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Course Description
The Integrative Seminar course is a seminary capstone experience. The class is designed to assess each student’s integration of the main educational and formational goals of Northern Seminary in the areas of Christian Heritage, Formation and Ministry.

Course Objectives
The goal is to know the Christian story you inhabit, and to live responsibly from within that narrative. You will be able to theologically assess issues from a Christian perspective, to practice wise discernment in the communal class experiences, and to articulate a coherent response in the context of a small and large group setting. Our emphasis is upon “integration.” This course will give students the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate competence in articulating your own clear and coherent theology. Peer interaction, feedback, research, analysis, and revisions will help you achieve this goal.
- Correlate your personal and communal theology, in a meaningful and coherent way, with various Church issues.
- Show self-awareness of your theological ‘lens’ or orientation, express your own faith convictions and ministry responses in a dialogical context, and learn from the perspectives of others.
- Present what you learned and discerned as possible leadership steps to offer to the class to process together in community.

Course Requirements & Evaluation:
You will have opportunity to practice ‘ministry application’ that corresponds to your theological identity and purpose within the Kingdom/gospel narrative. You will be presented with a concrete ministry issue, which you will work through with an assigned small group that will function as delegates from your present or home church’s leadership team. You will develop practical, measurable ministry responses integrating these resources:

- particular Christian tradition
- presentation of the Christian narrative (delineating doctrinal categories) that gives the theological contexts for why this issue matters to the church

“Be like the fox who makes more tracks than necessary, some in the wrong direction. Practice Resurrection.”

- Wendell Berry

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● Theo-ethical analysis and interpretation of the issue in that context
● (direct or indirect) biblical exegesis and hermeneutics on this issue
● contextual exegesis of the issue
● pertinent research (cultural, anthropological, sociological, psychological, medical, etc.)

As you make decisions about the use of these resources, you will demonstrate awareness of their hermeneutical assumptions, the embedded presuppositions, ideologies, perspectives, cultural values, and social locations they represent. As you exegete these hermeneutical assumptions, you will do the same with your own underlying assumptions and unexamined perspectives.

Class Schedule:

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| Week 1 | April 3  | ● Intro to Integrative Seminar  
● Northern in My Narrative discussion (w/handout) | Group Presentation Dates Assigned                                                                   |
| Week 2 | April 10 | ● Conflict mediation and transformation  
● The practice of communal discernment  
● Church issue assigned post-class | Read for class:  
● Hauerwas: “On Doctrine and Ethics” (M)  
● Nordling: “Living as Jesus” (M)  
● Watts: “New Creation” (R)  
● Smith: “You are What You Love” |
| Week 3 | April 17 | ● Critical Processing/Exercise  
● Share Gut Reactions to Church Issues | Gut Reactions Due (4/11)  
● Elder: “Developing as Rational Persons” (M) |
| Week 4 | April 24 | ● Draft 3-P Guide in class: (See 2a below)                                   | 3-P Guide due by midnight  
● Branson and Martinez |
| Week 5 | May 1    | ● Group Process                                                              | Tasks and location TBD by group                                                                      |
| Week 6 | May 8    | ● Group Process                                                              | Tasks and location TBD by group                                                                      |
| Week 7 | May 15   | ● Group Presentations                                                       | Presentation materials due from all groups                                                            |
| Week 8 | May 22   | ● Group Presentations                                                       |                                                                                                       |
Week 9
May 29
● Group Presentations

Week 10
June 5
● Group Presentations
● Individual Reflection Due
● “Lived Theology” Reflection Due
● Annotated Bibliography Due

Required Reading:


Assignments:

1) Gut Reaction to Church Issue - Due Apr 11 (Submitted on Moodle by 9:00 pm)

Set aside 1 hour to do this assignment.

On April 10, after class, you will each receive a description of your group’s church issue.

In the next 23 hours, when you are ready, open up the issue description. *If you had to reply with an answer in the moment, with no opportunity to reflect or do research, what would you say?*
You have 1 hour to write a quick, unfiltered, gut response to this issue on Moodle. Write as quickly as possible, in order to find out what you already think. DO NOT FILTER. (Prose or bullet points is acceptable.)

**DO NOT DISCUSS these papers with your group before the next class session.**

2) **Group Process on Church Issue:**
There is no separating theology from ethics. They are two sides of the same coin, both of which show the face of Jesus. Hence, this exercise leads us through your discernment of a meaningful, “lived theology” that you and your church might undertake together in regard to this issue.

As in any congregation or leadership team, individuals need to submit to one another and corporately consent for the good of the group, even as disagreements arise. Your group process is a microcosm of what is experienced in the church. As issues come up, the hope is that there is a group process to discern theologically sound and human image-bearing honoring responses.

a) **3-P Guide (Plan/Process/Participation) - Due April 24**

Prayerfully craft this 3-P guide as a group in class. It should clearly, concisely delineate the following:

1)  **Plan:**
   i) Attach a copy of your Church issue.
   ii) What is your plan for preparing a response to this issue?
   iii) Set clear deadlines and lines of communication for each step.

