

COS 323 Congregational Care
Mississippi Course of Study
September 25-26 and October 9-10, 2020
The Reverend Dr. Dorothy Dickson-Rishel, Instructor

Purpose: This course introduces students to practices of congregational care and the pastor's responsibility in care giving.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Implement and oversee appropriate types of care in varieties of settings, including prisons, hospitals, nursing facilities, and homes.
2. Organize caring ministries within the congregation.
3. Discern and implement appropriate boundaries, knowing when and to whom to refer people, and when and when not to share information.
4. Reflect on and practice skills of sensitive caregiving for persons within families and cultures, using role play and analysis case studies.
5. Identify and recognize Biblical and theological issues within care situations.
6. Develop listening skills to communicate Christian grace and love more effectively.

Bibliography *All students are **required** to read the **first two** books listed.*

- **The Skilled Pastor: Counseling as the Practice of Theology** by Charles W. Taylor
- **African American Pastoral Care and Counseling: Oppression and Empowerment** by Ed Wimberly.
- **OPTIONAL Student Choice Assignment for Extra Credit toward Distinction**
Students who are interested in being eligible for a grade of distinction (A or B) in the course should also prepare a 3-4 page summary and teaching outline of ONE of the texts of their choice listed below by October 9. Students who do not choose to complete this student choice written assignment will typically receive a maximum grade of low B or C.
 - a) **Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life** by Ronald Richardson *(This is a very useful but more advanced text. It is recommended for students with higher levels of interest and/or education)*
 - b) **Pastoral Care Emergencies** (Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling series) by David K. Switzer *(This is a classic pastoral counseling text designed to build skills for dealing with crisis situations such as bereavement, disasters, and hospitalizations.)*
 - c) **Listening and Caring Skills in Ministry: A Guide for Leaders and Groups** by John Savage *(This is a manual for developing advanced listening skills and deeper communication in the pastoral context. It provides a variety of exercises to facilitate hearing others' stories)*

- d) **Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities** by Jeanne Hoeft, Shannon Jung and Joretta Marshall (*Don't let the name fool you. This is probably the most advanced book on the syllabus, full of statistics and theories. Some of you with a strong interest in the academic side of congregational care in rural areas may find it enlightening. Previously, students have reported less "hands-on" information in it.*)

Precourse Assignments:

Assignments #2 and #3 due to the instructor by Wednesday, September 16.

1. Read the assigned texts. Demonstrate your comprehension of **The Skilled Pastor** by Charles Taylor and **African American Pastoral Care and Counseling** by Ed Wimberly in the assignments below. Please use 10 or 12 point font and single space.
2. Create a life reflection paper (2-page minimum) in which you
 - Tell me in one paragraph who you are. Please include a description of where you are from, your education and occupation, your appointment, your family and where you live now.
 - Choose 4 events in your life that have shaped you significantly and describe how each has molded you as a pastor.
 - Define congregational/pastoral care as you understand it in your setting. What strengths are present and what weaknesses do you see? What are the challenges in our new pandemic situation?
 - Describe 2 areas in which you want to grow as pastor and identify how you might work to facilitate those goals.
3. Choose and identify a Biblical event in which you see a pastoral counseling issue. Write a brief reflection on the counseling issue in the story (2-page minimum). What are the theological and/or relational issues raised? What are the issues of oppression and empowerment? What did the "helper" or character do to demonstrate good pastoral skill or how was the issue poorly handled? Provide a description of how this scriptural passage might be beneficial in your pastoral relationships.

Assignment #4 verbatim reflection papers may be turned into instructor by beginning of Friday class on September 25.

4. Reflect on a situation in which you provided pastoral care—perhaps in the context of a church, hospital, funeral, jail, home visit, mission trip, job site, etc.... Use the **Important Elements in a Verbatim Report** guidelines provided below to write a verbatim reflection paper. Demonstrate your understanding of the text books throughout the report. Feel free to refer to your authors' input. If there is an important page number or reference, include it in your paper. For instance, consider how the concept of narrative pastoral care presented in *African American Pastoral Care* is demonstrated, or not demonstrated, in the situation. Your entire verbatim assignment will total approximately 7-12 pages.

Important Elements in a Verbatim Report

(Source: “Appendix D: Case Study and Theological Guidelines.

<http://student.seminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/12/case-study-and-theological-reflection-guidelines.pdf> Northern Seminary

1) Introduction: (1/2 to 1 page)

- Time
- Place
- Brief description of the person (please maintain confidentiality)
- Your relationship to the person (how you came to talk to the person; how long you’ve known him/her; in what capacity, etc)
- The context of the conversation (what you thought and felt about this person and his/her situation before this conversation).
- Other relevant details or circumstances

2) Verbatim Record of Conversation: (2-3 pages)

Write an exact (as possible – make notes soon after meeting) record of a portion of the conversation including pauses, non-verbal communications, facial expressions, etc., insofar as they help to catch the “tone” of the experience. If the conversation is longer than can be conveniently reported, give highlights and be sure to indicate where breaks occur, and summarizing missing parts. The effort in this part is to be purely descriptive – omitting explanation of why you did what you did. This effort call for candor that will be, at times, difficult to achieve. Don’t try to “doctor” or edit your report to make it look better. Indicate changes you would make later in your analysis.

