

# EP 142: Spiritual Care and Counseling

Spring 2017

Friday 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.

The Rev. Karri Backer

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## Course Description

Effective leadership for the practice of the spiritual care of persons and communities requires ethical integrity, religious intelligence, and intercultural understanding. With this in mind, the course explores ways to think critically about core themes of practical theology, pastoral theology and spiritual care; prepares you to respond appropriately to common spiritual care situations; and provides basic training in listening, relational, and conversational skills. An overarching theme is the construction of a theological framework to inform your understandings of your pastoral/religious and caring identities; the meaning of the care of persons, communities, and worlds; and the role of communities of care.

## Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will:

- A. Increase their readiness for a spectrum of common pastoral and spiritual care conversations.
- B. Demonstrate an ability to create fruitful listening environment.
- C. Demonstrate beginning skills in content-rich, reflective listening.
- D. Demonstrate beginning skills in spiritual assessment and theological reflection, including the awareness, analysis and critique of larger social, political, and economic contexts in which people's joys and sufferings are addressed.
- E. Enrich their self-understandings of professional, religious and pastoral identities.

## Assessment Strategies and Grading

Final grades are based on the percentage of points earned. A total of 100 points is possible. The following assessment activities are required.

- You can earn up to 25 points through preparation, participation in class activities, and facilitating class discussion, which assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) A,B,C and D.

- Four written reflections on the text *Images of Pastoral Care* (25 points possible), which assess SLO's D and E
- A written case reflection (50 points possible), which assesses SLO's A,B,C,D and E.

## Learning Methods

Learning methods include (but are not limited to) lecture, discussion, team-based exercises, contemplative practices, in-class writing, and role-playing. Normally, skills development and practice are a part of each class. If you need accommodations for a learning difference, please see Dean Sweeney.

This course requires us to engage, with curiosity, many topics: current issues in practical and pastoral theologies; the relationship between theory and practice; resources for spiritual care, including cognate disciplines such as psychology; what it means, theologically and culturally, to be a "person," ways of analyzing and responding to situations of joy and suffering; the ability to make oneself emotionally and spiritually available to others; and the clarification of our self-understandings as spiritual caregivers. As we progress, the course might help you begin to conceptualize "health" and "wholeness" in ways that are congruent with your own theological, spiritual, and religious traditions and commitments.

My hope in this class is that we can enter this space together, becoming facilitators to each other's learning and attentive to the needs of the class as a whole. I ask that you participate wholly in the various activities we will undertake together, and take responsibility for what you desire to gain from the class.

Each student is responsible for the information in the seminary's catalog, including policies for academic honesty and incomplete grades, and its guidelines for inclusive language. In addition, e-mail and other electronic communication should follow guidelines for Internet etiquette at [www.albion.com/netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette).

## Assessment Activities

### 1. In Class Learning (25 points)

As part of your participation grade, you will be required to engage in the activities and discussions during the class, as well as provide leadership in the following ways:

- Discussion Leader  
You will choose one week where you will lead the discussion on the weekly readings. You are free to decide what this will look like for your week – you may bring in outside resources, guest speakers, develop a creative response to the work, involve extra activities, or facilitate a traditional classroom discussion. Consider how you would like to engage in the material yourself, and how you can invite fellow students into this experience. Plan approximately 45 minutes for this exercise.  
- Up to **15 points** of the participation grade will come from this exercise
- The remaining 10 points will be determined by your class participation (attendance, participation in discussions, participation in activities and contemplative practices) and familiarity with the readings.

## 2. Reflections on *Images of Pastoral Care* (25 points)

You will read Dykstra's *Images of Pastoral Care* throughout the semester. For each of the first three sections (as indicated on the syllabus), you will write a 2- to 3- page *critical* reflection on the material, addressing two questions:

- 1) How sufficient are these images for spiritual care today? And,
- 2) Which image from the readings is most helpful to you and why?

Be sure to support your argument with evidence from the text and from the course as a whole. **These three reflections are worth five points each.**

After reading the final section of the text, you will write a 3- to 5-page *constructive* reflection that articulates your own understanding(s) of spiritual care. This reflection should name the primary image/metaphor that informs your spiritual care giving – that is, an image or metaphor that communicates how you understand yourself to function when providing care (i.e., shepherd, companion, wise fool, big-eared alien, DJ, etc.). Images, metaphors, themes, and commitments for pastoral and spiritual care giving can be drawn from class readings and discussions or from your own imagination. You should identify some strengths and limitations of your chosen image/metaphor; articulate its assumptions about pastoral authority; and describe its understandings/definitions of spiritual/pastoral care, health, and wholeness.

