

AREA IV: MINISTERIAL STUDIES

The biblical and theological heritage of Christianity finds focus in engagement with persons and structures of the church and culture. The revelations of the Bible and theology, by their very nature, require ever-renewed lodging and expression in the ongoing life of both the church and the world. The church and the world, by their natures, require ever-renewed rooting and direction in the Christian heritage. It is a lifetime vocation to learn to discern and guide the processes of this reciprocal engagement. Area IV aspires to find guidelines and impetus for this vocation. All courses in Area IV presuppose some personal experience with the occasions of ministry.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND CARE

REL 807a or b, Introduction to Pastoral Theology and Care Staff

As an introduction to pastoral theology and care, this course explores the history, theory, and methods of the care of souls tradition, concentrating on the narrative, communal-contextual model. The course invites learners into the practice of particular pastoral care skills such as listening and responding in pastoral conversations; supporting families through life transitions; “reading” and engaging cultural contexts and systems of injustice in which care takes place; and the intentional uses of the self in spiritual care. The course introduces at a basic level key theoretical frameworks including narrative, intercultural/interreligious care; family systems; and grief and trauma theory. Teaching and learning methods include lecture, discussion, case studies, role plays, theological reflection, genograms, and visits to local ministry sites. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 810b, My Neighbor’s Faith: Building Interreligious Community Ian Oliver

As individuals and communities engage religious diversity in ways they never have before, this seminar seeks to explore theoretical and practical issues in religious identity and interreligious community building. The course surveys stories and research on the development of religious identity, examines how interreligious relationships and communities are formed, and considers theological and practical rationales and methods. Within traditions, we explore problems of representation and diversity. Between religious traditions, we examine white Christian privilege in America and sources of religious discrimination and conflict. The class defines the qualities of effective interfaith relationships and identifies common mistakes leaders can make. Guest religious leaders from different religious traditions make presentations, students conduct interviews across traditions, and a final project seeks to create an interfaith community education experience. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 824a, Ministry and the Disinherited Frederick Streets

There is a serious and vigorous public debate about the influence of religious values upon society. What ought to be our social responsibilities, particularly to those who are most vulnerable and in need of support, is a contested issue. The COVID-19 pandemic intensively and sharply reveals the public health crisis before us as well as some of the social and systemic inequities that structure our society and how those inequities impact the lives of people. This course has as its focus the effort to theologically reflect on, and discern from, an interdisciplinary approach to defining “the disinherited.” Students explore aspects of the Christian dimensions of social

and political reform movements; the contours of faith-based social services; the influence of religious values on individual behavior; and ideas about the role of the church and government in meeting human needs. Through the interests and research of students, the course addresses topics such as poverty; health care disparities; sexual orientation; ethnic, gender, and racial discrimination; hunger; immigration; homelessness; public education; and the welfare of children. Students are expected to develop an interdisciplinary approach from perspectives found in biblical scriptures, sacred texts, theological/religious beliefs and values, social work, sociology of religion, law, psychology of religion, political science, and social welfare theories. In that setting, students contextualize a theological understanding of the disinherited and what might constitute a ministry that addresses the needs of these groups. The learning journey of the course intentionally engages students on three overlapping themes or levels: theological frameworks, personal identity/sense of vocation, and practical tools one uses in living out one's ministry and/or sense of self in the world. Area IV and Area II.

3 Course cr

REL 833a, Research Methods in Practical Theology Mary Moschella

Qualitative research methods provide a way to study theology-in-practice, faith-on-the-ground. What is actually happening when people practice their faith? How do race, culture, and social capital figure into gatherings and ministries? How can researchers interpret a religious tradition that they also inhabit? Students learn answers to these and other questions while conducting their own research projects throughout the term. As their research progresses and students consult with the class, a research community forms. Ethnography, congregational studies, and participatory action research are among the key approaches covered. Topics include the art and ethics of research design, relationships with participants, reflexivity, analysis, representation, writing, and more.

Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 876b, Psychopathology and Pastoral Care Mary Moschella

This course brings together current medical expertise in psychopathology with pastoral theology and care practices. The basics of the *DSM-5* are introduced, including the history, etiology, epidemiology, and symptoms of, as well as treatments for, the major psychiatric disorders. Literature in pastoral theology as well as films and memoirs facilitate experiential understanding of the conditions studied. Students engage in theological reflection and practice basic skills for ministry that support and empower persons afflicted with these conditions, as well as their families and faith communities.

