

PT 551 Pastoral/Spiritual Care and Practice Spring 2020

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PURPOSE

To develop competence and confidence in initiating and developing pastoral/spiritual relationships.

To enhance ability to be present with awareness in pastoral/spiritual care.

To increase knowledge about and understanding of pastoral/spiritual care.

To develop the skills necessary to provide effective pastoral /spiritual care.

This course meets on Mondays (9am-12pm) Jan 27; Feb 10; Mar 9 & 23; Apr 6.

On-site intensive: Feb 27-29, 2020

Distance students must connect synchronously for Monday class times. On-site (in person) attendance during February Intensive Module is required.

Required text: The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach, 2015 Edition, Carrie Doehring.

COURSE OVERVIEW

To be a caregiver of another psyche or soul in times of everyday discernment, life transitions, trauma or crisis is a sacred and privileged call. As human beings our first instinct is to “fix” what is wrong and restore the comfort of the other and of ourselves. To be present with another’s suffering without imposing one’s own opinions, prejudices or agenda is a critical skill.

This is a skills based and experiential course designed to offer students the opportunity to practice interpersonal communication and listening skills as applied to pastoral and spiritual conversations both in the class and out in the community. Students will also articulate or create a regular spiritual practice towards their own spiritual growth. The content is selected to address the very practical but complex issues that the pastoral/spiritual professional may encounter in today’s society.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will have the opportunity to:

1. demonstrate a level of self awareness conducive to care without harm- personally, theologically and spiritually - in the pastoral/spiritual caring relationship

2. demonstrate an ability to self regulate opinions and emotions and respond instead of react in the presence of difference
3. develop a clear sense of the scope of practice in the pastoral/spiritual professional role and its limitations:
 - articulate an understanding of the similarities and differences in pastoral care, pastoral counselling and spiritual direction
 - demonstrate skills in active/embodied listening
 - develop awareness of and sensitivity to the dynamics of power and authority within a pastoral/spiritual care relationship
 - develop comprehension of and sensitivity to personal and professional boundaries
4. demonstrate knowledge of different approaches to spirituality and practices
 - articulate an approach that facilitates student's personal spiritual growth and development
 - understand the importance of a personal spiritual practice as self care

FORMAT

This course is designed to include discussion of assigned reading and lectures, in-class experiential practice, student presentations and pastoral/spiritual care practice in the community. Assignments will be due throughout the semester as outlined in the class schedule.

The PT551 class is scheduled for Monday mornings 9am -12 pm on Jan 27; Feb 10; Mar 9 & 23; Apr 6 and the Spring On Site Intensive weekend Feb 27-29. Due to the experiential nature of the course content, distance students must connect simultaneously with Monday morning class meeting times and must be present in person during the long weekend intensive classes.

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

1. All students in this course must have a current Police Record check on file with the Theological Field Education office at VST to take this course. It is your responsibility to bring or send evidence of that to the first class.
2. Attendance as specified by VST requirements: reading all required assignments before class, preparation of in-class reflections, presentations and discussions, and participation in in-class discussions, experiential practices and group reflections. In the small group, confidentiality and respect for differences will be two of the norms.
3. Beginning the week of January 27 each student will be expected to do a minimum of one hour of pastoral/spiritual conversation or visit each week for a minimum of 6 hours for the course. Guidelines will be provided about how to set up the required pastoral/spiritual conversations or visits.
4. Students will submit 2 written verbatim reports during the course.

5. Students will submit 2 brief journal reflections on personal insights gained through their experience in the course. Due dates will be posted on Canvas in the syllabus.
6. Each student will write an 8-10 page final reflection paper in which they evaluate their ability to engage this learning process, their progress in developing the course competencies, what skill(s) or learning is needed to further their development as a pastoral/spiritual professional, and an articulation of their experience of the spiritual practice used during the course.
7. This course is graded on an "Approved/Not Approved" basis. Students will be evaluated on their attendance at all class sessions, engagement in activities and discussion, and completion of the required readings and assignments. Student competence in using skills and ideas introduced in the course, and timely completion of assignments will also be accounted for in the final evaluation. Completion of all assignments is necessary to receive a mark of "Approved."
8. Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.