You should also name at least two key theological or spiritual themes or commitments that you bring to your practices of spiritual care and clearly relate them to your primary image/metaphor. These themes or commitments might

include key understandings from the Episcopal tradition (such as our understanding of sacramental theology or belief in balance), understandings of what it means to be human, the relationship between salvation or spiritual wholeness and holistic health, questions for spiritual assessment, or a particular dimension of the gospel or other sacred texts that are central to all of your care.

The constructive reflection is not a spiritual autobiography but a personal theological/spiritual statement – a “working theology/spirituality” of spiritual care. **It is worth 10 points.**

These four reflections will not be graded, but each must be completed to receive credit for the assignments. The first three are due **February 10, March 3, March 24**, and the fourth constructive paper will be due **April 21**.

### **3. Spiritual Care Case Reflection (50 points)**

A 15-page case reflection in which you (a) talk with an individual, couple, or family about an experience of receiving care in a religious community and (b) think critically, clinically and pastorally about the care received. You will be *learning about care received* in the past and simultaneously *providing care* in the present; therefore, you should intentionally use the relational, listening and conversation skills we are learning in the class. *An acceptable case reflection must be written to pass the course. (Due May 12).*

You should choose a person, couple, or family accepting of your role as a provider of pastoral/spiritual care or as a religious-leader-in-training; in the past year, the person/persons should have gone through a life-stage transition (i.e., puberty, marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, retirement, placing a parent in a nursing home, etc.) or crisis ( i.e., illness, divorce, grief, accident, depression, guilt, shame, coming out, etc.). Explain to them that the conversations will help you understand what the transition or crisis was like for them, how the religious/spiritual community provided care, and how the care was (or was not) helpful to them.

Conduct at least **two, hour-long conversations** that explore the experiences of this individual/family and the care received (or not received). Conversations should be at least one week apart. Help the person/family reflect on and make meaning of the experience by offering appropriate spiritual care, guided by what you are learning in class. Then write a paper with the following parameters. Your conversation should “map” the care received – what the pastor or other religious

leader did, what the Sunday School class or other small group did, ways that others in the congregation provided care, etc. You want a broad, ecological understanding of all the types of care provided (or not provided) by the community. Do not focus solely on the care provided by the pastor or other religious leader.

**(1) Introduction (3 pages)**

- (a) Describe the social locations and identities (age, ethnicity, social status, gender, etc.) of the care receiver/s, the life situation they experienced, and why you chose to be in pastoral conversation with the care receiver/s. State briefly what difference the care receiver/s social location and situation makes to your relationship.
- (b) Describe your own social locations and identities and their relevance to the conversations, your relationship (role and identity) with the care receiver/s, and how you conceptualized the contract of care between you and the care receiver/s (for a discussion of contracts of care, see Doehring, Chapter 4).
- (c) Briefly describe your general pastoral/spiritual assessment by naming what is going on internally/externally with the care receiver/s, what caring activities were provided to the care receiver/s, and what sorts of care would be beneficial at this point in time. This section is a “teaser” for Section IV below—save your most insightful comments for later.

**(2) Verbatim (3 pages)**

- (a) Write a verbatim of a portion of one of your conversations, emphasizing your knowledge of and skills in relationality and active, reflective listening. (For guidelines on a verbatim, see Doehring, Chapter 2, for verbatim format.) Annotate your comments on the verbatim to indicate the particular skills you were using, drawing on the skills and approaches described in course readings and in class. With your annotations, you are pointing out to me what behaviors you were practicing or what you were trying to accomplish with a particular comment—you are showing me how you put learning into practice.

**(3) Self-Reflection (3 pages)**

- (a) This section contains two sets of reflections. First, reflect critically on your own listening as illustrated in the verbatim and through body language, use of space, physical contact, self-disclosure, etc. Then reflect on how your own stories were resources and roadblocks during

the spiritual care conversations with the care receiver/s, especially in the portion of the conversation reported in your verbatim. (Exploring Exercise 2 from Doehring, Chapter 2, and Exercise 3 from Doehring, Chapter 3, can help you write this section.)

(4) **Spiritual Assessment** (3 pages)

- (a) Discuss the dynamics of the caring situation and how you understand, theoretically and theologically/spiritually, what is going on with the care receiver/s and between yourself and the care receiver/s. (You could use Doehring, Chapters 1 and 5-7, to frame your discussion.) *Cite at least two journal articles that inform your understanding of what is going on with the care receiver/s.* Note the caring activities offered to the care receiver/s, the role of the religious community in providing support, and the ways that the care was perceived by the care receiver/s. Evaluate the care described by the care receiver/s, supporting your evaluation with material from class.

