

Professional Ministerial Boundaries
MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

This preliminary syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of the course. Final syllabus will be available September 7, 2010. The class size is limited to 20 students.

Time: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Dates: January 18, 19, 20 and 21, 2011 Intensive

Course Number – M411INT Units: .05

Location of the Course - TBA

Professor: Rev. Dr. Qiyamah A. Rahman (qrahman@meadville.edu)

Description

A minister's life reflects moral, spiritual and physical challenges because they are invited into the most intimate aspects of people's lives. As a result, ministers face moral challenges that require integrity, moral wisdom, and spiritual discipline. It is important that clergy begin their ministerial careers prepared to handle issues of professional power, intimacy, and abuse.

The objective of this course is to prepare ministers to be aware of and address issues of professional ethics within their ministerial settings.

This course primarily focuses on the importance of boundaries, pastoral authority and power dynamics, self care and abuse prevention policies. A working definition of "Safe Congregations" is the process of reviewing and proactively engaging any dynamics that impact the safety of the congregational community and its members." While we would be remiss to presume to guarantee the safety of our members it is also a disservice to ignore ways to foster safety. Thus, this course is designed to help religious professionals identify ways to foster safety proactively. For the purpose of this class, Safe Congregations includes: clergy safety, child safety and interpersonal violence (clergy sexual misconduct, domestic violence or partner abuse, elder abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, and bullying) sexual assault (stranger rape, marital rape, and date rape) and economic misconduct.

The course will focus special attention on the moral dilemmas a minister potentially faces in ministry. Students will leave this course with a clearer understanding about how to address ethical dilemmas they may encounter in various ministry settings. Representative issues facing clergy and congregations will be examined so that skills for analyzing actual situations will be acquired. Students will develop and deepen their ability to articulate their ethical reasoning.

Goal

This course aims to create, promote, resource, and implement ministerial readiness regarding sexual ethics, professional ethics, healthy boundaries and self-care as a standard aspect of seminary education. The course will help the student establish basic methods and approaches to maintaining high ethical standards in their lives and ministries.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to do the following pertaining to ministerial boundaries and ethics:

1. Understand, identify and discuss resources, frameworks and appropriate goals to prevent boundary violations
2. enhance critical thinking skills and potential ethical dilemmas
3. understand, analyze and critically evaluate a wide range of issues and texts related to the topic
4. express self clearly, cogently and critically in written works
5. write a sermon or present a lecture or training
6. tap into existing networks that inspire social justice, crisis responses and serve as a source of sharing and exchanging.

7. discern and make theologically based ethical decisions in the midst of a complex and/or paradoxical context
8. teach and model sexually appropriate behavior reflecting the Professional Codes of Conduct of the UUMA
9. discover sociological and theological dynamics and trends and to apply that information to specific ministry settings including pastoral care and counseling.

Expectations:

1. Reading required materials
2. Completion of written assignments;
3. Mandatory attendance - class participation is one of the most significant parts of the shared learning experiences. Any student that misses more than one class may be at risk for failing the course.
4. *Let me know if you have any problems.* If at any point you have questions or concerns about this course, please know that you are more than welcome to make an appointment to meet with me.
5. Submission of a research paper by January 31, 2011. Research proposals should be submitted in advance to the instructor by December 1, 2010. All assignments are expected to show integration of reading and class materials.

Participation:

Contributing to the learning of all is expected and will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- a. accurate use and integration of reading materials assigned
- b. attention to and ability to appropriately engage the contributions of classmates
- c. openness to reflecting critically on the implications and ideas discussed from readings and presentations
- d. prompt and regular attendance

Format of the Course: Classes will start each day with a 7-10 minute centering/reflections/meditation/devotion led by student(s). Students will sign up on the first day of class either individually or in pairs. In addition, each day will consist of theological reflections in small groups based on the readings, along with small group work to develop and present daily case studies. The day will also include short lectures, scheduled guest speakers, and videos. Each day will conclude with closing readings and reflections led by students.

Requirements for Writing Papers:

Each student is expected to use a consistent notation style (either the “humanities” or “author-date” format) and include a complete bibliography as described in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (6th. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). All papers will observe rules concerning plagiarism and citation of sources. Finally, each student is encouraged to use gender-inclusive language.

Students will write a six to ten page paper on an issue of interest to them that focuses on professional ministerial boundaries and related “Safe Congregations” issues. The paper should show a graduate level review of the literature and scholarship, including UU scholarship addressing the issue and appropriate application of concepts introduced in the course.

Consultations with Instructor – In the course of the class students will have access to the instructor via email @meadville.edu and scheduled appointments.

GRADING POLICY

Students may take this course for a letter grade unless arrangements are made with the instructor for a Pass/Fail. Please indicate which you choose when you register for the course.

Final grades will be based on:

1. Attendance and participation 5%
2. Assignments 25%
3. Research paper 70%

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70 - 79 = C

Special Accommodations - Special Needs Adaptations: Student Ministers who require learning style adaptations or accommodations because of issues of physical conditions or mental affect should contact the faculty immediately upon enrollment. We will make every reasonable effort to adapt assignments to ensure coursework you is relevant and accessible. Unless you negotiate inadequate conditions, we will assume your learning needs are being met. Note that MLTS Chaplin David Owen-O'Quill is available in the Student Services Office (-oquill@meadville.edu, or at 773-256-3000, x238) for spiritual and pastoral support.

