Formation 3  
PT610 DA-h-D  
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Fall, 2015

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course serves as the Capstone for the students’ Formation experience. In this course, students will assimilate and update all of the previous Formation assignments into a working portfolio for ministry. In addition, the course will help students create a theological statement on mission and ministry.

Meeting Times:
Face-to-Face:  
Formation Retreat,  
Monday, Sept. 14-Thursday, Sept. 17, 8:30-5:30

Online:  
9 Weeks:  
September 20 – November 21

II. TEXTBOOKS:
Required Reading:

Snyder, Howard A. with Daniel V. Runyon, Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ’s Body. ISBN: 978-1610977104

III. GOALS:
This is a core course that provides content and culture to continue shaping one’s pastoral identity. It is designed to root students in deep spiritual formation, covenantal community, theological and biblical discernment so that a student would show an awareness of their own spiritual development characterized by mature self-acceptance and self-direction as well as demonstrate competence in the skills and perspectives necessary for leadership in the formation of disciples. We will explore the biblical and theological nature of ministry as well as edit and refine one’s portfolio for ministry.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of the course, a student will be able to:
1. Articulate a theological foundation for both the mission of the Church and one’s unique contribution to that mission.
2. Identify significant insights for ministry that emerge from one’s Capstone project.
3. Practice a grace-filled means of closure within one’s covenantal community.

V. LEARNING/TEACHING STRATEGIES:
This semester of ministry formation integrates a variety of teaching/learning strategies:

1. Attendance/participation in plenary sessions, MINgroup, worship and common meal
2. Establishment of a ministry group covenant
3. Submission of written assignments
4. Leading and participating in worship
5. Readings with corresponding papers and/or group presentations
6. Participation with members of the MINgroup in evaluation
VI. CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS:
(all times EST)

Pre-Work
Each student is expected to complete all of the following reading and written assignments prior to the Formation Retreat.

Reading:
Read Sacred Rhythms, Introduction, Chapters 1-2 & 9 (9-44, 146-166)
Read Decoding the Church, Introduction, Chapters 1-3 (13-59)

Written Work:
1. Sacred Rhythms Work – Each student must complete and bring the second half of the paper (material related to the Rule of Life) with them to the retreat.
2. SMART Goals – Bring 2 copies of your completed goals with you.

Bring enough copies of both written assignments for each group member and leader.

Formation Retreat (Sept 14-17)
All students must attend all of the Formation Retreat on September 14-17 (8:30 am-5:30 pm) at Christ UMC in Kettering Ohio. Arriving late or leaving early warrants failure of the course.

Retreat Contents:
   Monday: Covenant Making, Catching Up, and Preparing for Tuesday
   Tuesday: Silence and Solitude Retreat.
   Wednesday: Reflecting on Retreat, Rule of Life, SMART Goals & Personal Trajectory
   Thursday: Case Studies-ministry theology

Week One (Sept 20-26)
Tasks:
1. Submit SMART goals by Tuesday, Sept. 21.
2. Read Sacred Rhythms, Chapters 3-4 (45-77)
3. Practice ‘scripture’ as Barton directs using Isaiah 30:15-21 as your text. Then, post at least a 200-word reflection (or 5 minute video) to the questions on pages 59-61 of Sacred Rhythms in the ‘Scripture's Practice’ forum by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to at least two colleagues' posts by Saturday, 5 pm. If the group can make it work, a Google Hangout can replace this forum with all fully present.