(5) **Pastoral Care Plan** (3 pages)

- (a) Pretend that you are in an ongoing pastoral relationship with the care receiver/s and discuss your immediate and longer-term plan for spiritual care—both care you would hope to provide as religious leader and care you hope would be provided through the congregation and community. *This section should include referral information for two community resources that might be helpful to the person(s) for whom you are engaged in care: name of organization, address, phone number, hours of operation, services provided, eligibility, information on accessing services, etc.*

### Additional Information About Assignments

Papers for the course should be double-spaced, paginated, with unjustified 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Protect the identity of persons you are writing about by using pseudonyms for names and places, and by changing identifying details. All papers should be presented in hard copy. Four criteria will be used to evaluate your work:

- **Organization:** The work is exceptionally well organized. It contains a clear argument, and each and every paragraph contributes to the development and defense of that thesis. The work is succinct, to the point, and avoids needless

words.

- **Understanding:** The work demonstrates thorough and sympathetic understanding of the material addressed and accurately explicates the material as relevant to the development of the student's thesis.
- **Criticism:** The work takes a critical stance toward the material addressed, clearly articulating reasons for that criticism. Criticisms are based on solid reasoning supported with relevant evidence.
- **Mechanics:** The work is flawlessly presented, with no spelling or grammar errors. It properly references the ideas and words of others and conforms to Chicago Manual style.

Papers that fulfill all these criteria in an exceptional way will earn A's; papers that do so in a superior way, B's; and papers that merely meet the criteria at satisfactory levels, C's. Papers that do not fulfill one or more of the criteria at a satisfactory level may earn D's and F's, depending on the severity of the problems.

### Required Texts

- Doehring, Carrie. (2015). *The practice of pastoral care: A postmodern approach*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox. 978-0664238407.
- Dykstra, Robert C. (2005). *Images of pastoral care: Classic readings*. Indianapolis: Chalice Press. 978-0-827216-24-2.
- Franklin, Cynthia, and Fong, Rowena. (2011). *The church leader's counseling resource book: A guide to mental health and social problems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 978-0-19- 537163-5.
- Justes, Emma J. (2006). *Hearing beyond the words: How to become a listening pastor*. Nashville: Abingdon. 0-687-49499-0.
- Hunsinger, Deborah van Deusen. (2006) *Pray without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 978-0802847591
- Stevenson-Moessner, Jeanne, and Snorton, Teresa. (2009). *Women out of order: Risking change and creating care in a multicultural world*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 978- 0800664442.

### Required Electronic Texts

- Bidwell, Duane R. (2010). Therapeutic listening skills for spiritual care. Unpublished reflection.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010). Basic responding skills for spiritual care. Unpublished reflection.

Green Cross Academy of Traumatology. (n.d.). Standards of self care guidelines. Hugo, MN: Green Cross Academy of Traumatology.

Jueckstock, Joel A. and Kyle J. Vlach. "Claiming a Substantive View of Presence: The Significance of the Pastor's Self" *The Covenant Quarterly* [Online], 73 Number 3-4 (30 November 2015).

### Recommended Texts

Buber, Martin. (2010). *I and thou*. Ronald G. Smith (Trans.). Eastford, CN: Martino Fine Books. 978-1578989973.

Cooper-White, Pamela. (2004). *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 978-0800634544

Nichols, Michael. (2009). *The lost art of listening: How learning to listen can improve relationships*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Guilford. 978-1593859862.

Purnell, Douglas. (2003). *Conversation as ministry: Stories and strategies for confident caregiving*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press. 0-8298-1578-3.

Stairs, Jean. (2000). *Listening for the soul: Pastoral care and spiritual direction*. Minneapolis: Fortress. 0-8006-3239-2.

Way, Peggy. (2005). *Created by god: Pastoral care for all god's people*. St. Louis: Chalice Press. 978-0-927204-97-3.

Wegela, Karen K. (2010). *What really helps: Using mindfulness and compassionate presence to help, support, and encourage others*. Boston: Shambhala. 978-1590308806.

### Recommended Electronic Texts

Davis, Jonathan C., Miriam R. Hill, and Karen B. Helmeke. "Depolarizing Congregational Conflict: Principles for Effective Leadership from Internal Family Systems Theory" *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 20 (2001): 260-275.

### Classroom Policies and Procedures

**Assignments** can be submitted in a hard copy either in person or by mail or via email.

**Attendance** in the class is crucial, especially as there are only 10 class sessions possible. More than two missed sessions will result in a failing grade.

