I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course in pastoral care. The course is directed toward candidates for ordination who will become the central pastoral figure in their setting. The class will explore the Biblical and theological foundations for this ministry and develop how pastoral care is worked out in shepherding, preaching, worship, administration, counseling, and other dimensions of a pastor’s ministry. The class will also explore the unique role of the pastor among other “helping” professions, consider how one’s life history affects caregiving, practice listening and other helping skills, and focus on a number of common crises/life issues commonly faced by pastoral caregivers. There will be instruction and coaching in some of the fundamental skills of pastoral care.

II. COURSE GOALS and OBJECTIVES

GOALS – Through participating in this class, students will:
- Articulate a Biblical theology of Pastoral Care
- Understand more fully the gifts, strengths, and “growing edges” of their own care-giving.
- Strengthen listening skills
- Develop resources for caring for those in various life crises and transitions.

OBJECTIVES – In order to achieve these goals, students will:
- Read, reflect on and discuss books and articles which describe the identity of their role as a pastor and the task of pastoral caregiving
- Reflect on how their personal history, communication style, and experiences affect their caregiving.
- Participate in exercises designed to strengthen listening skills
- Write a “Working Biblical Theology of Pastoral Care”
- Develop a Resource Handbook for a particular issue or topic of pastoral care
III. METHODOLOGY

Prepared reading, reflection on reading, class lectures, group discussion, small group discussion, workshops and projects

IV. COURSE TEXTS

Required texts:

- Haugk, Kenneth C., *Christian Caregiving: A Way of Life*. This inspirational guide helps answer the question: “What difference can my faith make in my everyday caring and relating?” The focus is on what sets Christian caregiving apart—and explains how this distinctive approach to caregiving can become a way of life.

- Long, Anne, *Listening*. A practical study of all the key aspects of listening - listening to myself, listening to others, listening to the world and listening to God.

- Richardson, Ronald *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life*. A look at how congregations function emotionally, including clear directions on how to improve their quality of life together and function more effectively in achieving mission goals. The author presents a theory about human behavior that will aid understanding of how things can get out of control in the human community of the church; a practical set of leadership ideas and behaviors; guidelines for how to behave in the midst of upsetting and conflictual circumstances; and personal steps that leaders in the church can take to become more positive forces for healing and cooperation.

- Willimon, William, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Changes in society and the church in recent years have made the ordained life all the more complex and challenging. Is the pastor primarily a preacher, a professional caregiver, an administrator, prophet, priest? The book explores who pastors are, asking about the theological underpinnings of ordained ministry, and then moves on to what pastors do, looking at the distinctive roles the pastor must fulfill.

Recommended course texts

- Hunsinger, Deborah Van Huesen, *Pray Without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care*. The author challenges pastors and congregations to put prayer at the center of their Christian practice and theological reflection through an examination of the three foundational disciplines of spiritual reading, careful listening, and self-reflection, as well as prayers of petition, intercession, confession, lament, and thanksgiving.

- Miller, William and Kathleen Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors*. From recent research and developments in the health and behavioral sciences, this book covers topics such as: maintaining psychological health, avoiding crisis, and preventing personal and occupational burnout - the integration of counseling with other pastoral roles and functions - pastoral counseling ethics - how to help people build personal motivation for change - grief counseling and crisis intervention - post-traumatic stress, physical and sexual abuse, and personality disorders.
• Scott, Susan, *Fierce Conversations*. A helpful book to learn how to transform everyday conversations employing effective ways to get the message across. Focusing on the Seven Principles of Fierce Conversations, the author teaches how to: overcome barriers to meaningful communication, expand and enrich conversations with colleagues, friends, and family, increase clarity and improve understanding, handle strong emotions-on both sides of the table.

V. ASSIGNMENTS

A. **Reading Assignments – Due every week.** Students will be expected to be prepared to discuss material in class.

B. **Weekly Devotional** – Two students each week will present a brief devotional, one at the beginning and one at the end of class, (no longer than 3 minutes). Intended audience of the devotional is a person in the congregation you might pastor one day. Imagine that they have asked you a question at the coffee hour or in an adult education class and you briefly address the question. Your answer will serve as an opening/closing devotional for our class. Questions will be distributed in class.

