

7400 Theology in Ministry, Fall Term, 2008
Harding University Graduate School of Religion
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Course description

The first half focuses on theological methodology and contextualization, models of theological application in scripture, and methods of applying a theological vision to contemporary ministry settings. In the second half, students will develop and articulate a theological vision that applies to their ministry setting and specific D.Min. projects/dissertations.

Course objectives

- (1) To provide the foundations for thinking theologically within a Christian and biblical framework.
- (2) To engage in the art of theological reflection as a community in application to various ministry contexts.
- (3) To develop, test, and write the theological component of the student's thesis or project.
- (4) To understand ministry from a theological perspective and reflect theologically about specific ministry cases.

Required texts

- C. Leonard Allen, *Things Unseen: Churches of Christ In (and After) the Modern Age* (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2004).
- William J. Abraham, Jason E. Vickers, and Natalie B. Van Kirk, eds., *Canonical Theism: A Proposal for Theology and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).
- Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).
- Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).
- Samuel M. Powell, *A Theology of Christian Spirituality* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005).
- John Mark Hicks, Johnny Melton, and Bobby Valentine, *A Gathered People: Revisioning the Assembly as Transforming Encounter* (Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2007).

All textbooks may be ordered from HUGSR by contacting Brenda David at 1-800-680-0809 (toll-free), 901-432-7735 (local), or bdavid@harding.edu (email).

Requirements and grading

1. Reading of assigned texts and class participation
2. On-line assignments (25%)
3. Project presentation (25%)
4. Theological paper (50%)

Grading scale: 100-90 (A), 89-80 (B), 79-75 (C), 74-70 (D), 69 and below (F)

Cheating in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice and will result in sanctions up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade.

Students with disabilities

It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Steve McLeod, the Registrar, at 761-1353.

Class schedule

I. BEFORE ON-CAMPUS SESSIONS

Blackboard will provide a forum for learning and discussion before the classroom sessions. All posts are due by 5:00 p.m. on the dates assigned. Posts may be submitted prior to these dates, but not afterwards. Late submissions will not receive credit.

Mon., Sept. 1	Blackboard for Theology in Ministry opens
Wed., Sept. 3	Introduce yourself to the class on Blackboard
Fri., Sept. 5	Complete Blackboard assignment for Week 1
Tues., Sept. 9	Respond to three other posts from Week 1
Fri., Sept. 12	Complete Blackboard assignment for Week 2
Tues., Sept. 16	Respond to three other posts from Week 2
Fri., Sept. 19	Complete Blackboard assignment for Week 3
Tues., Sept. 23	Respond to three other posts from Week 3
Fri. Sept. 26	Complete Blackboard assignment for Week 4
Tues., Sept. 30	Respond to three other posts from Week 4
Fri., Oct. 3	Post your project presentation handout

Week 1

Leonard Allen, *Things Unseen*.

The first reading will provide some historical perspective and expose us to the current theological situation, especially from the perspective of Churches of Christ.

Week 2

Abraham, Vickers, and Van Kirk, eds., *Canonical Theism*, pp. xi-174, 244-270, 287-315.
Mark Powell, "Canonical Theism and Theological Commitments in the Stone-Campbell Movement," available on Blackboard.

These readings introduce you to a contemporary theological project I have participated in and find helpful as a response to the current theological situation. Note that you are only required to read selected portions of the book (though you may want to scan the rest).

Week 3

Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*.

This text attempts to think about ministry theologically, specifically through christology in a Trinitarian framework.

Week 4

Arthur Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, chaps. 1-2, 11-23.

This text considers missions from the perspective of what God is doing in human history, specifically through the central theme of Jesus's ministry in the synoptic gospels—the kingdom of God. Note that you are only required to read selected portions of the book (though you may want to scan the rest).

While we will not discuss *A Theology of Christian Spirituality* and *A Gathered People* online, these will be discussed in class and must be read prior to Monday, October 13.

II. ON-CAMPUS SESSIONS

Class meeting times: Oct. 9-16

Session 1: 8:15-10:55 a.m.

Session 2: 1:00-3:45 p.m.