**Late assignments** will affect the participation grade, and will result in one-half of a

point reduction for every day the assignment is delayed.

**Mobile phones and other devices that make noise** should be turned off or silenced while you are in the classroom. If your device rings audibly during class or if you make/receive a call while class is in session, the next week you must bring treats for the entire class.

### **Sensitivity**

Giving and receiving care can stir our deepest feelings; likewise, learning about providing pastoral and spiritual care may engage our feelings and experiences in unfamiliar ways. Therefore, we will covenant as a class to recognize that what we are discussing is not abstract, but real and human. Sometimes this will be evident to everyone, but more often it will be experienced in a way that is internal and known only to a particular person. To this end, we will develop together some guidelines for being a listening community in this context. We will also remember that *anything we are discussing might pertain to someone in the room right now*. So we are called to exercise pastoral sensitivity even as we engage in this learning experience together. (Adapted from Pamela Cooper-White, Ph.D., Columbia Theological Seminary)

### **Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

*All readings listed should be done for that class indicated, i.e. please read Doehring, Introduction and Ch. 1-2, and 4 for January 27*

#### **Getting Our Bearings: Key Concepts for Spiritual Care**

January 13                      Introduction to the Course, Practical Theology and Each Other  
A Relational Metaphysic; What is Listening?  
Contemplative Practice: Receiving Kindness and Compassion  
Read: Dykstra, Introduction and Part I

#### **Basic Listening and Relating**

January 27                      Focusing and Presence;  
Establishing Relationship and Tending to Power and Authority  
Contemplative Practice: Praying a Sacred Moment  
Read: Doehring, Introduction and Ch. 1-2, 4  
Hunsinger, Ch. 1, 2  
Jueckstock and Vlach article  
Justes, skim

Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 1 – 3, 10, 18

February 10      Empathy and Attending Skills;  
Empathy and Responding Skills; Caring Across Gender and Sexuality  
Contemplative Practice: Gazing at a Beloved Other  
    Read: Bidwell, "Responding Skills"  
    Bidwell, "Therapeutic Listening Skills"  
    Doehring, Ch. 3  
    Hunsinger, Ch. 3  
    Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 11, 17, 19  
    Stevenson-Moessner and Snorton, Ch. 1, 5, 7  
**Due: First reflection on Dykstra**

## **Part II: Assessment, Theological Reflection, and Plans for Care**

February 24      Assessment in Spiritual Care; Caring with Children and Adolescents  
Contemplative Practice: A Prayer of Welcoming Presence  
    Read: Doehring, Ch. 6 – 7  
    Franklin and Fong, Ch. 5-11  
    Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 5  
    Dykstra, Part II

March 3          Theological Reflection; Planning for Care  
Contemplative Practice: The CP with a Difficult Emotion  
    Read: Doehring, Ch. 5, 8  
    Stevenson-Moessner and Snorton, Ch. 16, 18, 21, 22  
**Due: Second reflection on Dykstra**

## **Part III: Engaging in Care – Key Issues**

March 17        Grief and Loss – Overview; Caring with Older Adults  
Contemplative Practice: The CP with Another  
    Read: Franklin and Fong, Ch. 12, 26-27  
    Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 4, 15, 16, 18, 21  
    Stevenson-Moessner and Snorton, Ch. 3, 13, 14  
    Dykstra, Part III

March 24        TBA  
    Read: Hunsinger, Ch. 5 – 9

Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 5, 13, 14

**Due: Third reflection on Dykstra**

April 7

Addiction and Recovery – Overview;  
Counseling Approaches for Severe Financial and Social Problems  
Contemplative Practice: The CP with a Difficult Other  
Read: Franklin and Fong, Ch. 2-4,  
Kujawa-Hilbrook, Ch. 12, 20  
Stevenson-Moessner and Snorton, Ch. 2, 6

April 21

Depression and Anxiety – Overview;  
Suicide and Violence against Others – Overview  
Contemplative Practice: The Compassion Practice Cycle  
Read: Franklin and Fong, Ch. 13-25  
Kujawa-Holbrook, Ch. 6  
Stevenson-Moessner and Snorton, Ch. 10, 11, 17  
**Due: Constructive reflection on *Images of Care***

### Final Things

May 5

Self Care; Nurturing Hope  
Reprise: What is Spiritual Care?  
Contemplative Practice: Ignatian Examine  
Read: Green Cross guidelines for self care  
Franklin and Fong, Ch. 33-34

May 12

**Due: Pastoral case reflection**