Week Two (Sept 27-Oct 3)
Tasks:
1. Read Sacred Rhythms, Chapters 5-6 (78-109)
2. Practice ‘self-examination’ as Barton directs. Then, post at least a 200-word reflection (or 5 minute video) to the questions on pages 108-109 of Sacred Rhythms in the 'Examination' forum by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to at least two colleagues' posts by Saturday, 5 pm. If the group can make it work, a Google Hangout can replace this forum with all fully present.
3. 2-3 page Weekly Reflection Report (WRR)1 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Three (Oct 4-10)
Tasks:
1. Read Sacred Rhythms, Chapters 7-8 & Appendix (110-145, 186-187)
2. Practice ‘Sabbath’ as Barton directs. Then, post at least a 200-word reflection (or 5 minute video) to the questions on page 145 of Sacred Rhythms in the Sabbath’s Practice forum by
Week Four (Oct 11-17)
Tasks:
1. As you make the turn toward completion of your Theology of Ministry paper, select two songs that serve as the soundtrack for what God has called you to do. Post YouTube links for the song in the ‘Ministry Soundtrack’ forum by Thursday 11:59 pm. Also include a few sentences about why you chose what you did. Why do the songs resonate with your understanding of vocation? What do they say theologically? How might one understand your unique calling by listening to those songs? Reply to 2 others by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. 6-8 page Rule of Life & Sacred Rhythms Paper Due by Saturday, 5 pm.
3. 2-3 page WRR 3 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Five (Oct 18-24)
Tasks:
1. Visit the ‘Outline’ forum. Post an initial outline of what you need to be thinking of or researching within each section of the Theology of Ministry paper. Post by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Reply to 1 other by Saturday, 5 pm. From this discussion, submit a more formal outline in the dropbox. Outline of Theology of Ministry paper due by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. Read Decoding the Church, Chapters 4-6 (60-102)
3. 2-3 page WRR 4 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Six (Oct 25-31)
Tasks:
1. As you work toward completion of your Theology of Ministry paper, select a scripture passage (or passages) that serve as a lens through which you understand your call. Post the text for the passage in the ‘Ministry Scripture’ forum by Thursday 11:59 pm. Also include a few sentences about why you chose what you did. What does that passage say about ministry? Why does it resonate with you? How has it or will it form your lens for essential ministry? Reply to 2 others by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. Read Decoding the Church, Chapters 7-9 (103-138)
3. 2-3 page WRR 5 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Seven (Nov 1-7)
Tasks:
1. Rough draft of Theology of Ministry paper due by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. Read Decoding the Church, Chapters 10-12 (139-190)
3. 2-3 page WRR 6 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.
4. To assist in completing part 2 of the final paper, post 300 words on: What is the nature and mission of the church / community of faith in the world? Who belongs in the church and why? Post by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to one other by Saturday, 5 pm.

Week Eight (Nov 8-14)
Tasks:
1. As you build the final paper, post in the ‘Almost There’ forum your answers to these: Having looked forward and articulated your vision for future ministry, how can you best prepare to live into that vision? What classes will you take? What experiences (CPE, counseling, additional internships or training) do you need to pursue? What is your action plan for the next two years? Be specific. Post 200 words by Thursday, 11:59 pm. Respond to one other by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. 2-3 page WRR 7 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.

Week Nine (Nov 15-21)
Tasks:
1. Visit the ‘Reflection’ forum and post 200 words of self-evaluation related to the SMART goals and the group covenant. Post by Thursday at 11:59 pm. Reply to all by Saturday, 5 pm.
2. 2-3 page WRR 8 Due. Submit to drop-box by Friday 11:59 pm.
3. Theology of Ministry Paper is due by Saturday, 5 pm.

VII: SEMINARY STANDARDS:
A. Inclusive language: United Theological Seminary has an official policy regarding the use of Inclusive Language. The policy may be found in the Seminary Catalog and further explained in the Student Handbook. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor.
B. Academic Integrity: Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the Seminary community. A detailed policy regarding what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in the Student Handbook.
C. Online Confidentiality: One of the highlights of the online classroom is that students can draw from the experiences shared during class discussions and in written work. However, it is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing online conversations with those outside of the classroom.
D. Statement on Disability: Any student who may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Registrar’s office.

VIII: USING ONLINE RESOURCES:
For information about how to access Online United and where to find help if you need it may be found on the seminary website at http://online.united.edu. Live support and help guides are available once you have logged into the United Online site in the upper right corner.

To get online help with the Student Portal, United mail, or any other system on campus, email: onlinehelp@united.edu.

IX. EVALUATION
A. Assignments

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS:

All papers will be written by the following guidelines: Double spaced, 12 pt. font, 1” margins, Times New Roman font. Grading Rubrics are provided for each written assignment.

1. Weekly Reflection Reports

Description: Each student will submit a weekly reflection report to the group facilitator. The report will comprise a reflection on their personal, professional and spiritual journey for the week as per the document, Weekly Reflection Report Guide. Each report must be 2-3 pages.

Due Date[s]: Reports are due each Friday at 11:59 pm starting with week two. There will be eight reports submitted.
2. SMART Goals

Description: All students are asked to set goals for learning and serving for the Fall Semester. The creation of SMART goals begins with the setting of goals for personal, spiritual and professional growth. Students will be given examples of these goals and a form within the first two weeks of the course.

Due Date(s): Students must bring an almost final draft to the Retreat. A final copy is due Sept. 21.

3. Theology of Ministry Paper*

*Adapted from Drew Theological School’s Supervised Ministry Theological Reflection Course

Description: Each student will submit a 13-16 page paper on one’s theology of ministry.

One of the key elements of effective ministry on the part of the pastoral leader is a clear theological vision for ministry. Religious leaders with a well-developed theology for ministry will be better able to lead faith communities to articulate a faith foundation for all they do. Religious leaders who do not have a well developed theology of ministry risk drifting from the central tasks of equipping disciples of Jesus Christ for effective ministry and working for justice in the world.