Area IV. Prerequisite: REL 807 preferred. 3 Course cr

PREACHING MINISTRY

REL 812a or b, Principles and Practices of Preaching Staff

This is the introductory course in theologies and practices of preaching. Students explore a rich variety of approaches to preaching, learn skills for exegeting listening communities, develop their understanding of preaching as public theology, and more. Attention is given to compelling biblical exposition, development of a powerful and supple homiletical imagination, reflection on the preacher's spirituality, and ways to engage all of the preacher's gifts for communication. The course includes plenary instruction and preaching sections in which students prepare and deliver sermons. Area IV.

3 Course cr

REL 816a, Grace Unbounded: Preaching on Ephesians Carolyn Sharp

The Epistle to the Ephesians has been foundational for Christian ecclesiology, theology, and ethics. Elements of Ephesians influential for Christian belief and praxis include the assertion that by grace believers have been saved through faith (2:8), the avowal that Christ is our peace (2:14), the articulation of a theology of unity expressed through vocation and baptism (4:4–6), the notion that God has equipped the saints with diverse gifts for ministry (4:11–13), the exhortation to walk in love as Christ loved us (5:2), and the trope of spiritual armor with which believers may contend against spiritual forces of evil (6:10–17). This course invites students to explore Ephesians as a vitally important resource for Christian proclamation. Students engage contemporary homiletical theory, study sermons from expert preachers, and develop their own homiletical capacity by preaching on texts from Ephesians. Throughout the course, students consider how to make the Gospel known through preaching practices that honor the sophisticated theology and rhetoric of Ephesians. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 817b, Pauli Murray In and Out of the Pulpit Donyelle McCray

This course offers an exploration of Pauli Murray's life and thought with focused attention on Murray's poetry, letters, speeches, memoir, autobiography, and sermons. Murray's writings and performative rhetoric are used to springboard reflection on faith-inspired witness today. The coalescing dynamics of race, class, gender identity, and sexuality are central to the course. A primary aims of the course are to gain a solid understanding of how Murray's voice and activism evolved and to consider contemporary implications. Ultimately, the course is an examination of preaching and identity. Area IV. Prerequisite: REL 812 or its equivalent. An introductory course in theology is recommended. 3 Course cr

REL 831a, Is It a Sermon? Donyelle McCray

Divine action in the world is proclaimed in numerous ways: in music, visual art, literature, testimony, and performance, for example. When might such forms of expression constitute preaching? What are the boundaries of the sermon genre? How might preachers and other proclaimers learn from one another? The aim of this course is to explore the limits of the sermon genre and use the insights gained to enhance the preaching task. The assignments involve blurring the neat lines that separate preaching from other ways of bearing witness to one's faith. The course examines the relationship between proclamation and identity, relying heavily on African American traditions of proclamation and resistance. Ultimately the course seeks to foster vibrant preaching and intellectual curiosity. Area IV. Prerequisite: at least one Area I course. 3 Course cr

REL 834a, Preaching for Introverts Donyelle McCray

While preaching is a public practice, some of history's most influential preachers were introverts. How did they manage the demands given their innate constitutions? How can contemporary introverts approach the practice while being true to themselves? This course explores preaching strategies for introverts. Finding ways to make the depth of one's spiritual insights accessible to others is the central task. Students examine strategies for engaging scripture, composing sermons, and relating with listeners. Since conceptions of introversion are largely undergirded by the preacher's identity and relationship to broader cultural contexts, this course gives considerable attention to the ways race and gender inform introversion and include strategies for integrating embodied knowledge and cultural identity. Ultimately, students find ways to proclaim

vibrant messages that stir passion for the gospel. Area IV. Prerequisites: at least one Area I course and at least one Area II course. 3 Course cr

REL 849b, Preaching for Creation Carolyn Sharp

This course considers ways to bear witness to the inherent value of Earth as a living and interconnected community that teaches profound theological and ethical truths. In discussions and preaching structured around mutual witness and deep listening, students explore such issues as: ways in which Scripture passages testify to the intricate glories and stark vulnerabilities of creation as a site of God's transforming work; the beauty, giftedness, intelligence, and relational sophistication of nonhuman creatures; human sin as a major vector for harms that cause untold suffering in creation; and grace as the divine intention not just for humanity but for all living beings, Earth, and the cosmos. Engaging contemporary homiletical theory and studying sermons from expert preachers, students develop their homiletical skills and capacity to imagine, honor, and advocate for the whole community of Earth and its flourishing. Together students listen for the Gospel in sermons focused on creation, explore the potential of micro-homilies to build the capacity of faith communities for ecotheological reflection and creation care, and attend to poetry and memoir writing as sources of wisdom. There is no prerequisite; those for whom this will be their first homiletics course are welcome. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 874b, Preaching on the Gospel of Mark Carolyn Sharp

