

LS/SP501: The History, Theology and Practice of Marriage in the Anglican Tradition

Thursday Nov 14, 2024, 6-9 pm; Friday Nov 15, 2024, 9 am- 5 pm

In-person only

Instructor: Archbishop (retired) Melissa M. Skelton

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PREREQUISITES

Open to Anglican students in the M.Div. program unless by special permission of the Instructor. Students in the Diploma in Anglican Diaconal Studies (DADS) program may also attend.

PURPOSE

Marriage today is under pressure to adapt and change in the face of numerous socially acceptable ways of approaching and living in committed relationships. What should the Church encourage, bless, and support? What are the norms or standards for marriage in a Christian church or in an Anglican congregation?

Marriage has been seen as a powerful symbol of reconciliation, as a means of living out a vocation to create a loving community, as a sign of Christ's love, and as one of the building blocks of society. Is there any reason to see it differently now?

Those conducting marriages on behalf of the Church benefit from clarity about what marriage is and how it might be celebrated in the light of the emergence of new understandings about the nature of human sexuality and relationships. They also need practical guidance in the preparation of couples for marriage, conducting wedding rehearsals, and presiding at the marriage liturgy, itself. Finally, those engaging with married couples are often involved in continuing support of married couples, in good times and in challenging times, after the marriage has taken place.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

Participants will

- Engage in a deeper reflection about their own experience of marriage (if applicable), marriages in their families of origin, or in other marriages they have observed.
- Increase their knowledge about the background to and evolving meaning of marriage to include the development of pastoral approaches and practices appropriate to today.
- Articulate their own theology of marriage.
- Develop an approach to and resources for preparing couples for marriage and in following up with couples after their marriage.

- Be able to articulate an approach to conducting a wedding rehearsal and a marriage ceremony founded in clarity about their role.

REQUIRED READING AND TEXTS (all readings need to be completed before the course begins)

The Anglican Church of Canada, This Holy Estate: The Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada
https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Marriage_Canon_REPORT_15Sept22.pdf

Liturgical Resources 2 (Episcopal Church)
<https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/21226>

The Book of Alternative Services (Anglican Church of Canada) pp. 526-540

The Book of Common Prayer (Anglican Church of Canada), pp. 562-572

Canon XXI of the Anglican Church of Canada
<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/221-2019-canon-xxi.pdf>

Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage between a Christian and a Person of Another Faith Tradition
<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/marriage-between-a-christian-and-a-person-of-another-faith-tradition.pdf>

COURSE POLICIES/REQUIREMENTS

- In-person attendance for all sessions of the course, and active participation in discussions.
- Completion of all reading and assignments: Come to class prepared (required reading done in advance of sessions).
- Assessment and approval (or non-approval) is based on a combination of participation in discussions, comprehension and retention of what is taught in the sessions as well as completion of a written assignment (see below).
- Note: VST's Readiness for Ministry criteria always factor into formation courses.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Due by e-mail to the instructor by **December 16, 2024**. Prepare a 1500-word paper in which you choose one of the marriage scenarios below and respond to the questions following the scenarios. An excellent paper will express *an awareness and sensitivity to pastoral issues, reference relevant sources, and will competently engage the fictitious couple in appropriate*

preparation for, planning, and deciding on a marriage liturgy in an Anglican context. Use The Chicago Manual of Style for all citations.

Scenarios: Choose one. You are working with:

- A couple seeking to be married where both partners have been divorced in the past 5 years.
- A same-sex couple preparing for marriage (both partners are members of an Anglican congregation)
- A couple seeking to be married in which both partners have in the last three years lost their previous partners to death.
- A couple seeking to be married in which one of the partners is a baptized Christian and an active member of an Anglican congregation and the other partner is not a Christian (agnostic, atheist, Jewish, Muslim etc.—you choose what you want to work with)

In the paper you will:

1. Identify and describe pastoral considerations you will need to be aware of in engaging with and *preparing the couple for marriage*: What you will listening for as you speak with them and what might be included and potentially emphasized in the preparation? What would be your responses to the kinds of questions both partners might bring to the marriage preparation? What is your plan for their marriage preparation?
2. Identify and describe what you will say to the couple about their *liturgical options for their marriage liturgy*. What rite(s)? What language? What readings? What other details?
3. *Outline the (imagined) marriage liturgy* that you have put together with them speaking to the reasons for their (imagined) choices of liturgy, readings, music and, in some cases, other participants and the actual physical business related to the rite.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bridges, William. *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. De Capo Lifelong Books, 2004.

Gottman, John and Silver, Nan. *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*. Harmony Books, 2017.

Haller, Tobias. *Preparing for a Wedding in the Episcopal Church*. Church Publishing, 2017.

Johnson, Sue. *Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*. Little Brown Spark, 2008.

Lee, Cameron and Furrow, James L. *Preparing Couples for Love and Marriage: A Pastor's Resource*. Abingdon, 2013.

Miller, Sherrod, Miller, Phyllis, Nunnally, Elam W, and Wackman, Daniel B. *Collaborative Marriage Skills: Couple Communications I*. Interpersonal Communications Program, 2007.

Prepare Enrich Resource Kit: Building Strong Marriages
<https://www.prepare-enrich.com/>