

**SYLLABUS**

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**I. Course Description:**

An introduction to the practice of pastoral care in the context of suffering and loss. Since suffering is the universal experience of humankind, emphasis will be placed on the role of care to members within the congregational setting but also how care can be extended to the larger community as an integral mission of the church.

Pastoral care as a means of *non-crisis* follow-up for the purpose of assessing a congregant's spiritual health will also be discussed. Visitation of this nature is often discounted, but it serves as one of the best ways of giving guidance and support to overall spiritual development. Frequently students will discover that their visitation engages them in discussions about spiritual growth, faithfulness in the ordinary times of life, and use of one's energy to contribute to the kingdom of God.

Students will also gain practical experience in care ministry through hospital visitation and ministry in other venues of the student's choice, and will reflect on this experience at regular intervals with the instructor and fellow students. The instructor will define certain key topics of discussion for each class, but the students will enhance the discussion with reflections from their own care settings and additional readings.

**NOTE: Students will be responsible for making arrangements for working alongside a pastor or supervisor in their own church or ministry setting. There may also be some possibility of working under the direction of a hospital or care home chaplain in the event that a student is unable to access a suitable placement in their home church.**

**II. Objectives:**

1. Students will evaluate and become aware of the existing experiences of suffering and loss in the context in which the student lives. Where there are possibilities for hospital visitation or care home visitation, the student will be encouraged to consider these for his/her field experience.
2. Students will become familiar with the hospital and care home venue and appropriate care practice in those facilities. Students will also become familiar with *additional* care venues like a hospice, psychiatric unit, prison,

respite home, etc. and reflect with fellow students on their experience in these institutions.

3. Students will reflect on their theology of suffering and the questions raised by those experiencing suffering and grief.
4. Students should gain experience in the appropriate use of Scripture and prayer in the care venue.
5. Students should consider how an appropriate vehicle for healing prayer may be implemented in the local church. Patients that are also part of a local church, occasionally request prayer for healing and pastoral students should give some thought to how they would proceed to offer this. A sample model will be considered.
6. Students should reflect on their own competency for care giving and the appropriate measures they would take to prevent caregiver burnout.
7. Students should reflect on how a pastor and congregation can extend care ministry to those outside of the church as well as how they might implement pastoral visitation for purposes of non-crisis assessment of spiritual health.

### III. Required Texts:

Gorsuch, Nancy. *Pastoral Visitation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999).

Hunsinger, Deborah Van Duesen. *Pray Without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.

Sittser, Gerald L. *A Grace Disguised: How The Soul Grows Through Loss* (Grand Rapids, 1996).

Wright, Norman. *The New Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: A Practical Guide For Ministers, Counselors and Lay Counselors* (USA, Regal, 2003).

### IV. Course Requirements:

1. Each student must report in written form on at least three hospital visits and at least seven other types of care experience made by them personally and/or with a supervisor or pastor. The reports will be summaries of the experiences using the modified verbatim report handed out on the first day of class. **Names and information should be sufficiently disguised to guard confidentiality.** The reports will be due on the dates outlined in the course schedule.  
*Class discussion will arise from these verbatims and two students on any day should be prepared to discuss with the class and the instructor some of the*

*significant insights, stresses, questions, and opportunities that occurred during their visits.*

2. Since not all visits will be of the same length, additional visits should be logged until the student has averaged three hours of visitation per week (including his/her verbatim visits). *Logs, with one line descriptions of the types of additional visits made each week, can be turned in at the end of the semester.* Please ensure that these visits are spread throughout the semester and not merely crammed at the end to fulfill the requirements of the course. (Additional visitation may include visits with shut-ins, visits with inmates, visits with people in various shelters and crisis pregnancy centers, visits on campus with students that may need support and encouragement, etc. A visit might also include phone calls devoted to resolve a pastoral care issue or visits by parishioners to one's office.
3. Each student must participate in the tour of Bethesda Hospital and Bethesda Place and the debrief which follows. For those wishing to do most of their visits in a hospital setting, this will be a good opportunity to discuss with the chaplain what possibilities exist for these types of visits.
4. Each student will read *Pastoral Visitation* within the first three weeks of the course and be prepared to discuss the notion of pastoral visitation as a means of non-crisis follow-up on spiritual development in one's parishioners.
5. Read the assigned sections of *Wright's* book as well as Hunsinger's book, *Pray Without Ceasing* and be prepared for any discussion from these books.
6. Read a *Grace Disguised* and prepare a three page (double spaced) response to the questions of suffering and loss covered in the book. In addition, write four more pages on your theology of suffering, including your own understanding of theodicy (i.e. Does God cause suffering, permit it but not cause it, or some other variation, etc.) Total length of paper is seven pages.
7. Since this course is not lecture driven, students will be expected to engage in reflective discussions with their instructor and fellow students based on their readings, as well as any notes the instructor will forward to the students in advance of each class. The instructor's notes will be referenced in the instructor's presentations and he will expect that all students have taken the time to read them.
8. Students will write out three types of prayers they might pray with someone who is suffering. Prayers must reflect three different types of ailments, i.e. cancer, job loss, miscarriage, etc. (What universal concerns might you

address...fear, anxiety, etc.?, What Scripture might you include? What language of care and connection would you use?)

Typically, written prayers will not be used in an informal visit, but this exercise is to help the student identify in his/her prayer what might be of greatest concern to a patient and help the student speak in a plain and warm tone. Sample prayers should be turned in on the day they are due.