3) Analysis and Evaluation: (2-3 pages)

- What took place (where do you and the person stand now in your relationship)?
- Intention at the beginning (discrepancy between intention and performance; shift in expectations, etc.)
- An evaluation of your responses, trying to identify your dominant feelings during the conversation; not to probe the depths of your unconscious, but a simple effort to catch the feelings on or near the surface (i.e. is this a person who makes you angry, happy, frustrated, etc.?). What did you see as this person’s needs and did your responses get at these needs? Are there any points that strike you as particularly significant now: any responses you would certainly want to omit or do differently?
- What does this interview reveal about the person and about you? What kind of pastor are you in this interview?
- What effect did this experience have on the person? How did he or she feel when it was over? Why?

4) Goals, Learning, and Future Involvement: (1 page)

- What goals and plans will you have for your next meeting with this person?
- What did you learn by studying this relationship and reporting on it (other person; yourself; own attitude to the other person/s, etc.)?
- How does this situation remind you of your readings in Webb, Wimberly and Taylor?

5) *Theological Analysis and Evaluation (2-3 pages)*

- What theological doctrine, problem, question, principle, issue, etc., is demonstrated, suggested, or illuminated in this case?
 - How does your understanding of the doctrine, etc., shed any light on the situation and future possibilities?
 - What are the theological dynamics of the actual situation (grace, redemption, forgiveness, salvation, hope, etc.)?
 - How has this report helped you integrate your experiences and theological understanding?
 - What opportunities for congregational care within your appointment might be helpful for this situation? What ministry ideas does it inspire for you?
4. Share this paper with your **clergy mentor** (not your lay committee), asking for comments and feedback. Attach a separate, additional page after the paper's bibliography which contains your clergy mentor's comments and feedback.
5. **Optional extra assignment necessary for extra credit in order to earn an A or B is due to the instructor by the beginning of class on October 9.**

Write a 3-4 page reflection on one student choice book that addresses the following:

- What insights/perspectives/discoveries from the book are the most useful to you in your ministry?
- Describe how you would use one or more of the methods from the reading to improve the counseling situation you wrote about in assignment #4.
- Provide a lesson plan or outline of how you might teach your congregation to be more effective in congregational care using the insights of the book you read.

Course Outline

Weekend I The Role of Pastoral Care and Skill Development

- Biblical study on pastoral/congregational care
- Distinguishing pastoral roles
- Facilitating conditions for all helping relationships
- Role play and practice of listening/discipling skills

Weekend II Applying Pastoral Caregiving Skills in the Local Church

- More Biblical study and role play practice
- Ethical issues
- Discussion on "Student choice" readings

Course Requirements

Written Assignments Please note the due dates for the written assignments. This is a firm date. In fairness to all students, late assignments will be penalized. I am happy to receive assignments by mail or email. Plagiarism is not acceptable. Please review COS guidelines and submit only your own work and attribute ideas appropriately. Cultural and gender sensitivity is also expected both in written assignments and in class participation. If there are disabilities or accommodations of which I should be aware, please contact me.

Class Participation and Attendance Because of the nature of this course, regular attendance and participation is crucial. All students will be expected to contribute to discussions and exercises. Absences will be excused only in pastoral or personal emergencies, according to COS policy.

Readings All students are expected to complete and comprehend the required readings. Written assignments, class discussion and exercises will give you opportunities to demonstrate your comprehension of the assigned books.

Grading Passing grades will be based on comprehension and engagement with the materials presented as well as effort and class participation. Students who are interested in a higher grading standard of A or B must perform at the college/graduate level and complete the additional assignment listed above. The goal of the course is that you grow in your understanding of and skills for pastoral care in your local church and your passion for ministry.

Class Participation 35% Written Assignments 65%

Contact Information:

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Please try to use the e-mail option if possible. Also, please do not go to the expense of sending your assignments by overnight mail.

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

I look forward to working with each of you. I am an elder in the Mississippi Conference appointed as a Clinical Psychologist to Memorial Hospital of Gulfport, Mississippi, in the Seashore District. My husband Rod is a retired elder. We both graduated from Perkins at SMU in Dallas, my hometown. I also have a doctorate from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Rod and I are the proud parents of two adored grown daughters, our love and joy. We are both deeply committed to evangelism, worship, mission and justice issues.

Teaching Course of Study has been one of the greatest privileges and delights of my career for over 25 years. It is always a highlight of the year. This year may be different for all of us. We will be following current CDC guidelines in our classroom. Please feel free to contact me if you have specific questions or concerns about your reading or written assignments. God bless you as you grow in this aspect of your ministry in the name of the "Wonderful Counselor".

Grace always, Dorothy