This paper is designed to pull together the resources and experiences of your seminary journey thus far and allow you to articulate your current theology of ministry. Knowledge gained from your field education setting and all of your coursework to date in pastoral theology, church history, theology, ethics, and biblical studies should be integrated into each section of the paper. Please study the attached grading rubric that your facilitator will use to grade the papers.

Note: Two copies of the paper should be turned in to your instructor. In 13-16 pages, address the following five areas:

3. Pastoral Identity (2-3 pages)
   a. How do you perceive your gifts, your motives, your role, your likes and dislikes as a minister after serving in your field education setting? How did it form your understanding of vocation?
   b. Describe one specific event, relationship or experience (can be positive or challenging) from your field education setting that helped you to better understand your calling, the nature of ministry and what a minister is and does. Relate this to biblical, theological or historical resources.

4. Nature and Mission of the Church (3-4 pages)
   a. What is the nature and mission of the church / community of faith in the world? How did your field education experience affirm or challenge your definition of the church?
   b. Who belongs in the church and why? Integrate your field education experience into your answer and cite biblical, theological or historical resources.

5. Activity of God in the Church and World (3-4 pages)
   a. When and how did you see God in your field education experience? How did your ministry experience complement or challenge your biblical/theological understanding of God’s character and activity? Be specific.
   b. How has your understanding of the life and work of Jesus Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit impacted or been challenged by the places in which you have served?

6. Your Vision for Future Ministry (3-4 pages)
   a. How has your understanding of ministry been changed or challenged while in the Formation program?
   b. If you were able to describe how and in what kind of community you hope to serve in the future—assuming you have access to adequate resource—what will be the
character of the community and how will you lead? If you are MDiv, integrate what you have learned about your pastoral leadership strengths and your use of pastoral power and authority.

7. Going Forward (1 page)
   a. Having looked forward and articulated your vision for future ministry, how can you best prepare to live into that vision? What classes will you take? What experiences (CPE, counseling, additional internships or training) do you need to pursue?
   b. What is your action plan for the next two years? Be specific.

Due Date(s): November 21. An outline is due October 24. A rough draft is due November 7.

4. Sacred Rhythms & Rule of Life

Description: Using Ruth Haley Barton’s Sacred Rhythms, students will write a 6-8 page paper that covers the following:

Half of the paper should be a reflection upon a 4-8 hour, self-initiated solitude and silence retreat (taken anytime before November 8). The reflection should include thoughts on some of the following questions:
- What expectations did I have going into my time “away?”
- What resources did I take? Leave behind?
- Describe the setting and how you spent your time.
- How did it ‘feel’: at the beginning? at the end?
- What surprised you? What bothered you?
- Where did God meet you (or where did you recognize God)?
- Share any other insights the time away has given you.

The second half of the paper should be in response to Barton’s book:
- How would you describe the deepest desires of your heart (Chap. 1)?
- What rhythms from her book are surfacing that may be a part of your life’s rhythm of soul care?
- Re-read your spiritual autobiography from Formation. How has God made God’s self known to you? Are there similarities in the disciplines or experiences? Share some responses to this in your paper.
- Using your Rule of Life from Formation 1b, offer a reflection on how you did and did not live into its practice this year. Include in this reflection wisdom gained along the way.
- Using Barton’s guide (162-166), update your Rule of Life for your life’s next season. Keep the format you have or create a more organic one that fits your life. You might want to reference weekly reflections from previous semesters and wisdom gained through semesters of MINgroup.
- Make sure your paper includes a description of the obstacles you anticipate rising to the surface as you continue practicing your Rule of Life.
- Conclude your paper with an original (to you) prayer that you might say as you begin each day in your pattern for life.

Due Date(s): October 17.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Online Participation: Each student will be assigned a grade based on his or her participation. Each student must participate in the weekly common meal, chapel and group time. Students who are absent for more than 1/6 of the course may be unable to complete the course with a passing grade. Requests for exceptions must be made directly to the facilitator prior to absences. A student may not miss more than 6 academic hours (2 weeks online). Online participation is measured by
participating in the group discussions, whether that requires posting in the forums as directed each week or being fully present in a Google Hangout. Only submitting written work for grading does not constitute weekly, online participation.

B. Method of Assigning Grades:

Grades will be assigned by the MiNgroup facilitator in consultation with the contextual ministries directors in accord with the standardized evaluation sheet. The various assignments will be weighted in terms of their value in relation to the whole of the work assigned.

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X. COURSE EVALUATIONS:
It is very important for students to submit course evaluations toward the end of the semester. Instructors do not see the student evaluations until they have submitted the students’ final, official grades. Students should feel free to evaluate the course without any negative ramifications.