

ARTS OF MINISTRY I:
THE CONTEXT OF THE LIBERAL MINISTRY
INTENSIVE COURSE
JANUARY 24-28, 2011

Instructor: The Rev. Christine Robinson, senior minister, First Unitarian, Albuquerque

Meeting Time: 9:00 am-12; 1:30-5:00pm, Monday-Friday

INTRODUCTION

Ministry is the bringing of spiritual resources to persons and organizational savvy to congregations and institutions. It requires a never-ending negotiation of ego, understanding, feeling, boundaries, knowledge, and love.

This course will explore the Unitarian Universalist Ministry in these times, considering both parish and community ministry, the nature of ministry as opposed to secular work and the skills and attributes that are necessary for success in that work. It will introduce students to resources from the theological and business worlds which will help them in ministry and it will cover some essential subjects not otherwise covered in the curriculum while giving them a head start on the MFC reading list, and the writing of sermons, and spiritually focused essays. Students will be encouraged to examine their own commitments to ministry in light of the issues explored.

ADVANCE WORK

What's Ministry and Who's the Minister?

Prepare: You will keep a journal for this course. The journal is for your eyes only but you will write assignments from it and add to it during the class. You may keep this journal on a laptop or a notebook, but it should all be in one place and usable in Chicago. Your first assignment is to write a two introductory essays (details below) You should complete these essays before you start the reading assignments. This will serve as a benchmark of your learning in this course as well as an introduction to your classmates.

- _____ Procure or Prepare your journal. One section of your journal will be devoted to reading notes. One section will be your list of questions doubts, quandaries, worries, regarding your calling and your future as a minister. This will be for your eyes only.
- _____ Post your essays for the class. The instructions come from instructions to those preparing to see the RSCC. Choose two topics from the following and write a one-page essay about each. These essays are due (posted to the class website) by **September 15**

Why did you choose to prepare for Unitarian Universalist (UU) ministry?
How do you hope to serve the UU movement?
What excites you about UU ministry?
What is your vision of your work two years after fellowship? “

Read, keeping a reading journal, finishing this reading by **November 1**

___ *This Odd and Wondrous Calling* by Lillian Daniel and Martin Copenhaver. *The authors, both mid-career ministers, reflect with honesty about their calling and their ministries.*

___ 2009 Berry St. Lecture “Imagineering Soul” by Christine Robinson and response by John Cullinan (<http://www.oulduuma.org/BerryStreet/index.htm>)

___ Diversity in Religious Congregations –Christine Robinson. (on class website)

___ Pew Research on religion in American Life <http://religions.pewforum.org/>

___ Faith Formation 20/20 13 Trends Effecting the Future of the church
<http://lifelongfaith.com/assets/docs/FF2020-TrendsSummary.pdf>

___ *The Time of Your Life* by Robert Randell

A book about time management for ministers, with the twist that Randell sees time management issues as symptoms of deeper issues in ministerial life.

___ 2008 Berry St. Lecture “It’s the Minister” by Ken Sawyer

<http://www.oulduuma.org/BerryStreet/index.htm>

___ 2000 Berry St. Essay “After Running Through the Thistles” by Mark Morrison Reed.

<http://www.oulduuma.org/BerryStreet/essays.htm>

Optional but on the MFC Reading List:

___ UUA, [Engaging Our Theological Diversity](#) (2005) (PDF, 195 pages)

Writing Assignments

___ Using your Reading Journal, write a paper for the instructor, 5-10 pages, specifically commenting on at least three of the reading assignments. **Due November 1**

___ Read your classmates’ introductory essays. Raise questions make comments, and share appreciations to each, in a helpful, pastoral way. **Due by Nov. 15**

Thinking in Systems and Understanding Boundaries

Read:

___ *Your Church Family* Peter Steinke

A basic introduction to systems theory, especially in congregations

___ *Understanding Clergy Misconduct in Religious Systems* Candace Benyei

This book not only covers the many facets of clergy misconduct, it serves as a helpful introduction to a variety of psychological concepts.

___ *Jamesland* by Beth Huneven Read last in this group. This is a novel about a UU minister who has real issues with her Fellowship and who has some troubling boundary issues herself. Note them!

Read, comment, and list questions you have on the class website by **December 15**

___ [UUMA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice](#)

___ [Safe Congregations Handbook](#) (2005)

Optional Reading but on the MFC Reading List

___ *Generation to Generation* by Edwin Friedman

This is the classic text of Systems theory as applied to congregational and ministerial families.

Change and Conflict

___ Gil Rendle, [Leading Change in the Congregation](#): Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders (2002)

___ *Switch: How to change when changing is hard* Chip Heath and Dan Heath New York, Broadway Books

___ *Getting to "Yes"* by Roger Fisher

___ Conflict levels. (posted on the website)

Persuasion and Asking for Money

Read:

___ *Influence* by Robert Cialdini

Optional but on the MFC Reading List:

Terry Sweetser and Susan Milnor, [The Abundance of Our Faith](#) (2006) **The above reading should be done before you get to Chicago.**

Worship Skills

Music

We will enjoy a half hour songfest every day. If you play the piano well enough to sight read hymns for us, we will pay you an honorarium...please identify yourself!

