Introduction to Theological Reflection
Course #: MP4000
Professor: Christina R. Zaker, D.Min.
Term: J -2017 - Online

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am – Noon Office Location: 357
Class online: http://d2l.ctu.edu
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STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – see Student Handbook
Academic integrity demands that a student acknowledge all sources employed in the preparation of written assignments, whether in the use of exact quotations, or in substantial reproduction of ideas. Failure to do so (plagiarism) will result in a failing grade for the course and may also result in dismissal.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Theological Reflection is a critical tool for ministry. This course provides a foundation for understanding its goals, methods and applications. Students will engage multiple methods, adapt them for various ministerial contexts, and develop skills in forming and facilitating theological reflection in their ministry praxis.


Book:
What are They Saying About Theological Reflection by Robert L. Kinast. (ISBN: 0809139685)

Articles:
“Parable as a Lens for Theological Reflection” by Christina R. Zaker in Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry. 2015 (provided on D2L).

“What Reflective Believing: Reimagining Theological Reflection in an age of Diversity” by Edward Foley in Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry. 2014 (provided on D2L)

All Students must read ONE of the following books: (Students are encouraged to select one they have not already read. Below are some recommendations to help in making a choice.)
Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry
by James and Evelyn Whitehead (ISBN: 1556128061)
(If you have relatively little experience with theological reflection or want a ministerial approach choose this book.)
The Art of Theological Reflection
by Patricia O’Connell Killen and John DeBeer (ISBN: 9780824514013)
(If your concentration or interest is spirituality choose this book.)

Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice
by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot (ISBN: 0859242633)

Social Analysis for the 21st Century
By Maria Cimperman, RSCJ (ISBN: 9781626981430)
(If your concentration or interest is justice choose either one of these two books on social analysis. Holland and Henriot wrote their book in 1985 and Maria Cimperman has done a beautiful job of updating it for today.)

by Thomas H. Groome (ISBN: 978-1579101961)
(If your concentration or interest is catechesis or education, choose this book. However, his writing is a little dense, so if you are new to graduate level reading you may find this text harder than the others. Only a portion of this text is required reading - pages 135 – 285.)

Theological Reflection across Religious Traditions: The Turn to Reflective Believing
by Edward Foley (ISBN: 9781442247208)
(If you have an advanced understanding of Theological Reflection or if your interest is in inter-religious dialogue, then choose this book.)

All Students must read ONE of the following texts (student choice) or choose another text that they feel could be used for the final assignment. See directions on the final assignment regarding the book choice and process for selecting a different book.

Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection
by Cochrane, James R.

Creation in "The Catechism of the Catholic Church": a Basis for Catechesis in Post-Colonial Africa
by Wa Ngugi, J. Njoroge

Environmental Science and Theology in Dialogue
by Butkus, Russell A.

Ministry that Transforms: a Contemplative Process of Theological Reflection
by McAlpin, Kathleen

Not Counting Women and Children: Neglected Stories from the Bible
by McKenna, Megan

Pedagogy of Liberation
by Paulo Freire

Preaching the Sunday Assembly
ed. James Wallace

Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience
by Gemma Tulud Cruz
Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States
By Juan Francisco Martínez

Why Theology is Never Far From Home
by De Mesa, José M.

Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology
edited by Kwok Pui-lan.

Liturgy in Migration: From the Upper Room to Cyberspace
edited by Teresa Berger.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT:

Learning Outcomes:
Student success in this course is manifest in the ability to:

