



PROPOSED VST ACADEMY MINI-COURSES, 2019

Suggested Format: a Friday evening free public lecture and discussion (about 2 hours) followed by a Saturday four hour workshop (registration and small fee required)

These mini-courses can be assembled into a series of two to four weekends (or more if you want) in any order and from any of the following VST professors. When your local group of clergy is considering a VST Academy program you are encouraged to combine courses into focused series, such as an "Introduction to Christianity" or a series focused on "Outreach and Social Ministries" or another series on the arts of ministry for lay people. There is so much choice, you might run an introductory series one year, and invite VST back for an "advanced" or more focused series in a following year. Dream big to support great lay education.

For information about scheduling a VST Academy series in your area, please contact:
Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Dean, patdw@vst.edu, 604-822-9804.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping • Principal, Professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition

THEOLOGY FOR NON-THEOLOGIANS (1 AND 2)

In these courses students are introduced to the basic talking points of the Christian faith and their relevance for the world now. The Trinity, creation, Jesus Christ and salvation, the Holy Spirit, the church and what can we hope for are some of the topics for conversation. In part one, we talk about the first half of these subjects; in part two the second half.

IMAGINATION, BEAUTY AND GOD

Imagination is a gift from God. Through the images and stories of the Bible, the Holy Spirit opens us to see God and anticipate the new creation God is bringing through Christ. This course explores some delightful visions for more humane world offered by scripture and invites us to live toward them in faith.

SEEING SALVATION: LEARNING CHRISTOLOGY IN ART

In this course, we explore how Christians through the ages have sought to show who Jesus is and what he has done for the world through painting, icons and sculpture.

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls • Dean, Professor of Hebrew Bible

NEW EYES FOR READING THE OLD TESTAMENT

This introductory workshop will help participants understand the insights and beauty found in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament by engaging participants in a careful reading of biblical passages illustrating the lively story-telling of our faith tradition.

NEW EARS FOR HEARING THE OLD TESTAMENT

As an introductory or follow-up course, this workshop will help participants understand the poetry of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, so that we can listen to the prophets and read the Psalms aloud with new appreciation for the power of the texts.

DO JUSTICE, LOVE MERCY

How do people of faith address social justice issues in their local communities and the world community? This workshop uses the book of Amos to explore a Biblical and prophetic basis for involvement in social justice concerns.

THE TEXTS BEHIND THE TUNES: ADVENT READINGS AND HYMNS

Explore the Old Testament prophetic texts behind familiar hymn tunes sung in Advent. Just where do all those references about "long expected Jesus" and "Emmanuel" come from? We will explore the original passages and sing the hymns together.

Dr Harry Maier • Professor, New Testament and Early Christian Studies

AT A TIME LIKE THIS, WHO NEEDS ANOTHER APOCALYPSE? THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Most mainline Christians either ignore or dismiss the Book of Revelation as a violent book contrary to Jesus' message of love. But while many ignore or avoid Revelation, popular culture and many Christian churches place its ideas and expectations front and center. This course invites us to reconsider the Book of Revelation as a part of the Bible that we should not only ignore, but embrace for its call to thoughtful and provocative Christian discipleship.

FOUR GOSPELS MANY RESURRECTIONS

Christians place at the centre of their faith the resurrection of Jesus and look to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for information about it. This course considers the resurrection stories in the Gospels as well as other parts of the New Testament in the larger context of each evangelist's story about Jesus. It asks us to consider both what the resurrection meant for the first followers of Jesus and what it means for us today.

CHRIST OR CAESAR? THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Desmond Tutu once quipped that the most political book ever written is the Bible. This course explores some of the ways New Testament writings intersect with the ideals and language of the Roman Empire. It will consider how early Christians drew on imperial themes to resist, embrace, transform, and engage Roman imperial realities.

PLACES FOR WITNESS: HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT INVITE US TO IMAGINE OUR IDENTITY IN SPACE AND TIME?

This course considers early Christian imagination as a means of conceiving the space and time in which we live and as a resource for conceiving congregational identity.