Course Content: The use of graphic videos and class discussions will include highly sensitive topics that can cause a strong emotional impact. Please talk to the instructor if you have any concerns.

Meadville Lombard Theological School Harassment Policy

ML is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. For further information please see: ML Student Handbook and Campus Safety Handbook.

Questions regarding the course should be directed to:

Rev. Dr. Qiyamah A. Rahman
Phone: 773 256 3000 ext. 242
Email: qrahman@meadville.edu

Required Readings

- UUMA Guidelines & Code of Professional Practice : [://www.uuma.org/?page=guidelines](http://www.uuma.org/?page=guidelines)
- Capps, Donald. *Giving Counsel: A Ministers Guidebook*. St. Louis. Chalice Press, 2001.
- Gudorf, Christine E. "*The Necessity for Reconstructing Sexual Ethics*" in *Body, Sex, and Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994.
- Hammar, Richard R. Steven W. Klipowicz, and James F. Cobble, Jr. *Reducing the Risk of child Sexual Abuse in Your Church: A Complete and Practical Guidebook for Prevention and Risk Reduction*. Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993.
- Hoerltoerfer, Patricia and Fred Muir, eds. *Creating Safe Congregations*. Boston: UUA, 2005.
- Ingram, David Bruce and Jennifer A. Parks. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Ethics*. Indianapolis: Penguin Group, 2002.
- Poling, James Newton. *Understanding Male Violence: Pastoral Care Issues*. St. Louis: Chalice Press. 2003.
- Rahman, Qiyamah A. *By the Shores of Babylon We Wept: An Exploration of the Institutional Response of the UUA to Clergy Sexual Misconduct Between 1991 - 2005*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Clark Atlanta University, 2007.
- _____ . *Safe Congregations Manual*.

Optional Readings

- Adams, Carol J. and Marie M. Fortune, ed. *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*. NY: Continuum, 1998 (excerpts)
- Coleman, Monica A. *The Dinah Project: A Handbook for Congregational Response to Sexual Violence*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004.
- Cooper-White, Pamela. *Shared Wisdom: The Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Fortune, Marie, "Is Nothing Sacred? The Betrayal of the Ministerial or Teaching Relationship," in Carol Adams and Marie Fortune, editors, *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*. NY: Continuum, 1995, 351-360.
- Korbin, Jill E. "The Cross-cultural Context of child Abuse and Neglect" in *the Battered Child* by C. Henry Kempe and Ray E. Helfer, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968. 21-35.
- Moore, Zoe Bennett. "Violence: A Reality in Women's Perspectives on Pastoral Theology" in *Introducing Perspectives on Pastoral Theology*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002.
- Radbill, Samuel X. "Children in a World of Violence: A History of Child Abuse" in *the Battered Child* by C. Henry Kempe and Ray E. Helfer, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968. 3-20
- Rediger, G. Lloyd. *Beyond the Scandals: A Guide to Healthy Sexuality for Clergy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 2003.

Pre-assignments:

1. Review and write no more than two pages summarizing your reflections on: the UUMA's Professional Code of Conduct. What surprised you? What is in your opinion is missing? Did you find it helpful, unhelpful? Why? ([://www.uuma.org/?page=guidelines](http://www.uuma.org/?page=guidelines)) (Due December 1)
2. Visit your home congregation or another UU congregation and interview the minister and DRE about their existing policy and procedures on "Safe Congregations" that is, policies designed to foster a safe environment and procedures to ensure safety. Write a 3-5 page paper that describes, analyzes and evaluates their policies and procedures. Include copies of policies. (Due Day 1)
3. **Socio-dramas** - In teams of 2-4, students will participate in planning and presenting a socio-drama on one of the class topics: clergy sexual misconduct, child abuse, sexual violence, battering, elder abuse, economic misconduct, stalking, etc. Scenes will include an episode of misconduct, an unhelpful interview with a minister and/or DRE, and an improved interview with a minister or DRE. (Due Day 3)
4. **Vocational Autobiography** - Write a three to five page reflections paper that allows you to reflect on your sexuality attitudes and beliefs as well as how your sexuality and personal sexual history affects your ministry. Address the following questions:

Grounding Orientation: How do you understand yourself as a moral professional? What is your "grounding orientation"? [I.e. "Golden Rule." "Live Long and Prosper," "Walk softly and carry a big stick," Etc.]

Social location: Gender, ethnicity/race, class, education/training? Any other relevant factors? How do you see these informing your understanding of yourself as a professional minister?

Professional training/education: Specific training (or not) for professional role(s). How this influences moral/ethical stance as a minister.

Values: What are your basic life orienting values? (For example: family cohesiveness, National security, human rights. Individual conscience? Free speech?

Norms: What “rules” do you follow, stand by, advocate for?

Role models, exemplars: What role model, images, symbols are important to you?

Implications: What are the strong points from your “vocational autobiography” for ethical/moral engagement as a professional? What limitations do you see for ethical/moral engagement in the profession of ministry? How does UUism contribute to your moral engagement as a professional? (Due November 3, 2010)

5. **Sermon:** Drawing on the themes and topics of the course prepare a 10 minute homily on a topic that is difficult for you to talk about or one you know little or nothing about that is related to the course material and themes. (Due October 1, 2010)

Day 1 - Setting the Stage - Ethics in the Pulpit and Pews

Day 2 - Safer Congregations - Multiple Len's on Safety and Boundaries

Day 3 - Can We Talk? Difficult Conversations

Day 4 - Emerging Themes and Enduring Questions