Since the earliest decades of the Christian movement, the dramatic Gospel of Mark has been cherished as an authoritative witness to the purposes of God in Jesus of Nazareth. Mark offers much of value for the preacher's consideration: narratives of the hiddenness and disclosure of Jesus as the Son of God and the Holy One of God; storytelling that underscores the urgency of discipleship and its grounding in compassion for the Other; rhetoric about healings and exorcisms as boundary-crossing acts that defy and defeat cosmic forces of oppression; and misunderstanding, conflict, and fear as inevitable dimensions of following Christ. In this course, students engage rich exegetical and literary studies of Mark by New Testament scholars and learn from expert preachers who bring fresh angles from homiletical theory to their engagements with Mark. Students design and preach sermons and micro-homilies that explore the power of the Gospel of Mark for Christian communities of conviction. Area IV. 3 Course cr

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

REL 801a or b, Marquand Chapel Choir Alfred Gumbs
1 credit per term.

REL 802a or b, Marquand Gospel and Inspirational Choir Mark Miller
0.5 credit per term. ½ Course cr

REL 803b, Introduction to Religious Education Almeda Wright

In this course we explore theories and practices of religious education within Christian communities. In particular, we explore and begin to formulate perspectives on the purpose, function, contexts, and methods of religious education. The course is guided by two essential questions posed by religious educator Mary Boys: What does it mean to be religious? What does it mean to educate in faith, to educate persons to the religious dimensions of life? Boys's guiding questions push us to think about how our understandings of religion and religious education are historically situated and how these understandings reflect specific theological and pedagogical commitments.

Answering these questions also requires us to explore the perceived and real challenges to living and growing as persons of faith in our U.S. and global communities. For example, in this course we explore how persons and communities of faith educate in ways that foster theological reflection and constructive responses to myriad challenges such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, poverty, and social class disparities, among others. This course is primarily oriented toward the practices of religious communities and institutions, such as churches and para-church organizations. However, the issues and contexts explored can connect with a variety of settings including families, community organizations, and schools. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 808a, Black Religion and Radical Education Almeda Wright

Can religion and education support black liberation and freedom struggles? Have they always done so? In this course, we carefully interrogate the historical connections between religion (primarily Christianity), education, and struggles for freedom within African American communities and what I have come to describe as *radical black religious education* during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Students explore the ways that scholars have theorized about the radical or progressive dimensions of African American religion, as well as the different definitions and visions of social flourishing at various points throughout the twentieth century. At times, we challenge what has been included in the religious educational tradition of African Americans and what is considered radical. In part, this includes reframing dominant understandings of the contributions of great educators and intellectuals, underscoring the tension between valuing the work of black male intellectuals while recognizing the ongoing silencing and obscuring of black women's social and intellectual work. The course begins with an emphasis on early black religious educators and missionaries, such as Daniel Alexander Payne and Amanda Smith, whose work in the nineteenth century set the stage for the evolution of radical religious education in the twentieth. It continues by focusing on the work of scholars such as Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Carter G. Woodson, as well as the mid-twentieth-century religiously inspired social activism and the education that undergirded much of the civil rights movement. The course concludes by investigating the corresponding changes in black churches and religious academies that resulted from articulations of black power and black freedom and by acknowledging the ongoing significance of questions regarding the interconnection of race, religion, and radical education in contemporary social change movements. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 811a, Models and Methods of College and University Chaplaincy Omer Bajwa and Maytal Saltiel

