Northern Seminary
MN 344 ISSUES IN CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP
Fall 2013
Mondays 4:00 – 6:40 p.m.
Dr. Harry L. Parker, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Oak Park, Illinois
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Course Description
Seminaries typically excel at equipping students in areas such as Biblical exegesis, theology, and church history. The formation of ministers also includes training in the practical skills of congregational leadership. This course will concentrate on “boots on the ground” issues that pastors and church leaders encounter in ministry.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:
1. Articulate a holistic understanding of the Gospel
2. Prepare a model of ministry and evangelism growing out of one’s understanding of the Gospel
3. Develop a personal plan of spiritual practices
4. Identify some of the interpersonal dynamics at play in one’s place of ministry
5. Demonstrate an understanding of, and strategy to deal with, conflict
6. Develop a decision making process for individuals and groups
7. Incorporate spiritual direction into ministry including developing skills in listening to underlying issues
8. Discern experiences of “Consolation” and “Desolation” and master a process of overcoming Desolations

Course Requirements

Master’s Students

- Attend all class sessions and participate in group discussion. Absences will be noted as unexcused unless the instructor is notified
- Read the six required texts
- Write four papers of four to five pages on the following topics integrating learning from the reading and in-class discussion, as well as devotional life.
  1. My Understanding of the Gospel and How it Shapes My Ministry
  2. My Personal Plan for Spiritual Formation
  3. Dynamics Shaping My Place of Ministry
  4. Strategies for Decision Making and Conflict Resolution OR Incorporating Spiritual Direction in My Ministry
- Pray and meditate at least thirty minutes a day, five days a week
- Keep a log and/or journal of your daily prayer and meditation
Diploma/Certificate Students

- **Attend** all class sessions and participate in group discussion. Absences will be noted as unexcused unless the instructor is notified
- **Read** five of the required texts
- **Pray and meditate** at least thirty minutes a day, five days a week

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**Grading**

- 5 points for class attendance (.5 point for each class attended) (5% of final grade)
- 5 points for daily prayer/meditation (.5 point for five days each week) (5% of final grade)
- 10 points for reading five texts (10% of final grade)
- 80 points for the four papers (20 point each) (80% of final grade)

**Grading Scale**

- **A** = 100-95  
  **A-** = 94-90  
- **B+** = 89-87  
  **B** = 86-83  
- **B-** = 82-80  
  **C+** = 79-77  
- **C** = 76-73  
  **C-** = 72-70  
- **D+** = 69-67  
  **D** = 66-63  
- **D-** = 62-60  
  **F** = 59 and below
Tentative Schedule

September 23  
Topic: Getting the Gospel Straight (Nominal Christianity, Soterian Gospel, Keller’s “Third Way”, King Jesus Gospel)  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “Introduction” & “Community” (Through Not an Ideal but a Divine Reality)  
Read: Keller

September 30  
Topic: Getting the Gospel Straight (Idolatry, Evangelism, Ministry)  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “Community” & “The Day with Others” (Through Reading the Scriptures)  
Read: Keller

October 7  
Topic: The Minister’s Spiritual Life (Lectio Divina, Prayer of Examen, Centering Prayer)  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, Finish “The Day With Others”  
Read: Bernardin  
Due: My Understanding of the Gospel & How It Shapes My Ministry

October 14  
Topic: Conflict and Its Resolution (Five Levels of Conflict, “The Presupposition,” Strategies, Forgiveness)  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “The Day Alone” (Through Prayer)  
Read: Galindo, “Part One: Understanding the Congregation”

October 21  
Topic: Church Dynamics  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, Finish “The Day Alone”  
Read: Galindo, “Part Two: Understanding the Hidden Lives of Congregations”  
Due: My Personal Plan for Spiritual Formation

October 28  
Topic: Church Dynamics  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “Ministry” (Through The Ministry of Holding One’s Tongue)  
Read: Barnes, chapters 1-5 “The Call of the Minor Prophet”

November 4  
Topic: Listening  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “Ministry” (The Ministry of Meekness)  
Read: Barnes, chapters 6-9 “The Craft of the Minor Poet”  
Due: Dynamics Shaping My Place of Ministry

November 11  
Topic: Decision Making (Wesley Quadrilateral, Ignatius of Loyola Model, Your Deepest Desire, Consensus vs. Voting)  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, “Ministry” (Through The Ministry of Helpfulness)  
Read: Begin Northcutt
November 18  
Topic: Spiritual Direction in Ministry  
Devotional: Bonhoeffer, Finish “Ministry”  
Read: Finish Northcutt

December 2  
Topic: Leftovers - Nuts and Bolts Ministry (Starting and Ending Well,  
Assessment Tools, Hospital Calling, Stewardship, Missional vs.  
Attractional ministry, Managing Change, etc)  
Due: *Strategies for Decision Making and Conflict Resolution* OR  
*Incorporating Spiritual Direction in My Ministry*  
Due: Devotional/Prayer Log  
Due: Reading Report

POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES

NOTE: All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account.  
Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to  
your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do  
their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person  
to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is  
equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity  
in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

**Class Attendance Policy**  
It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least  
80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. A professor may set other attendance  
expectations. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will  
be absent. Attendance expectations are higher for online and intensive courses (see syllabus for  
specific requirements).

**Class Tardiness Policy**  
The third time a student is late to the start of class, it will be counted as a class absence. It is also  
expected that students will return from a break by the time specified by the professor.

**Late Work Policy**  
If a student cannot complete the work for a course by the due date listed on the syllabus, they must  
submit a “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form to the Registrar by 4:30 of the last day of the  
term. The form must be signed by the instructor and Dean of Students. The professor may set  
stipulations and grade reductions. In the absence of a formal request form, the student will receive a  
grade based upon work completed by the last day of the term.

**Turabian Format**  
All papers, including footnotes and bibliography, must be submitted in the correct format according  
to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 8th ed.*,  
2013.
**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

**Electronic Format**
Unless otherwise specified by the professor, all work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

**Technology Use in the Classroom**
Unless it is directly tied to note-taking or research for the class, students are expected to refrain from using cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class.

**Course Evaluation in Moodle**
Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at http://moodle.seminary.edu in order to receive a final grade for the course. The evaluation will be open for one week starting the last day of the term. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to ithelpdesk@seminary.edu.