larger realities in the context)? Or perhaps less than they ought to (i.e., are they denying assets)?

(11) How are issues of systemic justice being addressed in this situation, on the congregational or community organizational level? How might such issues be raised in the future?

(12) In what ways is the congregation or community organization in this situation getting stuck because they do not believe God will do what God says God will do? How might a

learning leader help them get “unstuck”?

(13) Who could be a learning resource to this congregation or community organization as they seek a preferred future?

PRESENTING A CASE

Your small group will have roughly an hour and 15 minutes in which to present your case, and lead the class through an intentional learning experience which engages it. During that time you need to (1) acquaint us with the situation, (2) lay out your analysis of it, and (3) present pastoral responses on both the personal level (how ought pastoral leaders respond to the needs of the persons in the case) and on the congregational/community organizational level (what are the learning issues involved, how might pastoral leaders seek to offer appropriate formation opportunities around the underlying issues of the case).

We recommend that you send out the basic case document in advance of our class session, so that we all have an opportunity to at least read it in advance. Remember that these are exercises in shared learning, with the pragmatic intention of resourcing people for their current and future pastoral leadership. So, what kinds of resources do you want to make sure your classmates know about? Are there organizations, websites, practices, etc. to which you can introduce people?

Given that we are always learning by way of ideas, feelings, and actions, what kinds of learning experiences will you structure for our class? Is there a short video, for instance, that you have found helpful? Perhaps there is a form of prayer to which you would like to introduce us in the context of your case. Maybe there is a ministry such as Stephen Ministry, which would prove useful if implemented proactively.

In particular, you should be clear about a limited number of learning goals you will accomplish during your presentation. How could you assess whether the class has met those goals? What would you need to provide to us by way of resource or experience to help us meet those goals?

Finally, a word about small group learning. Much of the work which is accomplished on a daily basis in churches and other community organizations is done through the efforts of small groups. This class seeks to help you explore how best to work in small groups, and from that experience, to reflect upon how you might utilize small group structures in your own leadership. The reason this project accounts for 30% of your work in this course is because we believe it is crucial to learn these skills.

Small groups work best when each member of the group is clear about what their responsibilities are, and when their gifts match the tasks to which they are responsible. The more time you spend, early in the process, getting to know each other, the more benefits you will reap as your project unfolds. We also are more than happy to be available to consult with you on any issues that might arise.

Here are some small group tips from Phil Race (*500 Tips on Group Learning*, Routledge, 2000):

Ground rules can be very useful in group work contexts. The following suggestions include some of the issues and starting points from which groups can be encouraged to agree to their own set of ground rules.

(1) Create ownership of the ground rules. The various ground rule agendas suggested below should only be regarded as starting points for each group to adopt or adapt and prioritize. It is important that groups feel able to include ground rules which are appropriate for the particular people making up the group.

(2) Foster a culture of honesty. Successful group work relies on truthfulness. Suggest that it is as dishonest for group members to 'put up with' something they don't agree about, or can't live with, as it is to speak untruthfully. However, it is worth reminding learners about the need to temper honesty with tact.

(3) Remind group members that they don't have to like people to work with them. In group work, as in professional life, people work with the team they are in, and matters of personal conflict need to be managed so they don't get in the way of the progress of the group as a whole.

(4) Affirm collective responsibility. Once issues have been aired, and group decisions have been made as fully as possible, the convention of collective responsibility needs to be applied for successful group processes. This leads towards everyone living with group decisions and refraining from articulating their own personal reservations outside the group.

(5) Highlight the importance of developing and practicing listening skills. Every voice deserves to be heard, even if people don't initially agree with the point of view being expressed.

(6) Spotlight the need for full participation. Group work relies on multiple perspectives. Encourage group members not to hold back from putting forward their view. Group members also need to be encouraged to value the opinion of others as well as their own.

(7) Everyone needs to take a fair share of the group work. This does not mean that everyone has to do the same thing. It is best when the members of the group have agreed on how the tasks will be allocated amongst themselves. Group members also need to be prepared to contribute by building on the ideas of others and validating each other's experiences.

(8) Working to strengths can benefit groups. The work of a group can be achieved efficiently when tasks are allocated according to the experience and expertise of each member of the group.

(9) Groups should not always work to strengths, however! Activities in groups can be developmental in purpose, so task allocation may be an ideal opportunity to allow group members to build on areas of weakness or inexperience.

(10) Help group members to see the importance of keeping good records. There needs to be an output to look back upon. This can take the form of planning notes, minutes or other kinds of evidence of the progress of the work of the group. Rotate the responsibility for summing up the position of the group regarding the tasks in hand and recording this. *[Note: Google docs and spreadsheets can be very useful in this regard.]*

(11) Group deadlines are sacrosanct. The principle, 'You can let yourself down, but it's not OK to let the group down' underpins successful group work.

(12) Cultivate philanthropy. Group work sometimes requires people to make personal needs and wishes subordinate to the goal of the group. This is all the more valuable when other group members recognize that this is happening.

(13) Help people to value creativity and off-the-wall ideas. Don't allow these to be quelled out of a desire to keep the group on task, and strike a fair balance between progress and creativity.

(14) Enable systematic working patterns. Establishing a regular program of meetings, task report backs and task allocation is likely to lead to effective and productive group performance.

(15) Cultivate the idea of group rules as a continuing agenda. It can be productive to review and renegotiate the ground rules from time to time, creating new ones as solutions to unanticipated problems that might have arisen. It is important, however, not to forget or abandon those ground rules that proved useful in practice, but which were not consciously applied.

To these tips we would add – begin and/or end in prayer!

Policies and Procedures

Evaluation of individual assignments will proceed according to the attached rubrics, which include the parameters for letter grades. We will also be doing regular in-class assessment using a critical incident questionnaire process.

Any course that invites us to examine issues of human pain and perplexity has the potential to be unsettling. Our ability to learn in such a course depends on several things: our ability to tolerate ambiguity; our willingness to dialogue honestly and respectfully with each other; our willingness to consider alternative interpretations; our acceptance of truth, no matter where it is found; our ability to take responsibility for both our beliefs and our anxiety about different beliefs; our comfort with “political and religious incorrectness”; and our ongoing struggle to integrate new information with present beliefs. We expect that in this course we will all work to create a spirit of respect, curiosity, and dialogue. If you find that you are having personal difficulty in this course, please feel free to check with one of us, or with Karen Treat (parish nurse), Rev. Dr. Laura Thelander (Seminary Pastor) or Jeffery Olson Kregel (Associate Dean for Community and Residential Life) regarding a referral for consultation or counseling

We believe that this course requires full engagement with one's peers and with the process. We assume that you will be with parishioners in much the same way that you are with peers in class. We will depend on your wise judgment as to the ways in which you engage various digital devices, but if we observe your use of them distracting your colleagues or detracting from your own learning we will ask that you put them away.

ADA Compliance Statement

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student with a disability who is registered with the Student Resource Center and requests needed accommodation. If you are a student with a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or accommodation in this class or any other class, please contact the Director of the Student Resource Center or contact your instructor directly.

Academic Honesty

Members of the Luther Seminary community are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and honestly in academic matters. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses against this expectation and are subject to disciplinary action.

If instances of cheating or plagiarism are detected, one of the disciplinary actions shall follow: either the instructor records a failure for the assignment or examination, or the instructor records a failure for the course. In either case, the instructor shall bring the

matter to the Office of the Academic Dean and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the question whether further disciplinary action should be considered will be determined in consultation with the instructor, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students. See the current Student Handbook for more details on this matter.