

**Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
32/33-800 Seminar in Practical Theology**

Fall, 2014

Wednesdays 9:00-12:00

Instructor: Jack Seymour

Description: This seminar focuses on practical theology as a theological method. Purposes include the following:

- a) To explore the literature and perspectives in the field of practical theology and among the various fields of Christian education, liturgy, pastoral theology, church leadership and church and community;
- b) To articulate integrated methods of doing theology, research, and ministry;
- c) To embody approaches of interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the social sciences.

The course is designed as a seminar for PhD and advanced masters' students. Students will lead seminar discussions of key texts and present their work as a form of practical theology for feedback from peers and faculty members.

Learning Objectives:

- a) Students will gain knowledge of contemporary debates about practical theology as an aspect of all theology and ministry study;
- b) Students will prepare for doing practical theological research in the life of the church (and for PhD students – to connect research and teaching);
- c) Students will begin to understand themselves as practical theologians of the church and academy.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation in all aspects of the class.
2. Each PhD student(s) will provide a discussion starter for part of a class session where we explore alternative approaches in practical theology. The discussion starter is to be a brief appreciative description (20 minutes) of the approach to practical theology (African-American, Womanist, Feminist, Empirical, Latino, Asian-American, Hermeneutical, White) with questions for discussion. (Topics to be determined in class.)
September 17, 24.
3. Each student is expected to work in a group to teach the work of a practical theology scholar in his/her field of study. October 8, 15, 22, 29.
4. Conducting a seminar presentation of one's own research and theological reflection from the perspective of practical theology. To be scheduled in class for Sessions April 23, 30, May 7. The presentation will be refined in a final paper.
 - a. For PhD students, a final 20-page paper on one's own developing practical theology, its implications for the praxis of the church in the contemporary world including reflection on professional and vocational identity, and your research agenda in the PhD program. We encourage you to work with your academic advisor on this paper so it will be directly related to your dissertation research.
 - b. For DMin students the assignment will be as follows: For DMin students, a final 20-page paper developing the problem for and the practical theology strategy used in the research agenda for your upcoming DMin project. Show how you

are drawing on the theological tradition as well as the resources from social science and ministry as you seek to make a faithful intervention in your ministry. Note particularly its implications for the praxis of the church. I encourage you to work with your academic advisor on this paper so it will be directly related to your DMin project.

- c. For Masters students, a 12-15 page final paper on one's own developing practical theology and its implications for your professional and vocational identity and ministerial praxis in the church in the contemporary world. This should include case material drawn from your praxis of ministry.
5. All papers are to be completed in an inclusive manner, sensitive to issues of sexism, racism, and ageism in the English language. Specific details on all papers and rubrics for grading will be provided by instructors on Moodle class site. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course.

Reading:

- James N. Poling, *Rethinking Faith: A Constructive Practical Theology*. Fortress Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0800697549. \$22.
- Sections from Kathleen Cahalan and Gordon Mikoski, *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*. Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0742561267
- Sections from Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*. Blackwell Pub., 2012. ISBN: 978-1444330823. 199.95 (This seminal encyclopedia of practical theology is expensive. Chapters are available on library website.)
- Three of the following contemporary theorists in practical theology. Two are required: Browning and Graham. Any other key text or another chosen in consultation with instructor (for example, Mercer on practical theology of children or Tribble on leadership). Books will be on reserve in library.
 - **Browning, Don S., *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*. Fortress, 1996.**
 - **Graham, Elaine, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age*. SCM Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0334045984**
 - Plus one additional book:
 - Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0664224295
 - Branson, Mark Lau & Martinez, Juan F. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. IVP Academic, 2011. ISBN: 978-0830839261
 - Cahalan, Kathleen. *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*. Liturgical Press, 2010.
 - Crain, Margaret Ann & Seymour, Jack, *Yearning for God: Reflections of Faithful Lives*. Nashville: Upper Room Press, 2003.
 - Farley, Edward, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*. Westminster John Knox, 2003.
 - Fulkerson, Mary McClintock, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2010.
 - Groome, Thomas, *Will There Be Faith: A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. HarperOne, 2011.

- Lartey, Emmanuel Yartekwei, *In Living Color: an Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline*. Eerdmans, 2012.
- Osmer, Richard, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Eerdmans, 2008.
- Seymour, Jack, *Teaching the Way of Jesus*. Abingdon Press, 2014.
- Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research Methods*. London: SCM, 2006.
- Van der Ven, Johannes, and Barbara Schu, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*, Kok Pharos, 1993.

Schedule

September 3 **Introduction: Exploring Practical Theology**

September 10 **Practical Theology: History and Foundations**

Reading: Poling, *Rethinking Faith* (Appendices 1 and 2; pp 137-170); Cahalan and Mikoski *Opening the Field of Practical Theology* (Introduction and two essays on hermeneutics by Brown and Wolfteich) & Miller-McLemore, *Practical Theology* (Introduction, pp. 1-20).

Supplemental: Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel*

September 17, 24 **Practical Theology: Recovery and Methods**

Read: Sections from Miller-McLemore, *Practical Theology* (Section 2, pp. 89-266) & Cahalan and Mikoski, *Opening the Field of Practical Theology* (pp. 11-270). These will be coordinated for presentations of key perspectives on practical theology and their methods.

Supplemental: Miller-McLemore, *Practical Theology* (Section IV, pp. 397-596)

October 1 **An Experience of Practical Theology**

Reading: Poling, *Rethinking Faith* (Introduction and Chapters 1-4 on doctrine of God, sin and evil, and Christology).

Supplemental: Seymour, *Teaching the Way of Jesus* (chapters 1, 7, 8)

October 8, 15, 22, 29 **Alternative Perspectives on Practical Theology.**

We will explore key contemporary perspectives on the field of practical theology beginning with a shared discussion of Don Browning and Elaine Graham. Others include some of the following: Dale Andrews, Mark Branson, Kathleen Cahalan, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Elaine Graham, Thomas Groome, Juan Martinez, John Swinton, Richard Osmer, Hans van der Ven, Emmanuel Lartey, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, etc. Students are expected to participate in a group **teaching** colleagues the work of one of the scholars.

Reading: Browning, Graham and an additional text in practical theology.

Supplemental: Miller-McLemore; *Practical Theology* (Part 1, 21-88 & Part IV pp. 397-595).

November 5 – Visit of Dr. Ryan Gardner from BYU

Revised 7.10.14

November 12 **Faculty panel on practical theology**

Reading: Review sections of the following, particularly your own discipline: Miller-McLemore, *Practical Theology* (Part III, pp.267-396)

November 19 and December 3 **Student Presentations on Projects**