

VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

North Park Theological Seminary

Purpose:

This course is designed to explore the meaning of credentialed and endorsed ministry in The Evangelical Covenant Church and the responsibilities and competencies of those called to these positions. Attention will be given to enhancing self-awareness as well as ways to assist participants to become more healthy in ministry. The course centers around the themes of character, constancy and competency for those called to ministry.

Objectives:

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Articulate clearly a Biblical and theological understanding of vocational life and ministry in The Evangelical Covenant Church.
2. Participate fully in personal and vocational assessments as they relate to the practice of ministry.
3. Know the Rules for the Ordered Ministry and the Ethical Principles for Covenant Ministers as they apply to one's life and ministry.
4. Describe and commit to ongoing development of the pastor/minister as leader.
5. Identify patterns and spiritual formation disciplines within the ministerial journey that contribute to health and excellence.
6. Create a "Life Rule", including a self-care plan, which embraces a spiritual and behavioral code that sustains ministerial health. (Note specifics in Reader distributed in class).

Requirements:

A. Work due before class:

1. One of the keys to successful ministry is a deep understanding of one's self, including one's strengths and vulnerabilities. This knowledge can only increase the pastor's capacity for healthy ministry. Inventories, conversations and times for reflection comprise this process, which is designed to enhance self-understanding and identify practical steps for further growth as a pastor and person. These instruments are not an assessment of your call to ministry, rather an opportunity to explore who you are as you live into your call, being aware of the uniqueness of your personality and giftedness.

To this end we require completion of the following Midwest Ministries Assessments: MMPI-2, Sentence Stem Completion, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Wagner Enneagram Personality Styles Scales, and Autobiographical Questionnaire. They will be sent to you by Midwest Ministry Development Network. They will take approximately 6-8 hours to complete. **RETURN THEM TO MIDWEST MINISTRIES NO LATER THAN ONE MONTH PRIOR TO START OF CLASS.**

Individuals may not attend the class unless all requirements are submitted to Midwest Ministries by the deadline on the packet which is sent to you. All readings are considered pre-readings for the course, and are expected to be read in advance.

2. Required Readings: Reading and viewing all learning materials is to be completed in advance of the first session. Learning materials will provide general background for the experiences and will be referenced periodically during the sessions. Please submit required responses to reading material one week prior to the class.

The required texts are available at Covenant Bookstore, and may be ordered directly through <http://covbooks.com/collections/orientation>

- Calling and Character by William Willimon, Abingdon Press, 2000
- Rest in the Storm by Kirk Byron Jones, Judson Press, 2001
- Made Healthy in Ministry for Ministry by C. John Weborg, Wipf & Stock, 2011
- Vocational Excellence Reader

Exception: Vocational Excellence Reader **will be provided for you at class.**

B. Attendance and Participation:

Full attendance and participation throughout the entire class time is expected. No early dismissals for travel plans can be accommodated. Each person will spend an hour with a Midwest therapist analyzing and debriefing the results of the tests taken ahead of time. You will be asked to release one copy of your printed report to Ordered Ministry to be kept in a confidential file so we can assist you in maintaining ministerial health. Spiritual direction will also be available.

C. Work after the class:

Write a "Life Rule" including the following two portions: (NOTE: See the Reader for specific details)

- a) Introduction to Life Rule, responding to the following:
 - How are your practices of ministry going to be changed because of this course?
 - What have you learned about yourself in this class: what are your potential concerns/vulnerabilities and benefits?
- b) "Life Rule" incorporating all elements of the class (see template for instructions).

All assignments should be uploaded onto [Haiku's dropbox](#)

Please do not send your assignment as a PDF. Please submit assignment with student name and assignment title.

Written Assignment for Vocational Excellence

Due:

Paper should be double-spaced with 1 inch margins using Times New Roman or Arial font and not more than 12 pt. nor less than 10 pt.

Send to: Upload your paper as an attachment with the student name and course title as the subject line to Haiku dropbox

Prepare a **6-8 page paper** incorporating approximately 2 equal sections.

Section 1: Introduction to your “Life Rule,” (3-4 pages)

Respond to the following:

- “How are your practices of ministry going to be changed as a result of this course?”
- “What have you learned about yourself in this class: What are your potential concerns/vulnerabilities and benefits?”

Section 2: Your “Life Rule” (3-4 pages)

- To include at least four areas of your life: Physical; Emotional/Relational; Spiritual and Vocational. This rule is to serve as a guide for growth through the next 2 – 5 years; annual review, however, is a good practice in order to adjust and refresh the life rule.
- Process for developing your life rule:
 1. Consider the resources available to you through what you have read in the assigned books, the Reader and the handouts as well as what has been discussed in class.
 2. Do a self-diagnosis on the current state of each of these areas in your life today. Write out an evaluation of your existing plan for self-care. How are you doing today in these areas? Comment on what is now in place.
 3. Determine a verse or section of Scripture that will provide the foundation for your thinking on each area.
 4. Outline what you specifically will do or name specific actions to help you grow in each area.
 5. At a minimum, this project should take a couple of pages.
 6. Name a person to whom you will be accountable.
 7. Condense your writing into a key summary statement (which may be similar to a personal mission statement.) You may choose to write one summary statement or one for each section of the life rule.