The Rev. Dr. Jason Byassee • Butler Chair in Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation

HOW TO COAX A BETTER SERMON OUT OF YOUR PREACHER

The sermon isn't the responsibility of the preacher alone.

HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON

Preaching is a corporate exercise, not a performance by the preacher alone. How do all of us together coax the most out of a sermon for faithful life in the world?

PROPHETIC LISTENING: LISTENING TO GOD, ONE ANOTHER, AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

To be a Christian is to pay deep attention in ways that require more patience than most folks have.

THE TRINITY AND LEADERSHIP

When Christians think about "leadership," we usually turn to business and other sources. What does our own doctrine of God say?

Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan • Director, Inter-religious Studies and Professor of Jewish Studies

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WISE?

Biblical wisdom literature offers surprisingly modern answers; come study its views of creation, ecology, money, gender, sexuality and responsibility.

SACRED TEXTS: WHERE JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM MEET

Learn about themes common to sacred texts in all three traditions: creation, eschatology, ethics, and the power of God.

Rev. Janet Gear • Assistant Professor, Public and Pastoral Leadership

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL LIFE

Is the Christian life primarily one of peace within or of doing the right thing, of contemplation or action? Is it possible that these paths are not two, but one? The question the prophets asked, "how then shall we live," is a profoundly human question, and multi-layered: it is an ethical question about what to do, an existential question about life's purpose, a spiritual question about life in and with God. We will explore this question together, following the steps of the saints whose lives of love brought the inner and outer life together.

Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart • Director, Presbyterian Formation • Director, Centre for Missional Leadership, St. Andrew's Hall

EVANGELISM FOR THE SHY CHRISTIAN: LEARNING TO SPEAK OUR FAITH RESPECTFULLY IN THE WORLD

While the "E Word" is scary to many kind-hearted Christians, together we will learn how to share the "Good News" through words and actions that feel authentic and appropriate in our multi-faith Canadian context.

I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY: FIRST STEPS TOWARDS PREACHING FOR LAY LEADERS

Come together to discover the joy of preaching, and learn the basics of how to construct a message for occasional pulpit supply Sundays when your Minister is away.

THIS OLD HOUSE: MISSIONAL RENOVATIONS AND CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION

Explore the latest theological and pastoral expressions of Christian witness in Canada, as we engage in missional exercises and examples of renewal.

BEYOND SNAKES AND SHAMROCKS: ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR TODAY

Walk alongside St. Patrick's mission to a pre-Christian land, in order to glean lessons for ministry and witness in our post-Christian Canadian lands

Rev. Dr. Robert Paul • Dean, St. Andrew's Hall • Professor of Mission Theology

GOSPEL BOOM: THE ASTOUNDING GROWTH OF WORLDWIDE CHRISTIANITY

One-hundred years ago, the homeland of Christianity was Europe and North America. Today, the vast majority of Christians live south of the equator in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. How did this massive change take place, and what does it mean for the future of our faith?

MISSTEPS AND MARVELS IN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Christian mission is marred historically by missteps that have harmed indigenous peoples, calling into question the legitimacy of the missionary movement. There is another side to the story, however. A balanced appraisal of the impact of missionaries leads us into a deeper appreciation of the marvel of God's grace, and how we can bear faithful witness to the gospel.

STUMBLING INTO GRACE: THE THREE STOOGES OF MARK'S GOSPEL

Peter, James, and John, revered as great saints of the Church, were an inner circle of three in the midst of the twelve disciples. Yet in Mark's telling of the story, they often appear like Larry, Moe, and Curly of Three Stooges fame. What can we learn about ourselves, as followers of Jesus, from the antics and pratfalls of the saintly trio?

Marketing Support Available through VST's Marketing and Communications Office

To assist in the promotion and registration of Academy mini-courses, Vancouver School of Theology offers the following support:

- Placement of course description and registration link on VST's website
- Social media postings with link to registration form
- Inclusion in 'At A Glance'; a monthly online newsletter sent to subscribers across Pacific Northwest and beyond
- Creation of an 8.5"x11" poster for printing - distribution to be arranged by local co-sponsoring organization