This course explores various approaches to college and university chaplaincy found in the United States in the twenty-first century. Drawing on a historical framework for the role of chaplaincy in the college setting from the middle of the twentieth century (when secularism became a heavier influence), and exploring the issues that enhance the vocation in a pluralistic context of the twenty-first century, the course provides an overview of strategies needed to offer a creative, current, and engaging chaplaincy in higher education. Through a series of lectures, open discussions, site visits, short chaplaincy narratives, guest speakers, and hands-on creative projects involving extensive group work, the class encounters numerous perspectives and approaches. The course is dedicated to the examination of individual points of view from college and university chaplains from various faith traditions and in different settings (i.e., small

liberal arts schools, historically Black colleges, large research institutions, church-based schools) from across the country. These viewpoints also provide seeds for a deeper discussion of issues such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation within college and university chaplaincies. Area IV and Area V. 3 Course cr

REL 822a, Ministry with Youth Almeda Wright

This course explores theories, perspectives, and approaches to educational ministry with youth. Students look closely at the context and world of youth and explore texts and media that take seriously the voices, dreams, questions, and struggles of adolescents. The class also looks closely at the role of religion and faith in the lives of adolescents—in particular, the role of Christian education and youth workers in the lives of young people. While acknowledging that there are myriad approaches to ministry and education with youth, in this course students wrestle with the question of what “must” be included, covered, or emphasized in good youth ministry. Area IV. 3 Course cr

REL 848a, Educational Ministry in Schools and Colleges Daniel Heischman

This course prepares students of all denominations for the ministry of working with adolescents and young adults, primarily in schools and colleges, but also in church settings. It begins with an analysis of where young people are today, their existential/spiritual concerns, and the current state of their religious practices. The course then considers the similarities and differences between ministry in church settings and in school settings, both secular schools and schools with some sort of religious affiliation. Our principal text is “What Schools Teach Us About Religious Life.” In our study of schools, students consider the issues of school mission, culture, and leadership, including the relationship between church-based schools and the host church/denomination. Issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality are considered throughout the course. Through required field trips, the course considers the particular problems and opportunities in inner-city schools and parish day schools. Area IV and Area V. 3 Course cr

REL 875b, Advanced Topics in Educational Ministry in Schools and Colleges Daniel Heischman

This seminar is designed to allow students to pursue, in depth, themes raised in the introductory courses. The course’s overall consideration is how an educational leader trained at YDS can effectively “minister” to students, colleagues, and other members of school communities. Readings and discussions cover a range of topics including the tradition of faith-based education, school mission, pedagogy, worship, service programs, and ethical leadership in the “business” of schools (admissions, budgets, fundraising). The seminar also makes extensive use of case studies and simulations. For the major research project, each student pursues a topic of particular interest related to schools and educational leadership. Research includes direct experience, fieldwork/campus visits, and review of scholarship. Issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality arise in connection with topics considered in this seminar. Area IV and Area V. 3 Course cr

SPIRITUALITY AND MINISTRY

REL 827a, Introduction to Ecospirituality Melody Escobar

This course considers the link between ecology and spirituality, concentrating on practical wisdom and experiences that deepen awareness of the ecological crisis and

appreciation of our shared belonging within the Earth community. The seminar examines various historical and contemporary resources within Christianity and other religious traditions. Ecofeminism, ecowomanism, and Indigenous teachings inform themes of creation care, interdependence, and ecojustice. Participants are invited to attend to the sacred in their relationship with the natural world, join in “greening” spiritual practice, and discern a pastoral response that fosters the flourishing of all creation. This study seeks to more fully integrate the values of respect, compassion, and connectedness into daily life and ministry. Learning methods include collaborative discourse, analyses of diverse texts and art forms, engagement in ecospiritual practices, creative writing and expression, and design of an “eco-ministry” proposal. Area IV.

3 Course cr

REL 853b, Ignatian Spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises Melody Escobar

A notable example of mysticism of the present moment is the spirituality of sixteenth-century theologian Ignatius of Loyola, expressed particularly in his *Spiritual Exercises*, with its central theme of “finding God in all things.” This course theologically reflects on how the *Exercises* has been directed as a performative text in diverse social-cultural contexts and evaluates its relevance as a pathway for deepening the spiritual life and advancing justice in the world. The study explores Ignatius’s way of contemplation and active discipleship as foundational to everyday spirituality. Participants analyze key aspects in the life and spirituality of Ignatius through engagement with primary texts, scholarly commentaries, and experiential learning. Modalities include individual and small-group practices focused on the principal themes and critical application of the *Exercises*, exploration of scripturally based prayer, appropriation of the rules for discernment, Lectio Divina, the Examen, reflective writing, and a full-day class retreat. Area IV.

3 Course cr