

Theological Method in Pastoral Counseling
PC 100
Spring 2010

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Description

The course introduces pastoral counseling students to various theological methods that are useful in the integrative discipline of pastoral counseling. Students will explore the historical and theological foundations for the ministry of pastoral counseling, its grounding in congregational and specialized ministry, and the critical relationship to behavioral and other sciences. Methods for critical reflection and decision making for pastoral counseling ministry will be presented and practiced through case studies and thoughtful collaborative reflection and examination of ethical problems in clinical practice with an eye toward assessment and treatment.

Objectives

1. Develop a historical framework for pastoral care and counseling.
2. Develop skill to think theologically that is grounded in the students own particular ecclesial tradition and related pastoral or vocational identity.
3. Develop skill to discern and conceptualize theological themes and patterns in therapeutic conversations.
4. Describe the following critical elements of theological reflection in pastoral counseling:
 - Sources of information and authority for theological reflection,
 - Critical priorities for reflection in counseling practice,
 - Hermeneutical and dialogical processes that help construct reflective practices,
 - How theological reflection intersects with and broadens the scope of pastoral practice.
5. Analyze a variety of theological reflective methods in pastoral counseling that represent diverse theological frames of reference.
6. Demonstrate competence to reflect theologically on clinical material using one method of reflection that integrates the student's own theological heritage, faith stand, and critically engage theological, and clinical sources.
7. Establish a frame or basis for making ethical decision about prayer, scripture, religious and spiritual sources in clinical practice.

Evaluation

Timely and regular attendance is assumed for adult learners, is a prerequisite to participate in class, and is therefore not graded.

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| 1. | Class participation | 20 points |
| 2. | Mid-semester exam | 20 points |
| 3. | Case- studies | 20 points |

4. Theological reflection on therapeutic conversations 20 points
5. Final-Theological method of reflection paper 20 points

Description of course evaluation

1. Class participation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
 - Prepare and lead meditation as assigned.
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the historical frame of reference of pastoral care and counseling grounded in assigned readings, class topics, lectures, student work and presentations, papers and collaborative skills with colleagues.
 - Demonstrate skill to think theologically, grounded in student's own ecclesial tradition and related pastoral vocational identity.
 - Demonstrate competence to conceptualize and practice theological reflection method with case material.
 - Critically analyze theological reflective methods.
 - Describe critical concepts in pastoral counseling method.
 - Demonstrate knowledge of how theological method of reflection contributes to clinical assessment and informs treatment planning.
 - Reflective assignments as assigned by the professor.
2. The mid term exam – Students will be given a mid term exam.
3. Case study- a) Students will prepare (clinical) case studies. Each student will write case studies of their clinical work that consist of assessment and treatment. The student will formulate a theological reflection on the clinical case. The case studies will be in typed, double spaced verbatim format and accompanied by a videotaped segment for which a release has been signed. b) The cases must be presented in class.
4. The student will lead colleagues in a reflection on the theological themes and patterns that the student discerns in the case study on the day it is presented. Each student will write a theological reflection on themes and patterns for each case study. The themes and patterns may be those of the client/client family and/or for the student. c) In collaborative dialog the student will lead the group to examine the ethical dimensions of the clinical case, elicit information from colleagues, and provide a perspective to integrate the reflective process in clinical practice. In the theological reflection students will engage in the following theological method of reflection practices:
 - Begin with clinical material- identify theological themes and patterns present in clinical conversation,
 - Explore the way a theme is developed in sessions,
 - Clarify critical awareness of perspectives and interests,
 - Correlate competing perspectives from culture,
 - Interpret the sources for discerning meaning and value,
 - Broaden critique of interpretation,
 - Identify guidelines and specific plans for a specific community or ethical concern of clinical practice,
 - Propose constructive possibilities that theological themes and patterns offer for work in clinical practice with particular interest in how the students own ecclesial tradition may assist to interpret the student's perspective.

The student will prepare copies of the clinical case and the theological reflection for colleagues in the course, and the professor. The student will distribute the copies prior to presentation and will gather the copies from colleagues after the presentation. Confidentiality of the subject's identity is normative practice.

5. The theological method of reflection paper is the student's conceptualization of the theological reflective method and processes that the student discerns to operate at the intersection of the student's theology, ecclesial tradition and clinical practice. For example: How does your understanding of human anthropology guide your ethical judgment in clinical practice? What methods assist you to discern religious and theological themes and patterns in clinical conversations? What theological and theoretical sources assist you to discern clinical interpretation of theological themes and patterns in clinical conversation?

Required Text

Patricia O'Connell Killen and John De Beer. *The Art of Theological Reflection*, Cross Roads: New York, 1999.

Howard Stone and Duke, James. *How To Think Theologically*. Fortress Press, 2006.

Edward P. Wimberly. *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*. Abingdon Press, 1994.

Robert Kinast. *What Are They Saying About Theological Reflection?* Paulist Press, 2000.

Koenig, Harold. *Faith and Mental Health*. Templeton Foundation Press, 2005.

Reserved Text

All required reading

Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling

Lartey, Emmanuel. *In Living Color*.

McNeil, John T. *The History of the Cure of Souls*

Couture, Pamela and Rodney Hunter. *Pastoral Care and Social Conflict*

Peterson, R. and N. Roarke, eds. *Theological Literacy for the Twenty First Century*. Eerdmans, 2002.

Neuger, C. ed. *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist and Womanist Approaches*

Zimmer, M. *Sister Images*. 1993.

Journal of Pastoral Theology, 7, pp.23-42

Journal of Psychology and Theology, 25(1) pp 11-27

Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill Austern, eds. *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*. Abingdon, 1999.

Stevenson-Moessner, Jeanne, and Teresa Snorton, editors. *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*. Fortress Press, 2009.

Use of Inclusive Language

Learning is concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects all persons, their feelings, value and particularity to contribute to knowledge. Learning is inclusive.

Louisville Prebyterian Theological Seminary has established policy in the interest of constructing an inclusive community. The language (symbols, metaphors) used in our classes for discussion and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human beings and people of God.

Race, gender and class permeate our society. We must use language, symbols and metaphors that honor our commitment to inclusive community.

Citation of Sources

Fully document all information included in your papers and presentations that is not original. Be aware that when you summarize information, document the source and summarize using your own words. Visit the Academic Support Center for handouts that describe plagiarism and consult the seminary policy on academic honesty. The Library is an additional resource to assist you to clarify citation of sources.

Th.M. and D.Min. Students

All Th.M. and D.Min. students in the course will read an additional 250 pages, provide a critical review of their reading and will summarize their finding to the class in a presentation in addition to other course work. The student will select additional reading material for this assignment in consultation with the professor.

Office Hours by appointment

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