9. Students will write out one experience from their own lives where they received care in a time of suffering. Describe the situation, highlight the care received, its impact on you and any lessons you learned from the experience. Also describe how this experience has shaped the way you currently conduct your care of others. Five page summary (double spaced).

**Students will receive a Pass/Fail grade based on their completion of all the requirements listed above and attendance at all classes. All requirements must be completed by the end of the semester and on the dates assigned.**

**V. Course Outline:**

- Sept. 14** – Introductions and outline of course  
-The context for pastoral care  
-Awareness exercise of opportunities in the student's world  
-Identification of hospital, care home and other opportunities in Winnipeg and surrounding communities  
-Identification of any pastors and supervisors for care experience  
-Sample hospital visit and bedside protocol
- Sept. 21** – Orientation to hospitals and care facilities  
-Tour of Bethesda and Resthaven (Steinbach)  
-Brief intro. to chaplaincy  
-Debrief
- Sept. 28 - Due: Reading of *Pastoral Visitation***  
Forum: Interacting on the care needs of older people
- Oct. 5 -Due: First submission of verbatim reports**  
-Discussion from students reading of *Pastoral Visitation* and the idea of visitation as soul care and non-crisis connection.  
-Begin addressing questions of suffering and grief in the care relationship  
-*Discussion of visits* (two students should be prepared to share their experience)
- Oct. 12 - NO CLASS – (October Intrasession)**

- Oct. 19 – Due: Reading of Wright’s *Crisis and Trauma Counseling* (ch. 1-12)**  
 -*Discussion of visits* (two students prepared to share their experience)
- Oct. 26 – Due: Sample Prayers**  
 -Use of prayer and Scripture in the caregiver’s context  
 -Limitations and opportunities for spiritual discussion in the hospital or care setting  
 - *Discussion of visits* (two students prepared to share their experience)
- Nov. 2 – Due: Second submission of verbatim reports**  
 -Caregiver competencies  
 -Student assessments of their own competencies  
 -*Discussion of visits* (two students prepared to share)
- Nov. 9 – Due: Summary of *A Grace Disguised* and theology of suffering**  
 -Discussion on emotional competency and effect of family system and the church system  
 -Discussion on pastoral care in times of conflict  
 -*Discussion of visits* (two students prepared to share)
- Nov. 16 - NO CLASS – (November Intrasession)**
- Nov. 23 – Due: Third submission of verbatim reports**  
 -On death and dying and discussion of theology of suffering  
 - *Discussion of visits* (two students prepared to share)
- Nov. 30 – Due: Reading of *Pray Without Ceasing***  
 -Healing prayer in the church context  
 -A model and practice session  
 -*Discussion of visits*
- Dec. 7 – Due: Students own summary of receiving care**  
 -Discussion of student experiences receiving care  
 -Preventing caregiver burnout  
 -*Discussion of visits*
- Dec. 14 – Due: Final submission of verbatim reports. Logs to be turned in.**  
 -Grief care and the ministry of the church to the community  
 -*Discussion of visits*  
 -Final debrief

### **Recommended Reading**

Anderson, Ray S. *The Shape Of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry With Theological Praxis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

- Baxter, Richard, *The Reformed Pastor*. Edited by James Houston. Portland Oregon, Multnomah Press, 1982.
- Biebel, David B. and Harold G. Koenig. *New Light On Depression: Help, Hope and Answers for the Depressed and Those Who Love Them*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.
- Carson, D.A. *How Long O Lord?: Reflections On Suffering And Evil*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1990.
- Fernando, Ajith. *Jesus Driven Ministry*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002.
- Gorsuch, Nancy J. *Pastoral Visitation*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.
- Hanson, David. *Long Wandering Prayer*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2001.
- Hart, Archibald and Gary Gulbranson and Jim Smith. *Mastering Pastoral Counseling*. Portland OR: Multnomah Press, 1992.
- Hightower, James E (ed.). *Caring for People From Birth to Death*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999.
- Dayringer, Richard. *The Heart Of Pastoral Counseling: Healing through Relationships*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998.
- Hagberg, Janet O. and Robert Guelich. *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing, 2005.
- Hunsinger, Deborah Van Duesen. *Pray Without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Job, Reuben P. *A Guide To Retreat For All God's Shepherds*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Kuenning, Delores. *Helping People Through Grief*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1987.
- Lehman, Victor D. *The Pastor's Guide To Weddings and Funerals*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001.
- Mottram, Kenneth P. *Caring For Those In Crisis: Facing Ethical Dilemmas With Patients and Families*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.

- Oates, Wayne, E. *The Presence of God In Pastoral Counseling*. Waco, Texas: Word, 1986.
- Patton, John. *Pastoral Care In Context: An Introduction To Pastoral Care*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.
- Phillips, Sara Webb. *Pastoral Prayers For The Hospital Visit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006.
- Richardson, Ronald W. *Becoming A Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and The Pastor's Own Family*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.
- Scalise, Charles J. *Bridging the Gap: Connecting What You Learned In Seminary With What You Find In The Congregation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy For Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Stone, Howard W. *Crisis Counseling*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Wardle, Terry. *Healing Care, Healing Prayer: Helping the Broken Find Wholeness In Christ*. Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Publishers, 2001.
- Wicks, Robert (ed) and Richard Parsons and Donald Capps. *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, vol. 1*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993.

