

# **COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO at MTSO**

## ***COS 524 – Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry***

### **2018 Winter Session**

February 9-10; March 9-10

(makeup dates: February. 16-17 and March 16-17)

Reverend Stanley T. Ling

sling@wocumc.org

614-315-3409

#### **Course Description:**

This course is the capstone to the student's basic course of study. Its focus is the integration of the biblical, theological, and practical aspects of ministry.

#### **Course Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a Trinitarian theology for the practice of ministry.
2. State clearly the nature and mission of the Church and its relation to pastoral ministry.
3. Demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically.
4. Develop a plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection, and growth.

#### **Course Overview:**

This course integrates the role of the practicing pastor with the church's theological heritage and its particular Wesleyan expression. Each participant is expected to think, speak, and act from a theological foundation. Current issues, events and our historic roots will serve as the context. Living each day as God's gifted and called leaders requires pastors to balance study, prayer, and action.

#### **Required Texts:**

1. *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016*. "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Tasks", pages 45-102.
2. William Willimon—*Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Abington Press Nashville, 2016 ISBN: 0687045320)
3. Frederick Buechner—*The Sacred Journey: A Memoir of Early Days* (Harper San Francisco, 1991; ISBN 0060611839)
4. Tom Rath – *Strengths Finder* (Gallup Press NYC, 2007; ISBN 9781595620156)
5. Holy Bible NRSV, *Gospel of Luke* and *The Acts of the Apostles*

## **Assignments for Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry—COS 524:**

Assignments to be completed prior to attending the first class and emailed or sent via USPS by **January 31, 2018**—nine days prior to the start of class:

1. *Personal Spiritual Autobiography*, 2,000 words—maximum length 2,200 words—12-point font (please complete this assignment before moving to the next assignment). The purpose of a spiritual autobiography is to reflect on your life’s journey, to understand God’s call and your gifts for ministry. The writing is to be in four sections:

Early years  Teen years  Adult years  Present time (see description below)

For each of the first three sections reflect and write on your awareness of God. How have you been blessed and broken, and how have you acted or lived out your calling as a beloved Child of God?

For the Present Time section: What keeps your faith vibrant? What is the nature of your relationship with God? Describe the role of scripture in your relationship with God. What methods of prayer work best for you? What is Sabbath rest for you? Email or mail your work to me by January 31, 2018.

2. Complete the *Strengths Finder* inventory after writing the Spiritual Autobiography and review your top five strengths – instructions are provided with the purchase of the text. Email me the list of your five strengths which you can list on the last page of your Spiritual Autobiography. Do not send any of the content or descriptions of the strengths – just a listing of your top five categories. Send both assignments by email or USPS by **January 31, 2018** – nine days before class.

### **Friday, February 9, 2018 Assignments:**

1. Read the section “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (Pages 45-102, paragraphs 101-104) in *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. You will be asked to demonstrate your learning from this book with a guided discussion.
2. Read “Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry” by Willimon. You will be asked to demonstrate your learning from this book with a guided discussion.
  - Bible
  - Trinitarian Theology
  - Human situation in history, including how we face suffering and evil
  - Salvation/Liberation in the light of Eschatology
  - The Nature of the Church and its Future
  - The meaning and purpose of the sacraments in our life together

## **Friday, March 9, 2018 Assignments:**

1. Read *The Sacred Journey* and write a reflection with a minimum of 1,500 and a maximum of 1,700 words using 12 point font. What was awakened in you? Where did you find connection? Where and how do you need to discover healing, assurance, or direction? With what do you wrestle when it comes to faith or relationships? What are your doubts and frustrations? This will be a confidential paper between you the writer, and me, but will be graded and is due on **Friday, March 9, 2018**.
3. Reflect theologically on a contemporary issue (spiritual, local, national, or global) that impacts the life of your community and/or congregation. Write a minimum 500 word and maximum 600 words "Church Newsletter Column" or pastoral letter on this issue for your congregation. This is due on **Friday, March 9, 2018**.
4. Doctrinal Sermon Series of 4 sermons will be the primary focus of the course integrating all the assignments, the readings, reflection, and theological understanding, personal connection, and story. Each sermon will express the student's understanding of 1) Trinitarian Theology, 2) Nature and Mission of the Church, 3) Human situation facing evil and suffering, 4) Our sacramental life together. Each sermon will be 20-25 minutes in length as reflected with the appropriate number of pages in 12 pt. font. Further directions will be outlined during the first weekend.
5. Daily scripture reflections from subscription to USCCB [dailyreadings=usccb.org@mail171.suw121.mcdlv.net](mailto:dailyreadings=usccb.org@mail171.suw121.mcdlv.net) (Between February 12 – March 8, 2018)

**NOTE:** A large self-addressed, stamped, mailing envelope which will be used to return your papers and final course grade.

### **Class Time Outline:**

#### **We will cover the following topics during our time in class**

- Remembering Our Baptism—Who we are and whose we are
- Role of Prayer, Rest, and Sabbath Time—Balance in the chaos
- Knowing Yourself—a personal timeline
- Moving to a place of Insight—thinking and reflecting theologically—the three lenses of pastoral theological leadership
- The United Methodist Discipline*
  - o What is the role of theology in the United Methodist Church?
  - o What is its relation to ministry?
  - o What difference (if any) does it make in the life of the church?
- Writing your sermons and dialogue
- The Uniqueness and Attractiveness of a Wesleyan Theological Construct
- Principles of Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit
- Practices of Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit
- Passions of Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit

- Holy Communion
- Dialogue on Servant Leadership, Adaptive Leadership and Strategic Leadership

**GRADING:**

The grade for this course will be determined on a scale of 100 points:

15% Spiritual Biography and Strength Finders

15% Sacred Journey Paper

10% Contemporary issue newsletter article

35% Final Sermon Series

25% Class attendance and informed participation

Graded assignments will be graded from "A" to "F" and assigned corresponding point values according to the COS handbook.

**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.

Reverend Stanley T. Ling  
Associate Director of Development  
West Ohio Conference United Methodist Church  
32 Wesley Blvd  
Worthington, OH 43085  
614-505-7335 desk phone  
614-315-3409 cell