C. **Self-Assessment (Genogram/Family Tree) – Due September 28.** Write or draw a genogram of at least three generations; bring to class
   - Overview of Genograms: [www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Genogram](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Genogram)
   - Free Genogram software: [www.genopro.com/archives/InstallGenoPro.3.0.0.7.exe](http://www.genopro.com/archives/InstallGenoPro.3.0.0.7.exe)

D. **Working Biblical Theology of Pastoral Care – Due October 12.** Write a paper (5 pages) entitled, “My Working Biblical Theology of Pastoral Care” in which you outline Scriptural passages and themes which will undergird your pastoral caregiving.

E. **Final Project Outline – Due October 26**
   See final project, below. Outline will consist of a one-page summary of the following:
   1. Title of your “area of pastoral care” to gather resources
   2. Brief outline of your biblical/theological reflection
   3. Where you will look for books and articles
   4. Brief outline of a sermon addressing your topic
   5. What kind of community resources you will look for and where you will look
   6. How you plan to find “do’s and don’ts” for lay caregivers
   7. Which of the two final options you choose and a brief outline of what you will present
F. Care-giving assignment – Due November 16. Meet with a “care-receiver” (not a relative or a classmate) for 3 times to discuss an issue. Write (1) an account of each conversation and (2) a reflection of the listening and caring skills you demonstrated, including both strengths and weaknesses. (if appropriate, invite the care-receiver to give you feedback) Your account and reflection should be no more than 5 pages.

G. Final Project – Due December 14. Resource Handbook. Develop a “handbook” or “resource notebook” on a particular area of pastoral care such as: Marriage preparation and/or strengthening; In time of death; Addiction; Suicide; Depression; Grief/Loss; Death of a child. (...or other topics approved by professor)

Handbook should include (at least):
- A list of appropriate or helpful Scripture passages (1 page)
- A short biblical/theological reflection on the topic (2 pages)
- Annotated Bibliography of books and articles for further reading (1 page)
- Sermon outline that addresses the topic (1 page)
- Appropriate community resources (1 page)
- A list of “dos” and “don’ts” for lay caregivers (1 page)
- Either:
  - A detailed outline of a 5-week class or program, either for those facing the issue or for those being trained to give care. (3 pages)
  - OR
  - A 5-week devotional book with Scripture readings and written reflection/commentary (3 pages)

Note: be sure to reference all sources, both written and oral/personal. Pages single-spaced for this project.

H. Take-home Final exam – Due Exam Week – December 21 – 5pm
Exam will be essay questions, open Bible; not open book (on your honor). The exam will be sent by email on Dec. 12. You will be asked to respond in writing to 3-4 real congregational pastoral situations (about 1 page on each) which demand response and care from a pastoral leader. Answers should reflect an ability to recognize issues, ask good questions, suggest appropriate responses or resources – short or long-term, and recognize the challenges that would be involved in offering such care.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE
Sept. 7 Introduction
Devotional
Introductions, Overview, Syllabus, Expectations, Chapel, etc.
Presentation: “The Pastor’s Ministry”
Presentation: “Pastoring is More Complicated than You Think”
Presentation: “What Happens the Other Six Days of the Week?”
Reading assignment to be completed before class: none
Sept. 14  Basic Pastoral Skills – Part One
Devotional
Presentation: “Getting Real – Appropriate Pastoral Transparency”
Presentation: “Good Listening”
Presentation: “Relationship Skills”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Listening – General Introduction (pp. xiii-xviii), Intro and Section One (pp. 3-27)
Creating a Healthier Church – Introduction/Chapter 1 (pp. 11-23)
Christian Caregiving – Preface and Chapter 1 (pp. 9-18)
Pastor – Introduction (pp. 11-25)
Total pages to read:  69

Sept. 21  Basic Pastoral Skills – Part Two
Devotional
Presentation: “Conflict Management”
Presentation: “Pastoral Care is not an Interruption”
Presentation: “Dealing with Difficult People”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Listening – Section Two (pp. 33-71)
Creating a Healthier Church – Chapters 2-3 (pp. 24-53)
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 2-3-4-5 (pp. 19-43)
Total pages to read:  94

