Leadership Here and Now: Advanced Leadership Skills and Practice (PT653)

Course Description

Course Instructors: Allison Rennie, Keith Howard, and Janet Gear
Fall 2014 (3.0 credits)

Purpose

You are equipping yourself in faith for vocations in and beyond congregations - vocations of love, service, sacrament, reconciliation and compassion. There are challenges and opportunities for anyone called into vocations of guiding, nurturing, creating, building, serving and sustaining communities of faith and service. The effective leader has advanced skills in understanding, navigating and working within complex communities. Building on and advancing the skills acquired in the Leadership Studio (PT651/652), this course examines fundamental issues of leadership through the practice of self-reflection and group process and through the lenses of generational analysis and theological frameworks.

This course is required for all MA-PPL and MDiv students. The Leadership Studio (PT651/652) is normally a pre-requisite for this course for MDiv and part-time MA-PPL students. Fulltime MA-PPL students (and others with permission of an instructor) may enroll in PT653 and the Studio concurrently.

Students meeting the course competencies will grow in their capacity for effective leadership in congregations and faith-based communities in three areas:

As Self-reflective leaders able to
- Deepen self-awareness and assess the impact of leadership choices on group health
- Apply knowledge of group dynamics

Theologically, as leaders able to
- Read the theological landscape and identify a variety of implicit and explicit theologies of divine agency within a community
- Articulate the relationship between theology and a community’s ethos

Critically, as leaders able to
- Identify and articulate key beliefs of distinct generations
- Articulate the impact of these beliefs upon each generation’s understanding of and hopes for communities and institutions of faith and service.

Course Organization:

This course is designed for education through reflective practice. Students meet together three times in the fall term for an evening followed by a full day (7hrs) of case study reflection, role play, lecture, video input, discussion, and leadership practice. Three areas of leadership will be explored: Leader as
Reflective Practitioner, Leader in Social Context, and Leader as Practical Theologian. Expectations, preparatory and follow-up assignments are listed below.

I  Leader as Reflective Practitioner (Instructor: Allison Rennie)  Sept 18, Oct 16, Nov 6
Outcomes
Students will
• Be able to apply theoretical models to lived experience of group process
• Be equipped to analyse group experience and consider options for improving health and effectiveness of congregational groups in which they participate
• Develop appropriate vocabulary for reflecting on group experience and leadership
• Audit their current group leadership competencies
• Develop a learning plan for increasing effective leadership capacity
• Increase self-awareness related to participation in groups

Pre-course assignments (due Sept 18)
1. Read chapters 1 and 2 of Leadership Can Be Taught - Daloz Parks and Chapter 1 of Leadership and the New Science – Margaret Wheatley
2. 1 – 2 page Group Observation
   Choose a group in which you are currently a member (not designated leader). The group could be church related, or not – book club, Outreach committee, Strata council, etc. Attend an upcoming meeting and pay close attention during the gathering. Write a 1 – 2 page description of what you observe. Focus on observation and description, not evaluation. Do not include any names of participants, or personal content shared by group members in this meeting. Two copies of this assignment must be brought to the first class.

Assignments between classes
1. Between the class sessions students will be required to keep a leadership journal. Specific requirements of the journal will be introduced at the first class.
2. Between the class sessions additional reading will be assigned.
3. A major project will be due at the final class.

II  Leader in Social Context (Instructor: Keith Howard) Sept 19
Demographic change forms one component of an increasingly complex landscape for ministry and leadership.

The generational component of Advanced Leadership Skills and Practices focuses upon the impact of key differences in belief and practice of generational cohorts upon the life and work of the church.

