

## Meadville Lombard Theological School

M483INT Introduction to Pastoral Ministry

March 19-23, 2012

**Instructor:** Rev. Deborah Derylak

**Phone:** 312-485-1598 (cell)

**Email:** [dderylak@ctschicago.edu](mailto:dderylak@ctschicago.edu)

**Office:** Chicago Theological Seminary (1407 E. 60<sup>th</sup> St.), Rm. 141

with Rev. Elizabeth Harding

**Phone:** 773-592-2809

**Email:** [elizabeth.harding@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.harding@gmail.com)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In his book *Leading Causes of Life*, Gary Gunderson describes the concept of “Bophelo,” a Sesotho word that identifies the essential relatedness of things:

*Bophelo* is a way of talking about the health of the whole connected ensemble – the person inseparable from the family, which is inseparable from community, which is inseparable from “the people,” who are inseparable from the land and creation. (p. 75)

*Bophelo* will be our foundational principle, as we explore the vocation of pastoral ministry this week. Pastoral ministry is necessarily about the health of the whole connected ensemble. No matter where we serve as ministers...

- our professional selves (i.e., the care, service and leadership we provide) remain connected to our personal selves (our families, backgrounds and non-professional relationships);
- our personal call to service and leadership is enacted in the communal settings in which we serve and lead – which themselves are connected to families, relationships and cultures;
- and our personal call and communal ministry are deeply grounded in the faith tradition that shapes us and sustains us, and through which we seek to shape a sustainable world.

This week, we will explore some *practices of pastoral care*, in particular, and the *vocation of pastoral ministry*, in its broader sense, and we will touch upon the whole connected ensemble as we do so – beginning with reflection on our own selves and our own families; considering family systems; addressing communal concerns as we discuss both pastoral ministry across the lifespan and pastoral care in relationship with other facets of ministry; and finally returning to our selves, considering the things that challenge us and the things that sustain us – including especially the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition which shapes us and calls us.

Exercises for skill building and self development will be woven throughout our discussions during the week. We will cultivate skills for listening (to others and to ourselves) through sharing and listening exercises, and through case studies and scenarios. Through our discussions, activities and explorations together this week, students will encounter a holistic understanding of pastoral ministry, and begin to situate their pastoral identity and imagination within the “whole connected ensemble” that is necessarily the matrix for our ministries.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students will:

- Demonstrate the capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection that is essential for personal and professional development in pastoral ministry
- Demonstrate beginning competency in listening skills that are important for inter-personal and communal care and community leadership
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in ministerial and theological reflection on pastoral ministry, grounding reflections in broader ministry concepts and Unitarian Universalist faith community and tradition
- Identify concrete areas to focus personal and professional development towards sustaining the work of ministry, and specific resources (e.g., practices, disciplines, texts and traditions) that will sustain pastoral imagination, spiritual vitality, physical and emotional health and moral integrity

## **PRIMARY READINGS**

### *Leading Causes of Life*, Gary Gunderson and Larry Pray

The 5 “leading causes of life” described by Gunderson and Pray – connection, coherence, agency, blessing and hope – offer a wonderful foundation for understanding and practicing pastoral ministry, both in more intimate pastoral care encounters and in the broader vocation of pastoral ministry and all that it may entail. These 5 causes of life will especially form the foundation for our discussions of pastoral ministry across the lifespan and pastoral care in relationship with other aspects of ministry.

### *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*, Heidi Neumark

In *Breathing Space*, Heidi Neumark paints a poignant picture of ministry, as a white woman serving a mostly Latino/a and African American congregation and community in the South Bronx, a neighborhood blighted by poverty and violence. As she describes the life and ministries of Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Neumark demonstrates the deep connection between pastoral and prophetic ministry, the significance of “breathing space” for sustaining our work and our world, and the way in which our self-reflections about our pastoral work can be so beautifully interwoven with the foundations of our faith – in her case, biblical scripture, Christian congregational life and Lutheran liturgy.

### *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

In *Trauma Stewardship*, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky speaks to everyone whose work involves caring, compassion and seeking the betterment of our world – from first responders to case workers to environmental activists to clergy – helping us to understand our responses to trauma (individually, communally and societally), and inviting us to find fresh ways to sustain our selves and our work so we may continue working together toward the transformation we know is possible.

Please read each of these books prior to our first class on March 19. (I hope you will enjoy them as much as I do!) I recommend buying them (either paper copies or e-books) via an independent bookstore, such as Chicago’s Seminary Co-op Bookstore ([www.semcoop.com](http://www.semcoop.com)), or one that is near and dear to you. As necessary, we will highlight particular sections to review prior to the next day’s class discussion. Other readings (brief chapters, essays and articles) will be provided electronically via LiveText before or during class, or in person during class.

## EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to:

1. Complete all readings, and participate fully in class discussions and experiences
2. Lead the group in a spontaneous moment of prayer, when requested, once during the week (an exercise in listening, and an opportunity for skill-building in preparation for CPE!!)
3. **Prior to our first class** – complete a genogram.
  - A *genogram* is a visual depiction of a family tree that displays detailed data on relationships among individuals – such as major life events, illnesses and disorders, emotional relationships, etc. – in order to identify hereditary patterns and psychological factors that punctuate relationships. Using the guidelines and tools provided during the January 2012 term via LiveText, create a genogram of your family to bring to class. Rev. Harding is available for consultation, if you have any questions or concerns as you proceed.
4. Complete 2 Relational Reviews (due Wednesday, 3/22 and Friday, 4/20)
  - An article describing the purpose and process of the Relational Review, a tool for self reflection developed by Dr. Allan Schnarr at Loyola University Chicago Institute for Pastoral Studies, will be available via LiveText prior to our first face-to-face class session; Deb will be in touch via email when all is set up!
  - Each Relational Review is to be completed *after class on the date assigned* and turned in to Deb on the following morning; they will only be shared with the instructors.
5. Complete a 2 page reflection paper on your understanding of the relationship between pastoral ministry and prophetic ministry, as you consider our shared vocation of ministry in general, and character of your own intended future ministry. (due Friday, 3/23)
6. Complete a final paper, in three sections (aim for 9-12 pages, or 3-4 pages per section):
  - Revisit your genogram, the life story you shared verbally during our first class session, and your career assessment materials, and describe areas you must pay special attention to as you grow into your ministry – both areas from your personal background, and trauma exposure response concerns that have resonated with you during the course of our discussion about *Trauma Stewardship*.
  - Articulate your theology of pastoral ministry – pastoral care in particular, and pastoral ministry in your anticipated setting. Use the 5 causes of life and your understanding of Unitarian Universalist faith life and theology as a guide, along with any other theological concepts that are significant to you.
  - Find some breathing space: detail a (beginning!) self-prescription for sustaining your work and your life, as you develop personally and professionally, using some of the tools for balance and, again, your understanding of UU faith life and theology as grounding.

**This paper will be due by Friday, April 20.** Electronic copies sent via email in Microsoft Word or PDF format are preferred, though hard copies are certainly welcome, too.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### **Monday, March 19**

*pastoral ministry and the pastor, part 1*

In this session, after an introduction to each other and to the week ahead, we will explore ourselves – sharing the stories of our lives, we will look more closely at our own experiences, relationships and patterns of navigating our lives, and begin to consider how our professional work in ministry is affected by our personal experiences and development.

### **Tuesday, March 20**

*pastoral ministry and the pastor, part 2*

In this session we will continue our conversation from Monday, and broaden our explorations to include families of origin and family systems thinking. We will work closely with our genograms during the first half of this class. (There will be additional readings posted on Live Text for this class.)

*\*\* first Relational Review due Wednesday morning \*\**

### **Wednesday, March 21**

*pastoral ministry through the life span*

In this session, we will explore pastoral needs from birth to death, and everything in between. Our time together will include consideration of pastoral and spiritual care concerns at different life stages, death and dying, as well as practical tools such as advance directives for health care. We will begin this session by exploring some of the dynamics of pastoral care and counseling, in general and from a Unitarian Universalist perspective.

### **Thursday, March 22**

*pastoral ministry and the beloved community*

In this session, we will explore “pastoral ministry” more broadly as a vocation – in particular, considering the relationship of pastoral care to other aspects of congregational and community life (worship and preaching; prophetic ministry; congregational life; service, justice and advocacy, etc.)

*\*\* Reflection Paper on pastoral and prophetic ministry due Friday morning \*\**

### **Friday, March 23**

*pastoral ministry, imagination, and integrity*

In this final session, we will return to our selves, as we discuss the challenges of the pastoral and prophetic vocation of ministry – and our own trauma exposure responses that may result from our work in the world. And as we consider healthy ways to navigate our vocational journeys – to refresh our joy in the midst of our work toward transformation – we will incorporate the stories and practices of our Unitarian Universalist faith, in its history and as it is lived today, as the essential grounding for building our ministries, our sense of pastoral imagination, and our integrated selves.

*\*\* Second Relational Review and Final Paper due by Friday, April 20 \*\**