

**PRACTICES OF CARE IN CONGREGATIONS
ANDOVER NEWTON THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL**

**PSYP 611 Fall 2008
Tuesdays 6:00pm-8:50pm**

DRAFT – Not final form

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Description:

This is an introductory course in practices of care for ministry in congregations. While the primary focus of the course is pastoral ministry in local congregations the material will be relevant to other settings as well. This is not a course in pastoral counseling. The aim of this course is broader and at the same time limited. It begins with the assumption that practices of care are not exclusively one-to-one interactions that occur in the pastor's office. Practices of care involve the whole community of faith as it is called to live out the "priesthood of all believers." Practices of care depend on lay involvement. Throughout the course pastoral and prophetic points of view will be held together as we explore the needs of people in diverse communities today.

The course is divided into five sections: Historical Context, Theological Frameworks, Critical Skills, Representative Issues, and Emerging Themes. We will begin by looking at various contexts for pastoral care and how these contexts inform the issues and needs people have. This means our pastoral practices will attend to the societal pressures that impact people's lives. This means that our listening cannot just be listening, rather it needs to be *just* listening. We will ask what skills are required to engage people in contemporary contexts for personal and communal wellbeing. With a "double vision" – the individual person and the person's context -- we will explore some of the critical issues facing people today and how the pastoral practices of faith communities can be mobilized to respond to them. We will look at representative situations such as: crisis and illness, grief and loss, contemporary forms of family life, the reality of violence in our churches, families, and society. We will address questions of pastoral identity and pastoral ethics that inform our understanding and practice of care. Throughout the course we will be asking what difference does race, gender, class and culture make in the way we understand the meaning and practice of care in a world hungry for just and compassionate communities?

As a backdrop to our work together, we will be guided by two questions: What is our vision of a healed world? How is this vision expressed in pastoral practices and celebrated in worship?

Course Objective:

The aim of this course is to explore and expand our understanding of the meaning of pastoral care. We will develop skills of pastoral discernment, *just* listening, small group work, social analysis, and theological reflection as ways to mobilizing the resources of a community of faith to respond to people and the variety of circumstances facing us today. We will explore how our pastoral identities influence our views and practices of care. We will begin to articulate our theological postures that can inform our pastoral practices.

Format of the Course:

There will be one class meeting each week. There will be lecture/discussions, case studies, video presentations, small-group work and student presentations.

Assignments:

1. Pastoral Identity Paper - Draft for Peer Group Due **October 7th**. Final version Due **October 14th**
2. One Critical Reflection Paper (Based on Peer Group Dynamics) - Due no later than **November 18th**
3. Group Class Presentation --engaging pastoral issue (Approximately 1 & 1/2 hours)
4. Theological Reflection Paper: **Due December 9th**

[All written assignments are expected to integrate class readings, discussions, and should be fully footnoted.]

Grading:

20% Class participation
20% Pastoral Identity Paper
20% Critical Reflection Paper
20% Group Class Presentation
20% Theological reflection paper

Academic Credit:

Three units
Auditors excluded

Required Texts:

Donald M. Chiula, *Building King's Beloved Community*
R. Esteban Montillo and Ferney Medina, *Pastoral Care and Counseling with Latino/as*
Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women*
Christie Cozad Neuger and James Newton Poling, eds., *Pastoral Care and Counseling Men*
Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care*
Barbara Brown Taylor, *When God is Silent*
Sharon G. Thornton, *Broken Yet Beloved*
Peggy Ann Way, *Created by God: Pastoral Care for All God's People*

Select One

Clayborne Carson, Ed. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*
Garret Keitzer, *A Dresser of Sycamore Trees*
Melanie May, *A Body Knows: A Theopoetics of Death and Resurrection*

Mary Beth Rogers, *Barbara Jordan: American Hero*
Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life*
[Or propose an alternative autobiography]