

**Syllabus for COS 524 – Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry**  
**(Formerly COS 514 – Theology and the Practice of Ministry)**  
**October 27-28 and November 10-11, 2017**  
**Martin Methodist College**  
**Rev. John Hill (Oct 27-28) – [therevjohnhill@gmail.com](mailto:therevjohnhill@gmail.com)**  
**Rev. Dr. Matthew Kelley (Nov. 10-11) - [matthew.kelley@tnumc.com](mailto:matthew.kelley@tnumc.com)**

Course Overview:

This course is the capstone to the student's basic course of study. Its focus is the integration of the biblical, theological and practical aspects of ministry.

Course Objectives:

- The student can articulate a Trinitarian theology for the practice of ministry.
- The student can state clearly the nature and mission of the Church and its relation to pastoral ministry.
- The student can demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically.
- The student can develop a plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection and growth.

Required Texts:

- *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* by Will Willimon
- *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* by Kathleen Cahalan
- *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry* by Charles Wood and Ellen Blue

Supplementary (Not Required) Texts:

- *The Grace to Lead* by Lacey Warner and Ken Carder
- *The Sacred Journey* by Frederick Buechner

Pre-Course Assignment

- Read Willimon, pages 11-74 and 171-298, and Cahalan, all
- Write a 5-6 page paper in which you describe the nature and mission of the Church and the theological and biblical foundations for its work. Be sure to include the primary tasks of the Church today, a discussion on the role of the pastor and of the laity in the fulfillment of the Church's mission and tasks, and how our Wesleyan/Methodist theology informs the way that we live out being the Church.
- This is an academic paper and should include an introduction with a thesis statement, a body with supporting evidence for your thesis, and a conclusion. Evidence of engagement with the reading assignments – along with proper citations – should be apparent.
- Written work must be submitted as a Word document by email to both instructors by Monday, October 23, 2017.

Mid-Course Assignment

- Read Willimon, pages 75-170 and 299-336, and Wood & Blue, all
- Write a 4-6 page paper with two main sections. The first section (2-3 pages) is a case study (see Wood & Blue, pages 27-109, for examples) that describes the basic setting of your church (location, size, demographic makeup, etc.) and details a particular incident or

situation that you think would provide useful material for theological reflection. Be sure to include details, people involved (please change the names to keep people anonymous), conversations, decisions, etc. The second section (also 2-3 pages) is a theological reflection on the incident or situation. Be sure to identify the main theological issue(s), how the different parties are viewing the issue(s) and what is at stake in the resolution of the issue(s). Please also evaluate your personal involvement in terms of pastoral effectiveness and appropriateness.

- The paper should have two distinct sections: 1) a case study that simply describes the situation without commentary or evaluation and 2) a reflection piece that provides theological commentary and evaluation. Do not mash these two sections together.
- Written work must be submitted as a Word document by email to both instructors by Monday, November 6, 2017.

#### Final Assignment

- Create a 2-4 page plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection and growth. Include spiritual disciplines that you will practice (e.g., daily prayer, weekly Sabbath, yearly retreat, etc.), how you will foster theological reflection within yourself and within community, and how you will be held accountable by others for this important work.
- Written work must be submitted as a Word document by email to both instructors by Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

#### Other Information Regarding Assignments

- Written work must be typed, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font in Microsoft Word using a standard font such as Times New Roman.
- Submit all written work to *both instructors* by email on or before the due date.
- Read the assignment instructions carefully before beginning your work.
- Please contact either instructor by email if you have questions about any of the assignments.

#### Instructor Biographies

- Rev. John Hill is an ordained elder in the Tennessee Annual Conference. He is serving as the pastor of Blakemore UMC in Nashville. He previously served Christ UMC in Franklin, Bethpage UMC in Sumner County, Christ UMC in Louisville, KY, and Northside UMC in Atlanta while he was in seminary at Candler School of Theology. He previously taught MIN 514 for two years with Dr. Bob Ratcliff.
- Rev. Dr. Matthew Kelly is an ordained elder in the Tennessee Annual Conference. He is serving as Associate Pastor of Christ UMC in Franklin. He previously served Arlington UMC in Nashville, Bethlehem UMC in Clarksville and Crieveewood UMC in Nashville. He earned his M.Div. from Vanderbilt and a Doctorate of Ministry from Candler School of Theology.

#### Grading

- Pre-Course Assignment: 30%
- Mid-Course Assignment: 30%
- Final Assignment: 10%
- Class Participation (including evidence of engagement with the assigned texts): 30%

## Brief Course Outline

- October 27
  - Introduction to theological reflection in ministry
  - Discussion of Pre-Course Assignment
  - Ministry of Pastoral Care
- October 28
  - Ministry of Evangelism
  - Ministry of Christian Education
  - Ministry of Leadership and Administration
  - Introduction to Case Studies and Mid-Course Assignment
- November 10
  - Discussion of Mid-Course Assignment
  - Ministry of Preaching
- November 11
  - Ministry of Worship
  - Ministry of the Sacraments
  - Ministry of Mercy and Justice
  - Pastoral Ethics
  - Pastoral Self-Care and a Lifelong Plan (Final Assignment)