2)  **Process:**
   i) What procedures will you undertake to become more informed, and to inform the class, about this issue and its wide-ranging implications?
   
   ii) Recognizing that God offers wisdom and truth in and outside of Scripture, what multi-dimensional sources (psychology, sociology, subculture, church tradition, personal experience, Scripture, interviews with experts, etc.) will aid you in discernment around this issue?
   
   iii) What will be your discernment process in preparing a response to this issue?
   
   iv) What tasks, expectations, roles, and responsibilities will you set for researching, discussing, praying, writing-up, and presenting the issue to the class?

3)  **Participation:**
   i) Attach a copy of each member’s personality assessments from Seminary Formation course (Midwest Ministry Center)
   
   ii) How will each person participate in this process?
   
   iii) What communal practices and behaviors do you commit to in an effort to receive and respect the work of the Holy Spirit and the image of God in one another’s lives?
How will you account for one another’s different perspectives and behavioral preferences?

Send a completed copy to Dr. Nordling and Megan Westra (TA) by midnight.

b) Group Presentation: Materials Due May 15; Presentations Due May 15-June 5

One full copy of your presentation (with any supplemental materials) will be handed in on May 15. You must include a biblio/videography of all resources used in your research and presentation.

Remember that you are presenting your issue, and a well-informed, prayerfully considered, possible response, to a group of fellow leaders, all of whom have varying degrees of influence in their congregations. All want to learn with you in order to lead their congregations into mutual discernment over similar issues. Your presentation will offer a coherent response that is still open to further discernment by the class.

Presentations should be about 45-50 minutes. Each person in your group must participate during the presentation. You may use slides, handouts, and anything that will help communicate your proposal.

3) Individual Reflection on 3-P Process (3-5 pages) – Due June 5

You will each complete:

a. An assessment of your individual involvement, and that of your fellow group members, in following your 3-P guidelines and class presentation.

b. An individual reflection on the communal discernment process. Please include responses to the following:

   What were the challenges and benefits of wrestling together over this issue?
   What did you notice about the dynamics of the group? Did it change over the course of your weeks together? What opportunities for transformation by the Spirit resulted from conflict within the group?

   Reflect also on your own experience in the group. What happened to you in the process? Were your initial perspectives challenged and widened? What did you learn about your “part” in the body of Christ? What strengths did you bring to the group? What personal blind spots were you made aware of? How did other members of the group bring strengths that complemented your own?

4) “Lived Theology” Response (3-5 pages) - Due June 5

Description: Based on your personal response to the issue presented by your group (which may differ from or be the same as the group’s response), you will write up your own “lived theology.”
Assume that you will submit this “lived theology” response to a church leadership group (of which you are a part) that is responsible for discernment and pastoral care decisions on behalf of your own community (home church or present church). Assume that your church knows the issue and the people involved. You will show mastery of the theological wisdom gained from the multiple sources accessed in your group process (e.g., social sciences, Scripture, Christian tradition, etc.).

Conclude by reflecting on how group discernment contributes to a better understanding of 1) the issue 2) your own contextual perspective, and 3) the necessity and challenge of communal discernment as the church in communion with the Triune God.

5) Annotated Bibliography - Due June 5

Description: From the list of theological concepts below, create an annotated bibliography to encapsulate your theological framework. The resources on your biblio/videography should both be informative in the construction of your response to your assigned issue, and also be accessible to people in your congregational setting. For each term, list off one book, article, podcast, or video recording you would recommend to a congregant and 1-2 paragraphs on why you consider this resource formational to your theological framework.

Theological concepts to be covered:

- Theological Anthropology
- Trinitarian Theology
- Eschatology
- Ecclesiology
- Soteriology
- Homoousion
- Creation ex nihilo
- Incarnation
- Hypostatic Union
- Pneumatology
- Nicene Creed

Grading/Evaluation:

Letter Grade, based upon:

- Class Participation 20%
- Gut Reaction Post 10%
- Group Presentation 30%
- Individual Reflection 15%
- Lived Theology Reflection 15%
- Annotated Bibliography 10%

Total: 100%
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

POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES

NOTE: All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account. Contact helpdesk@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.

Diploma/Certificate Student Course Requirements
The amount of work required of Diploma/Certificate students will be at the discretion of the professor. Students will be responsible for contacting the professor about what assignments are required.

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 more strict attendance expectations for a given course. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will be absent. Attendance expectations are higher for online, intensive courses, and integrative seminar (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.

Food in the Classroom
Drinks are welcome in the classroom. Food should only be consumed in the student commons and the breakroom. Please limit eating to before, after or during breaks from class.

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.