Sept. 28  Pastoral Care and Counseling/Mentoring
Visitations
Devotional
Presentation: “Counseling, Spiritual Direction, & Mentoring”
Presentation: “Visitations”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Creating a Healthier Church – Chapters 4-5-6 (pp. 54-90)
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 6-7-8 (pp. 44-70)
Pastor – Chapter 7-8 (pp. 171-223)
Total pages to read:  117

Oct. 5  Using the Sacraments & Prayer Book in Pastoral Care
Devotional
Presentation: “Eucharistic Pastoral Care: From the Pulpit to the Door”
Presentation: “Baptisms and Weddings”
Presentation: “Reconciliation/Confession”
Presentation: “Funerals”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Listening – Section Four (pp. 139-180)
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 10-11, 15 (pp. 81-98, 123-127)
Pastor – Chapter 3-4 (pp. 75-109)
Total pages to read:  100

Oct. 12  Death and Dying; Trauma and Crisis
Devotional
Presentation: “Hope in the Midst of Grief and Loss”
Presentation: “Traumas not ending in Death”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Pastor – Chapter 1-2, 5-6 (pp. 27-74, 111-169)
Total pages to read:  107
Oct. 19  NO CLASS – READING WEEK

Oct. 26  When to Refer; Addiction, Depression, Suicide
Devotional
Presentation: “How to Gather and Evaluate Resources”
Presentation: “How to Make Referrals and Follow-up”
Presentation: “Areas of Specialized Care”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Pastor – Chapter 9-10-11 (pp. 225-297)
Total pages to read:  73

Nov. 2  Pastoral Care and the Soul of the Pastor
Devotional
Presentation: “How to Keep Caring when you don’t feel like it anymore”
Presentation: “Pastoring out of Weakness”
Presentation: “Disciplines of the Effective Pastor”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 9, 12-13-14 (pp. 71-80, 99-122)
Pastor – Chapter 12-13 (pp. 299-336)
Total pages to read:  72

Nov. 9  Pastoral Care and Current Cultural Issues
Everything that doesn’t fit neatly into another category
Devotional
Presentation: “Sanctity of Life, Gender, and other issues”
Presentation: “Unique Pastoral Care Situations”
Presentation: “Malpractice, Spiritual Warfare, Exit Interviews”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Listening – Section Three (pp. 79-130)
Creating a Healthier Church – Chapters 7-8-9 (pp. 91-130)
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 16-17 (pp. 128-137)
Total pages to read:  102

Nov. 16  Integrating Pastoral Care with other areas of Ministry
How to Develop a Pattern of Lifelong Learning on the Job
Devotional
Presentation: “Pastoral Care and Evangelism”
Presentation: “Pastoral Care in Non-Pastoral Care Situations”
Presentation: “Learning Pastoral Care Every Day of the Rest of Your Life”
Reading assignment to be completed before class:
Creating a Healthier Church – Chapters 10-11-12-13 (pp. 131-183)
Christian Caregiving – Chapters 18-19-20 (pp. 138-157)
Total pages to read:  73

Nov. 23  NO CLASS

Nov. 30  GUEST PRESENTER

Dec. 7  GUEST PRESENTER

Dec. 14  FINALS WEEK
VII. EVALUATION

This class is a graded course.
To receive a passing grade, students must:
• Attend and participate in class, giving evidence of advance preparation
• Complete assignments adequately and on time

Evaluation of each student’s understanding of the course material will be accomplished through class participation, and written papers and projects.

Normal work:
  *Completed assignments & prepared participation in class discussions – B*
Extraordinary work:
  *Outstanding work on all assignments and extraordinary class participation – A*
Incomplete work:
  *At least one assignment not submitted – INC or D*
Below-average work:
  *Insufficient preparation or assignment completion – C*

Attendance, preparation, and engagement are expected, as are strict adherence to Trinity’s policy on plagiarism and the institution’s expectations regarding classroom decorum. NOTE: Please do not surf the net, play video games, send text messages, check or send email, use Twitter, Bing, Facebook, or your computer for any purpose other than to take notes during the class.