**PT500: Spiritual and Theological Foundations for Pastoral and Public Leadership**  
Instructor: Janet Gear, Asst. Professor of Pastoral and Public Leadership  
Fall 2015  
Tuesday 9:00-11:50  
Office: #420  
Phone: 604-822-9802  
Email: jgear@vst.edu  
Office Hours: Wed and Thurs10-12, or by appointment

**Purpose**

The time is one of “great turning,” “emergence,” a “threshold time” characterized by a recognized shift in inherited patterns of thinking and acting. The place is right here where your feet are planted and your relationship to those around you matters deeply. The task is preparation for contributing to the collective spiritual work of embracing the intersection of suffering and wonder where questions of meaning and purpose arise. The goal of this course is to deepen our understanding of the teaching and practices of contemplation and action integral to the Christian life as a foundation for public and pastoral leadership.

In this class we will honour the exploration of a call to ministry not first as an individual career path but as a beckoning into a “great work” of love - a mandate wider and longer than any one person’s lifetime. How do we articulate that mandate? How does our faith guide and inform our understanding of that “great work?” Who are our mentors in this time and place? What do we need to learn, individually and collectively, in order to lend our lives and leadership to the promise of abundant life? These are some of the questions we will explore together as we formulate a foundation in prayer and action for the collective work of public and pastoral leadership for our time.

**Format**

This course is designed to incorporate discussion of assigned readings and lectures, in-class practice, conversations with practitioners, and student presentations. A variety of assignments are due throughout the semester (see syllabus for details).

With sufficient enrollment, this course is also taught in a hybrid delivery for distance education students (see additional information).

---

**ALL DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THESE CLASSES ON SITE: FIRST CLASS, SEPTEMBER 15TH AND THE FINAL EXAM, NOVEMBER 24**

Discussions will be based on close reading of three related texts:

- Throughout the term we will use J. Driskill’s *Protestant Spiritual Exercises* as framework for exploring a disciplined practice of contemplation. This will include occasional participation in practices during class time and the expectation of on-going practice.
- In her most recent book, *Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*, Sallie McFague uses the lives of the saints to introduce the practice of kenosis and to demonstrate the way in which spiritual and ethical, inward and outward practices are related. In a variety of ways, the saints demonstrate how to embrace the mystical path of “waking up, letting go, and becoming part.”
- In her seminal text, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*, theologian Dorothee Soelle offers an understanding of the inseparability of the inner and outer movements (prayer and action) of the religious life. Through lecture and discussion we will use portions of this text as the theoretical basis of our reflections. [There are second-hand copies of this book available from former students and elsewhere; it is not necessary to buy the book but it is recommended].
- We will be assisted in imagining the practical application of Soelle’s work by reading and discussing S. Thornton’s *Broken Yet Beloved*, a pastoral theology based in the locus of suffering.

**Expectations, Evaluative Criteria and Competencies**

1. Attendance as specified by VST requirements.
2. Adherence to VST’s expectations for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
3. Completion and submission of all written assignments by deadlines indicated. Because seminars are designed for mutual exchange of informed reflection on assigned readings, no extensions will be granted on assignments unless indicated in the syllabus or requested with cause and negotiated with the Dean and instructor.
4. In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans (i.e. ‘mankind’ does not mean “humankind”) and a variety of metaphors are expected when making reference to the divine life (God has many names).

5. Completion of reading assignments as outlined in the syllabus. Students should be prepared to offer spontaneous summaries, synopses of readings.

6. Full participation in seminars, class discussions and exercises as outlined in syllabus.

7. Successful completion of a final oral exam.

NOTE: VST is committed to creating safe space and inclusive learning environments. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

The course is designed to build competency toward the following outcomes:

- mature spiritual life based in disciplined practice
- ability to do contextual and critical analysis
- capacity for leadership in intercultural and interfaith communities
- theological understanding of public and pastoral ministry

Assignments have been designed for you to demonstrate

- ability to articulate insight and self-knowledge through journal entries and small group discussion on spiritual practice
- ability to offer orally and in writing analysis of current context, to relate texts to specific problems/instances, and to apply learning to relevant ecclesial and social situations
- ability to locate and review samples of diverse religious and cultural resources informing approaches to public and pastoral leadership
- a discerning appreciation of and capacity to integrate a diversity of religious and cultural sources informing public and pastoral theology and practice
- ability to formulate questions of texts and practitioners which lead to deeper learning (hermeneutic circle) and widen the parameters of collective inquiry
- ability to articulate an understanding of the theological concept of attention and its relevance to public and pastoral leadership
- ability to articulate “the mandate,” purpose, call, or mission of communities of faith (within and beyond current congregational models) in this time and place
- ability to discern and outline specific goals for further learning in field-based and classroom environments

Required Texts:
Driskill, Joseph D., Protestant Spiritual Exercises: Theology, History and Practice, Morehouse 1999
McFague, Sallie, Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint, Fortress, 2013 (also available on Kindle)
Thornton, Sharon G., Broken Yet Beloved: A Pastoral Theology of the Cross, Chalice 2002

TEXTS HAVE NOT BEEN ORDERED THROUGH UBC BOOKSTORE. ORDER IMMEDIATELY TO PURCHASE FROM AMAZON. BRING TEXTS TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION.

If you are relatively new to Christianity, please also read:
Clark-King, Ellen, A Path to Your Door: Approaches to Christian Spiritual, Continuum 2011

Recommended Text: (there are a number of readings assignments from this text)
Soelle, Dorothee, The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance, Fortress 2001

REQUIRED READING IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 15th WILL BE POSTED ON THE MOODLE BY AUGUST 1ST. ALL REGISTERED STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE READING ASSIGNMENTS FROM REQUIRED TEXTS AND ONLINE SOURCES.
Additional texts (on reserve in library) will be required for assignments. No need to purchase.

Social/Historical Context:

- Budden, Chris, *Following Jesus in Invaded Space – Doing Theology on Aboriginal Land*, Pickwick 2009

Ecclesial Context:

**liberationist**


**mainline**


**evangelical/missional/emergent**

- Barger, Rick, *A New and Right Spirit* Alban Institute 2005

Additional Bibliography of Required and Recommended Reading on Moodle or on-line (additional texts may be added throughout the semester to augment the class discussions).

- Soelle, Dorothee. *Against the Wind: Memoir of a Radical Christian* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress 1999 (in syllabus as ATW)