

**Course of Study School of Ohio**  
**Hosted at Methodist Theological School in Ohio**  
**COS 323 – CONGREGATIONAL CARE**  
**MEETING DATES: FEBRUARY 9-10; MARCH 9-10 2018**  
**Makeup dates: February 16-17; March 16-17**

**Instructor:** Rev. Dr. Francesca Debora Nuzzolese  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to practices of congregational care and the pastor's responsibility in caregiving.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

1. Implement and oversee appropriate types of care in varieties of settings, including prisons, hospitals, nursing facilities, and homes.
2. Organize caring ministries within the congregation.
3. Discern and implement appropriate boundaries, knowing when and to whom to refer people, and when and when not to share information.
4. Reflect on and practice skills of sensitive caregiving, using role play and analysis of case studies.
5. Learn practices of self-care and self-compassion for the pastoral caregiver, to benefit the wellbeing of the whole congregation

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Hoeft, Jung, and Marshall. *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.

Webb, Larry E. *Crisis Counseling in the Congregation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011.

Wimberly, Edward. *African American Pastoral Care and Counseling: The Politics of Oppression and Empowerment*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR FIRST CLASS SESSION –FEBRUARY 9-10**

Reading and Writing Assignments before coming to first class session:

A. **Read** the book *Crisis Counseling in the Congregation* by Larry E. Webb

B. **Write** in your own words a brief essay, which highlights the core themes introduced by Webb. Pay particular attention to the descriptions of pastoral care

and counseling, the core skills and competencies for effective pastoral care, and the main issues discussed by the author.

- a. What ideas and practices had the greatest impact on your thoughts?
- b. What did you find new, surprising, and/or disturbing?
- c. How will this reading have an impact on how you approach pastoral care and counseling in the future?

**Length:** 5 to 6 pages long, double-spaced.

C. **Read** the book *African American Pastoral Care and Counseling* by Ed Wimberly.

D. **Write** in your own words a short reaction paper to this book answering:

- a. How does Wimberly define pastoral care and counseling?
- b. How does he define modernity and why is this the issue he is addressing in his book?
- c. What are the methods and techniques of pastoral care and counseling he is proposing for addressing the issues he raises?
- d. How will this book be helpful to you in your pastoral care and counseling? (Read it before you decide it is not relevant for you.)
- e. Where do you find this work to be less than helpful to you or where do you disagree with the author?

**Length:** 5 to 6 pages long, double spaced.

**PLEASE NOTE: Both papers are due before the first day of class. Please send them to my email address ([fnuzzolese@mtso.edu](mailto:fnuzzolese@mtso.edu)) as attachments by February 9th.**

### **CONTENT OF FIRST CLASS SESSION – FEBRUARY 9-10**

This First Class Session will be spent laying some of the crucial foundations of congregational care, drawing from your personal experiences and contexts and mainly from the two books you have read in preparation for this course. We will discuss some of your general practices of care, and raise some important theological and pastoral questions about self-care of the pastor and the pastoral staff in particular.

While the focus of this first weekend will be on theory, we will spend balanced time in experiential application, so that theory and practice can stay consistently interconnected. Besides adequate preparation through the above assignments (reading and writing of papers), the best way to learn from this session is to come open to engage every aspect of the course, and willing to trust the process – even when some of the activities might seem uncomfortable.

### **ASSIGNMENTS FOR SECOND CLASS SESSION – MARCH 9 -10**

- A. **Read** the book *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities* by Hoeft, Jung, and Marshall
- B. **Write** a book review, which highlights your understanding of the authors' discussion of pastoral care in rural congregations and communities. Use the following questions as guidelines for your writing:

- a. How is pastoral care in rural communities different from care in non-rural settings?
- b. What would non-rural congregations learn from rural congregations with regard to pastoral care and congregational life?
- c. What are the major distinctive pastoral issues and challenges in rural congregations and how do they reflect problems in the larger society?
- d. Why is the reading of the rural context done by the authors appropriate in any ministry context?

**Length:** 5 to 6 pages long, double spaced.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *this paper is due the day before you come for the second class sessions, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Email your paper as an attachment to fnuzzolese@mtso.edu*

**C. Pastoral Care Case Presentation.** Also due before the second weekend meeting is a written description of a pastoral care situation you have experienced in your ministry. Your paper should include responses to the following questions:

- a. **Who?** Briefly describe the person/family and their situation. Pay attention to the confidentiality of the person(s) by not using their real names.
- b. **What?** What is the issue about which they have sought your care? This might include other people involved in the situation.
- c. **How?** Give some detail about how you responded pastorally to what was presented to you. It would be appropriate to include a short word by word exchange between you and the person(s). What you need to do is give me a clear picture of how you cared for the person(s) and why you think what you did was pastoral care. What were the issues and dynamics in the case and how did you respond and approach the case?
- d. **Identify** what theological issue this encounter raises for you and discuss it in relation to the situation as it was presented to you and as you understand it.
- e. **Evaluate** your work in this situation using the various course readings as well as your theology. How did you do as a pastoral caregiver? In light of the various readings, if you were to work with the same person(s) or family, how you would offer pastoral care differently and why?

**Length:** 3 to 4 pages long, double spaced. Do not go beyond this length. Bring this paper in hard copy to class for group presentations. The paper will be turned in to me at the end of the second day of class – after all presentations have been completed.

### **CONTENT OF SECOND CLASS SESSION – MARCH 9-10**

Class discussions in Week 2 will focus on examining major concepts, ideas, issues, and practices of pastoral care and counseling discussed in the text, *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities*. So, be prepared to discuss your ideas on this book with the class, based on your book review and your overall learning; and also bring any questions and reactions you might have to the authors' proposals for pastoral care.

This Second Class Session will also be dedicated to case study presentations and to the discussion of personal practices of self care. Please, come open to share some of the struggles you encounter in ministry, so that together we can develop helpful self-care strategies, to benefit you and the wellbeing of your congregation.

**GENERAL READING AND WRITING TIPS:** Mark in your books particular quotes, lines, paragraphs which raise questions or help you think; and highlight the central themes that can help you write your papers. While you are invited to write the essays in your own words, it is important that you also give evidence of what the authors think by quoting directly from their voices, and providing page numbers where the author is discussing the ideas you are referencing. Whether you agree or disagree with the authors you read, the main objective of the written assignments is to demonstrate that you can critically and reflectively engage the reading material and integrate it with your own thinking and pastoral experience.

**LEARNING TIPS:** Classroom work will include class discussion of the readings, focusing on selected key topics and issues; and also the presentation of case studies and role play. The experiential and interactive nature of these classrooms is intended to give you the most effective form of adult learning experience. It also presupposes that you are willing to participate fully in all that the class invites you to do. The more open you are to this learning experience, the more you will gain from it.

## **Academic Honor**

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions: (1) warning; (2) probation; (3) suspension for the remainder of the course; (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio; (5) grade of Fail for the course. Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.