Thurs., Oct. 9	Session 1: The minister as theologian Session 2: Historical context and contemporary issues (Allen)
Fri., Oct. 10	Session 1: Historical context and contemporary issues (Abraham, Vickers, and Van Kirk; M. Powell) Session 2: Who God Is: The Trinity (Purves)
Sat., Oct. 11	Session 1: What God is Doing: The kingdom of God (Glasser)
Mon., Oct. 13	Session 1: Thinking theologically about ministry: spiritual formation (S. Powell) Session 2: Thinking theologically about ministry: worship (Hicks, Melton, and Valentine)
Tues., Oct. 14	Project presentations (three students)
Wed., Oct. 15	Project presentations (three students)
Thurs., Oct. 16	Project presentations (three students)

III. AFTER ON-CAMPUS SESSIONS

Fri., Nov. 21

Theological paper due

On-line discussion

Blackboard will be used to discuss required course readings prior to the classroom sessions. If you have not used Blackboard or need a refresher course, go to <http://elearning.harding.edu> and log in with username “guest” and password “harding.” (Do not include the quotation marks.) Theology in Ministry will involve the *Discussions* area of Blackboard, so pay special attention to the *Discussions* area tutorial to insure your ability to properly post and respond to postings in the *Discussion* area.

Before beginning the online portion of the course, you may want to check your computer settings. You can check your settings by going to www.blackboard.com, click on *Support – Student*. From this page you can check your browser settings, as well as find other helpful information on possible problem areas, such as pop-up blockers and Java settings.

You may reach Theology in Ministry by:

1. Logging in to *Pipeline* (<http://pipeline.harding.edu>).
 - a. You will need your username and password to access your courses. If you do not have your username and password, please contact Dr. Steve McLeod, HUGSR Registrar, at 901-432-7733.
2. Click on the *HU Student* link, then *HU Courses*
3. You will see Theology in Ministry in your course listings. Click on the course title.
 - a. If you do not see Theology in Ministry listed, please contact Dr. McLeod at 901-432-7733 to verify your enrollment.
 - b. If you have verified your enrollment but still do not see your course, please contact Blackboard support at webct@harding.edu or 501-279-5201. Please include your phone number, if available.
4. You should now be in your course
 - a. If you have trouble opening your course or if it asks you for an additional password, please contact Blackboard support at webct@harding.edu or 501-279-5201.
 - b. If you are using a MAC, please contact webct@harding.edu for special instructions.

Important phone numbers: You may find it helpful to print these phone numbers and keep in area that you can access even if you cannot get online.

Blackboard Support

(8 am to 10 pm)

HelpDesk – 501.279.5201

24/7 - webct@harding.edu – Your e-mail will be responded to within 24 hours.

You are required to post one critical review of each week's readings. The critical review should be 400-600 words (2-3 pages); no more and no less. When citing or referring to a passage from the readings, use parenthetical notes with the page number(s) you reference (footnotes are not required for Blackboard assignments).

You are also required to respond to three posts by other students. Each response must be at least 100 words. I will also contribute to the discussions so that our dialogue begins even before we arrive in the classroom.

In order to receive credit, each post must be (1) on time, (2) on topic, (3) of sufficient length, and (4) of sufficient quality.

Project presentation

Each student will present to the class the substance of the theological component of his or her project/dissertation. The focus of this presentation will be the theological rationale for the project/dissertation.

1. Prepare a two page handout for the class and post the handout on Blackboard by Friday, Oct. 3.
2. Present your theological rationale in 45-60 minutes.
3. Lead a discussion with the class concerning your rationale and be prepared to defend its feasibility. You are responsible for the discussion period so you may want to prod it by prepared discussion questions if nothing arises from the floor. The discussion period will range between 45-60 minutes.

Theological paper

Each student is required to submit a 30-40 page paper. Consider this paper the theological chapter of your project/dissertation. Using the insights gained from the discussion in class, present and defend the theological rationale for your particular project. The paper must carefully follow Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed., rev. by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Papers will be penalized for style.

A hard-copy of the paper should be mailed to the professor at 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38117. The paper should be bound by a paper clip in the top left-hand corner. Late papers will be penalized one-point per day late (excluding Sundays), up to ten points. A scanned copy of the paper, with the professor's comments, will be returned to the student by e-mail.