Core issues include:
• The meaning and use of authority
• Reaction to different methods and styles of decision-making
• The importance of certainty or consensus
• The use of various media
• The place and importance of various types of feedback
• Setting the right conditions to encourage volunteers
Outcomes
Students will:

- Name and describe the different events, beliefs and practices that shape each of the four major generations of our time
- Identify the beliefs and practices of their generation plus one other that most excites and energizes them
- Identify points of tension between different styles of leadership and the key beliefs and practices of various generations
- Identify the “hidden” assumptions various generations make of one another
- Examine the key beliefs and practices of their congregation and how those may be in tension with the beliefs and practices of other generations
- Begin to formulate approaches to inter-generational conversation and congregational life that are authentic and have integrity

Pre-Class Viewing and Reading (due Sept 19):


What is a Generation? [http://www.lifecourse.com/about/method/phases.html](http://www.lifecourse.com/about/method/phases.html)


Courtney E. Martin, This isn’t her mother’s feminism, [http://www.ted.com/talks/courtney_martin_reinventing_feminism](http://www.ted.com/talks/courtney_martin_reinventing_feminism)


Assigned Reading on reserve or posted on Moodle:


Collins-Mayo, Sylvia, The Faith of Generation Y (Explorations) Church House Publishing 2010; chapters 6, 7 & 8


Howe, Neil, Millennials in the Workplace; Publisher: LifeCourse Associates (2010) (chapters 5-12)


Walrath, Douglas Alan, Frameworks: Patterns for Living and Believing Today, Pilgrim Press 1987
Pre-Class Assignment (due Sept 19):

Interview two people of different generations, each of a generation different than your own, about their life and perspective of a good life. In preparation for the interviews, identify five pivotal questions you will ask each.

Reflect upon their answers from the perspective of your generation and the implications of these insights for leadership and the mission of the church. (1500 words max)

A major final assignment will incorporate and build upon the generational analysis advanced in this assignment.

III Leader as Practical Theologian (Instructor: Janet Gear) Oct 17

Faith leaders/practical theologians are able to listen and speak to how faith animates the lives of others. Leaders in communities of faith have a complex task of reading the various theologies shaping and informing shared and dissenting commitments (vision and mission).

Outcomes:

Students will

- Be able to differentiate theological frames expressed in faith communities (implicit or explicit beliefs about God, world and church)
- Recognize how theological frames shape commitments and actions (the difference these make to how the community lives and works together)
- Demonstrate a developing appreciation and fluency in reading and speaking across a variety of theological frames, including areas of compatibility and incompatibility
- Engage in critical analysis of activities and mission strategies emerging from theological worldviews

Pre-Class Reading Assignment (Available on Moodle by September 5, 2014)

Students with fewer than two graduate courses in theology should read:

All students will read and prepare notes for reference and discussion on the readings posted on Moodle due October 17.

Pre-Class Assignment (due Oct 17):

A brief preparatory assignment will be distributed and explained on Sept 19.

Post-Class Assignment (due Oct 27)

A short reflective exercise will be assigned on the lecture and readings.

Final Course Project (due Nov 7)

Using an existing group in your faith community prepare and present an in depth analysis using all the tools, models and frameworks presented in this class. This will include generational frameworks, theological lenses, and models for understanding group life. Your project must demonstrate your ability to understand, integrate, and apply these models in a real life faith context. The conclusion of your project must include the identification of 3 – 5 specific leadership choices you would make to increase the effectiveness of the group you have chosen. Further instruction will be given on the course syllabus.
Bibliography will include required and recommended readings from the following texts:

**Leadership, Group Process, Facilitation:**

Baldwin, Christina, *Storycatcher: Making Sense of our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story* New World Library 2007


Block, Peter, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Berrett-Koehler 2008


Scott, Susan *Fierce Conversations*. Berkeley 2004


**Generational Analysis:**


Kinnanman, David, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*. Baker Books 2011


**Theology:**


Graham, Elaine, *Between and Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* SCM Press 2013 (recommended)


Oord, Thomas Jay, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific and Theological Engagement* Brazos Press 2010


Rieger, Joerg (ed.), *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology*, Augsburg Fortress 1998

Rollins, Peter, *Insurrection: To Believe is Human; To Doubt Divine*, Howard Books 2011


**Church and Ministry:**

Butler Bass, Diana, *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church*, Alban Institute 2004


Hasler, Joe, *Crying Out for a Polycentric Church*, Church and Society 2006


Van Gelder, Craig (ed), *The Missional Church and Denominations*, Eerdmans 2008

**These required texts will be available for purchase at the UBC Bookstore:**

Baldwin, Christina, *Storycatcher: Making Sense of our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story* New World Library 2007


