

# MA PPL SPECIALIZATION IN SPIRITUAL CARE

## CULMINATING ASSIGNMENT:

### PPL697 INTEGRATIVE PAPER - SPIRITUAL CARE

A culminating assignment (Integrative Paper, Capstone Project, Thesis or Comprehensive examination) is required for successful completion of a master's degree at VST.

#### PREREQUISITES

At least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, and PT615: Integrative Seminar – Spiritual Care must be completed prior to registration for this cumulative assignment. It is normally completed in the final term of a student's program.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Integrative Paper – Spiritual Care is to assist VST in assessing the ability of MA PPL students in Spiritual Care to integrate their academic and experiential learning and to demonstrate competencies appropriate to the field of spiritual care. The paper should reflect the competencies articulated by the school for the MA PPL degree, as expressed below.

#### **Integrative Paper – Spiritual Care competencies:**

The paper and presentation will show one's capacity as a public theologian by demonstrating:

- knowledge of biblical themes and their contexts, articulation of one's own hermeneutic, and ability to integrate biblical themes [and/or wisdom from other religions and spiritualities] and theology with practice of spiritual care and pastoral leadership;
- knowledge of central themes of one's faith tradition and ability to engage in theological and historical reflection on those themes as they relate to major challenges facing contemporary religious communities and society;
- familiarity with theological and professional ethics as they relate to major challenges facing contemporary religious communities and society and the practice of ministry and leadership;
- understanding of the intersection of religious faiths and contemporary culture, and how this intersection might impact one's contribution to the practice of spiritual care;
- the way in which one's spiritual life bears on one's practice of spiritual care;
- compliance with the VST policy on research with human subjects.

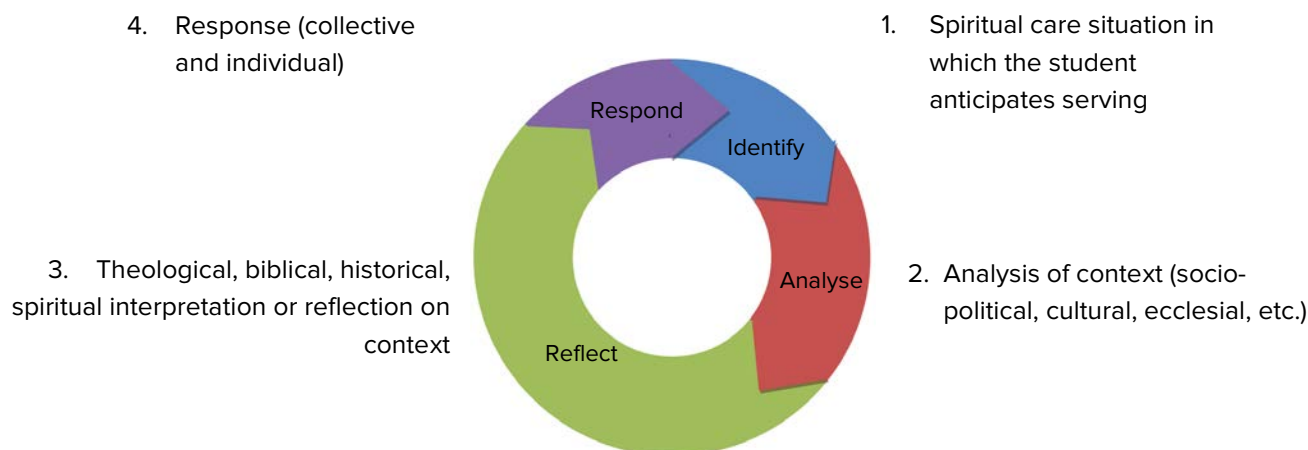
#### PAPER GUIDELINES

The paper should be 5,000 words (exclusive of notes and bibliography), and is normally completed and submitted in the final term of the students MA-PPL program. In writing the paper, students may want to make some use of case studies, art, poetry or other forms of expression

that assist them in articulating the integration of their academic, spiritual, and practical-based experience of a VST education. The paper must include a bibliography of sources and follow the guidelines for academic papers (MLA, Turabian, Chicago). Papers must be carefully edited and will not be approved until all copy-edit errors and omissions are corrected.

The approach to the paper should follow the method of the “pastoral cycle” described below, wherein the student integrates the following steps in demonstrating their capacity to reflect critically and constructively on spiritual care in a specific context, and with reference to wider issues currently influencing the church or other faith communities in the world. While all the phases of the cycle are required, the majority of the paper should be dedicated to point 3:

1. **Identify and describe** the situation, or type of situation, where the student is preparing to provide spiritual care. This may include things such as a student’s faith tradition or denominational affiliation, orders of ministry, geographic location [if known], particular specializations, etc.
2. **Analyze** the wider context by drawing from various bodies of relevant knowledge such as theological, cultural, political, economic, and social theory, including recognition of one’s personal identity and location *vis à vis* that of others.
3. **Reflect** on the context as presented above, and needs and opportunities for spiritual care in that context, drawing on the knowledge and understanding gained through courses taken at VST in theology, history, biblical studies, leadership, spirituality, and interreligious and indigenous studies.
4. **Compose a Personal Response** to points 1-3. In this section, the student situates or identifies their anticipated contribution to spiritual care, and demonstrates realistic self-knowledge as well as the ability to name faithful and effective personal and corporate response to challenges and opportunities that have been identified. The student will give evidence of their ability to place themselves with modesty and confidence within the wider field spiritual care practitioners.



## PROCESS

1. Students who wish to write the Integrative Paper – Spiritual Care should register for PPL697 Integrative Paper – Spiritual Care and choose a date for presentation of the paper on the culminating project calendar, normally during exam week.
2. The evaluation panel will include the student’s DDF (where appropriate) or the Spiritual Care faculty mentor, 1 additional VST faculty member assigned by the Faculty Association, and a spiritual care practitioner chosen by the student and approved by Chair of the PPL Committee. This practitioner should have experience of the student’s practice of spiritual care during the student’s degree program and should not be a staff or faculty member or spouse of a staff or faculty member at VST. If the student is from a religious tradition other than Christianity, a religious leader from the student’s own tradition may be an additional panel member, as chosen by the student and approved by Chair of the PPL Committee. All members of the evaluation panel sit equally as evaluators on the panel. Students will have opportunity to invite one additional sessional or core faculty member to attend the panel WITHOUT an evaluative role, if desired.
3. The Integrative Paper is submitted **ONE WEEK PRIOR to the presentation date** to all members of the panel. A copy of the evaluation form must be sent with the paper.
4. On the assigned date, the student meets the panel for a 1-hour discussion of the paper led by the panel members. At a certain point, the student will be invited to leave while the panel makes their assessment. When the student returns, the results will be shared with the student. Papers are either APPROVED, INCOMPLETE, or NOT APPROVED based on the MA-PPL competencies noted above.