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PT505 and TFE - Exploration
Practical Foundations for Public and Pastoral Ministry:
Leading in Context
Spring 2024
Course Outline – A Syllabus will follow before the class begins

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Instructor: Rev. Mary Nichol
Director of Theological Field Education
Vancouver School of Theology, Room 418
Email: rev.marynichol@gmail.com (until January 15, 2024)
          mnichol@vst.edu
Phone/Text: 778-980-1374

Purpose of the Course:

Building on the skills and understanding of *Theological and Spiritual Foundations for Pastoral and Public Leadership* (PT500), *Leading In Context* will provide method and opportunity to explore potential practicum sites that combine leadership challenges, ministry possibilities and offer excellent learning opportunities in pastoral and public ministry. To be effective in ministry practice and leadership in the public sphere, it is critical to understand the field and its demands, expectations, and possibilities. Preparation for practice of ministry is not introduced simply as skill development but rather as the formation of leaders who will understand and respond to the continually changing landscape of contemporary ministry and navigate communities in the art of resourced and adaptive change.

PT505 *(Leading in Context)* runs concurrently with Theological Field Education – Exploration (TFE-E), which is required for all students in the MDiv and MA-PPL degrees. During this Spring Term course, students explore potential field sites where they might follow up on their vocational interests expressed in the work of PT 500. They interview potential mentors, conduct site analysis, consider their learning styles, explore different models of leadership and theological reflection and reflect on the ethical requirements of research with human subjects. The work in PT505 is assessed APPROVED/NOT APPROVED or INCOMPLETE.

At the end of PT505, students prepare a Project Proposal that will be suitable to the requirements of *TFE – Leadership in Practice*/The Studio/PT651-652 or *TFE – Leadership in Faith Community.* (The determination of which TFE program the student moves into will be made in discussion with the Director.) Successful presentation of the Project Proposal, which contains a description and analysis of the proposed learning site, an introduction to the proposed mentor and the project proposal, marks the completion of TFE - Exploration. This approval admits the student to TFE – Leadership in Practice (TFE _P 1 and 2) /The Studio/PT651-652 or TFE – Leadership in Faith Community.   If the student is not planning to proceed with either TFE program in the following term, it is possible to delay the Proposal Presentation (withdrawing from TFE – Exploration) upon approved of the TFE Director. For more information, see the Theological Field Education *Handbook*, pp. 9-12 and the diagram on p. 13. PT505 is synchronous only. Prerequisite: PT 500 *Theological and Spiritual Foundations for Pastoral.*

Competencies related to Course:

Demonstrated ability in the following:

> ➢ **contextual analysis** of church and community contexts (e.g. demographics, socioeconomic realities, history, mission and how it was shaped, ethos, ethnography, beliefs, theological orientation).
> ➢ **cross-sectoral analysis:** development of the skills and knowledge necessary to critically analyze leadership situations across various dimensions, including ecclesial/social agency governance and policy issues.
> ➢ **learning for leading:**
> > o **learning styles and self-understanding:** developing and implementing knowledge of one's own preferred style of learning; increased awareness of one's own gifts and weaknesses as a leader to maximize growth and integration in articulating spiritual vocation as related to leadership.
> > o **learning goals and learning opportunities:** the establishment of personal learning goals and discernment of learning opportunities in faith or community organizations as they seek to respond to their context: pandemic, changing church, changing realities and needs in society.
> ➢ **research with human subjects:** demonstrated understanding of the requirements of research with human subjects and program implementation.
> ➢ **theological reflection:** discernment of, and theological reflection upon, the *missio Dei* of potential practicum sites.

Course Organization:

Seminar Format: Nine 3-hour seminars plus one final presentation session, during Spring Term exam week. This presentation session may last for an extended time depending on the number of students in the class.

Seminar meeting dates: The following Thursdays from 2pm-5pm - January 25; February 1, 8, 15 & 22; March 7, 14, 21 & 28 and April 8, 9am – 12 noon (approximate, depending on the number of presentations). Attendance at each seminar is considered important for successful preparation for Theological Field Education programs. This course is synchronous only.

Course work will include:

- Direct observation in the field in a variety of contexts
- Interviewing on site – staff, constituency, parish/agency committees, small groups
- Researching history and tradition and contexts of a community
- Practice of theological reflection
- Documentation of site exploration
- Clarification of personal approaches to learning
- Development of Learning Goals and Learning Covenants
- Students will be required to participate in *Research Module E: Human Research* as a part of the course, the date is not yet determined. When available, register on Populi for the Module, in addition to PT505.

Assignments:

Evaluation will be based on:

- Six short written assignments.
- Active participation in the seminar.
- A final oral and written TFE II Proposal presentation:
  - At the final seminar date (April 8) students will provide a seven-minute visual presentation based on their exploration process that artfully and passionately communicates to peers and the instructor their site and field proposal.

The student's evaluation of PT505 will be either *Approved/Not Approved*. Students who receive Approved in PT505, and who successfully present their Proposal are allowed to move into either The *Studio* and *TFE – Leadership in Practice or TFE – Leadership in Faith Community*, pending completion of all documents.

Readings

Students are not required to purchase any texts. Specific brief readings will be assigned on the syllabus, posted on Populi, and will be taken from among these and other sources:

Peter Block. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2004).

Barbara J. Blodgett. *Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be: Four Practices for Improving Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2011).

Barbara J. Blodgett and Matthew Floding, eds. *Brimming with God: Reflecting Theologically on Cases in Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

Kathleen A. Cahalan. *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010).

Matthew Floding, ed. *Engage: A Theological Field Education Toolkit* (Lanham, MD, 2017).

Henri Nouwen with Michael J. Christensen and Rebecca J. Laird. *Discernment: Reading the Signs of Daily Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013).

Parker Palmer. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004).

Course Policies

1. **Attendance:** 100% attendance and full participation is expected. No more than one allowable absence for any reason. If you need to be absent, please inform the course instructor in advance. Being on time for class is expected as a demonstration of leadership, respect for others and as an aspect of readiness for ministry.

2. **Reading and assignments:** Students are expected to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.

3. **Academic honesty:** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook**.**

4. **Inclusive language:** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when referring to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when referring to God.

5. **Late assignments:** 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.

6. **Electronic equipment** Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.

7. **Support** VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. 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 <u>within the first week of classes.</u>

8. **Visibility on Zoom** Synchronous distance students are ordinarily required to be visible on the screen (via Zoom) during class time.