1. Minister and build community in a collaborative style respectful of others and their gifts. (M.Div. 1, M.A.P.S. 2, M.A. in 1, 2, 3)
2. Articulate the content and processes of theological reflection for ministry.(M.Div. 3, M.A. 2, M.A.P.S. 1, M.A. in 1, 2)
3. Recognize and begin to employ various methods of theological reflection for ministry. (M.Div. 3, M.A.P.S. 1, M.A. in 2)
4. Articulate the cultural and religious context of their ministry. (M.Div. 1, M.A.P.S. 1, M.A. in 1)
5. Analyze various kinds of texts, themes, issues and methods in a judicious and reflective manner.(M.Div. 2, M.A. 2, M.A.P.S. 1, M.A. in 1)
6. Organize and facilitate various kinds of groups. (M.Div. 3, M.A.P.S. 2, 3, M.A. in 2)
7. Advocate for and strategize with the poor and marginalized (M.Div. 3, M.A.P.S. 2, 3, M.A. in 2, 3)

Assessment of Student Performance
Please note that D2L allows the professor to see how often you log in, the amount of time you spend online and how often you read and reply to your peers’ posts. This activity tracking allows me to gauge how much you participate in the online class. We do not have a set time each week that we meet. It is assumed that you will log in multiple times during the week to view and post discussions. This time should be equivalent to the time you would spend sitting in class discussing these topics with your classmates. Student performance will be assessed in the following areas:

Process: 10%
Includes:
- Sequencing with class regularly throughout the term; not working ahead or behind the online community.
- Class readings and discussion forum posts completed in a timely manner.
• Assignments completed and uploaded to D2L on time.

Participation: 30%
• Reading, sharing and offering feedback and input to peers in the class discussion forums. There are eight required discussion forums through the term. (Discussion forums # 3, 4 and 6 require multiple timely responses. Discussion forums #1, 2, 5 and 7 ask for initial posts and optional additional responses. In all forums it is assumed you will read the posts of your peers.
• Small group reflection participation. There are three small group reflections through the course.

Additional Assignments: 30%
Includes:
• Assignment 1 – Kinast Chapter Assignment – (1-2 pages)
• Assignment 2 – Description of Ministry Incident (4 paragraphs or video)
• Assignment 3 – Understanding Method – (2-3 pages)
• Assignment 4 – Annotated Bibliography of two sources
• Assignment A – For 3 credit students only: Personal Method of Ministry - Analysis and Development (3-5 pages)

Project: 30%
Includes:
• Written (6-10 pages) or Video Presentation (10 – 15 minutes) on the development of a method of theological reflection for a particular ministerial setting. (Assignment #5)

Ordinarily, students can expect the professor to give feedback on their smaller assignments and discussion posts (if applicable) within two days. The final assignment will take approximately 2 weeks to give proper feedback.

Grading Scale – See Student Handbook

EXPECTATIONS
Bias-Free Language – see Student Handbook
Netiquette and Nethics – See Student Handbook

CAMPUS RESOURCES
Library Hours: http://www.ctu.lib.il.us/ For information, contact: Melody Layton McMahon, Library Director, 773-371-5460; mmcmahon@ctu.edu

English for Theological Education: contact Christina Zaker: czaker@ctu.edu

Writing & Resource Center: There are a number of writing resources available to all CTU students. The Writing and Resource Center is located in room 338 for drop in help with writing and presentation skills. Contact: Kathleen Martin, kmartin@ctu.edu, room 370B.

Student Services: contact Kait Christ, Room 347; 773-371-5536; or studentservices@ctu.edu

Academic Calendar: http://www.ctu.edu/academics/academic-calendar

Course Calendar, Assignments and Bibliography are listed and explained on the D2L Course content page. The following is a brief outline of the Course Calendar:

Week 1 - January 4 – 10 – Introduction to Methods
   Introductions
   Kinast Chapter Discussion and Reports
   Writing a Ministry Incident

Week 2 – January 11 - 17 – Methods and Best Practices
   Understanding method assignment
   Best practices discussion
   Small Group praxis discussions begin

Week 3 – January 18 - 24 – Facilitation and New Methods
   Parable as a lens
   Group facilitation skills
   Small group praxis discussions

Week 4 - January 25 – 31 – Next Developments
   Reflective Believing
   Adaptation for personal methods of ministry
   Small group praxis discussions

This Syllabus is subject to revision.