___ UUA, [Singing the Living Tradition](#) (1993)(read through the hymn section and flag 5 favorites with one color and 5 hymns you would like to try with another color.)

___ UUA, [Singing the Journey](#) (2005) (songfest) (read through and flag 2 favorites with one color and 2 songs you would like to try with another color) **Bring marked books to class.**

Readings and Stories

Each student will contribute to and compile a collection of readings (poetry, prose and stories) appropriate for use in worship, and as "sermon starters" for preachers. We will experience and discuss what makes a good reading.

___ *Singing the Living Tradition* Read through Readings section. Focusing on the liturgical sections (openings, chalice lightings, etc, rather than readings about a topic) flag favorites.

___ Post three readings (poems, stories prose) from the secular canon (ie, from secular sources such as poetry, op ed pieces, novels, blogs) which you consider engaging, evocative, and appropriate for worship. Post three readings which are not from scriptures but which are overtly spiritual/religious. Cite sources when possible. **Due January 1**

___ Copy the compiled class readings to your laptop or print out for class use.

Sermons

___ Each class member will write and preach one homily (1500 words) on any topic evoked by one of the reading assignments. Sign up on the website, giving your proposed sermon title. Guidelines for good homily/sermon writing are given on the website.

Spiritual Practice

For a daily shared spiritual practice we will be doing meditative reading (*lexio divina*) on the Tao Te Ching.

Prepare

_____ Select a translation of the Tao Te Ching to bring to Chicago with you. (Mitchell, Star, and LeGuin are modern and accessible). You do not need to read this in advance, just select and bring.

Learn

_____ Study up on the Tao Te Ching in general so you understand the origins of this book, how it relates to the religion called Taoism, and the meaning of the major concepts, *Tao*, *Te*, and *WuWei*.

Optional but useful

You might want to glance through some interpretive Tao Te Chings, such as *The Tao of Leadership*, *the Tao of Star Wars*, *The Tao of Pooh*, *The Tao Te Ching for Parents*, and so on, to get a sense of the vast malleability of this ancient text.

REQUIREMENTS

This course will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Students are expected to complete advance assignments on schedule. “Incomplete” is not a category in ministry, and none will be given short of extremely extenuating circumstances. Do as well as you can, by the deadline. Students are expected to attend all classes, and participate in class discussions and activities. In addition to the above, there are three assignments:

_____ After completing relevant reading, write a case study, using posted guidelines, of a situation you have been involved in (or which you have personally researched, interviewed persons, etc.) as you prepare for ministry in which boundary issues, conflict resolution, time management, leadership “ego”, misconduct, or mental health, were a substantial part of the issue. Send to instructor by **January 1**. We will use these in class.

_____ Sign up on the website by **January 1** to provide leadership on a particular topic. You will be responsible for making a ½ hour presentation of the material in a “once over lightly, to remind us of what we read” way. You will then lead the discussion or learning activity for an hour. You will organize the material, prepare yourself with exercises or sharing techniques, to keep the discussion focused and watch out for process.

_____ Following the coursework, a final paper, re-writing your two, original introductory essays in light of your learnings from the class is due by **February 28**

Bring to Chicago: Your journal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, *Singing the Journey*, The compilation of Readings printed or downloaded to your laptop, and any version you like of the Tao Te Ching.

SCHEDULE:

Our daily practice:

9-9:30 Tao Te Ching/Leadership Study/Meditation

9:30-11:30 Topic of the Day: Sermons, Reviews, discussions, case studies

11:30-12 Sermon presentation and discussion

1:30-2:00 Song and Reading Fest

2-4 Topic of the day

4-5 Round Table (finish discussions, raise other questions, worry together about the future etc.)

The Topics

Time	Subject	Readings	Leader
Monday AM	Context of Ministry	through Pew Research	
Monday PM	The Minister	Randell-Morrison-Reed	
Tuesday AM	Systems	Steinke-	
Tuesday PM	Change and Conflict	Rendel-levels	
Wednesday AM	Psychology/boundaries	Benye	
Wednesday PM	Boundaries		
Thursday AM	Guidelines		

Monday Morning: The Context of Ministry (Readings through Pew Research)

Monday Afternoon: The Minister (Readings from Randell – Morrison-Reed)

Tuesday Morning: Systems Theory (Readings: Rendell-Conflict Levels)

Tuesday Afternoon: Change

Wednesday Morning: Boundaries

Wednesday Afternoon: Conduct and Guidelines

Thursday Morning: Conflict

Thursday Afternoon: diversity

Friday Morning: Persuasion

Friday Afternoon: It's the minister: Reprise

Homily (1,500 words, guidelines on the class website)

Sign Up to present and guide the discussion in one time slot.