

Anglican Studies: Discernment of Call

Practical Theology (PT) 202 – Mondays, 9:30-11:00 am

Instructors

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Office Hours

By appointment

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Course Overview

What does it mean to be called? What is the difference between a ministerial call and other vocational calls? How does one discern one's call? This seminar is designed to explore the theological and spiritual meanings and practical implications of ministerial calls. Special attention will be given to understanding the significance of a "call" within the Anglican Communion. Critical engagement with call narratives, a development of a vocational statement, and engagement with practitioners in diverse ministerial vocations will provide the foundation for appreciating the complex dynamics of a call. While this course is required for Anglican Studies students, it is open and will be beneficial to all Union students (MDiv and MA).

Primary goals of the course:

1. To help students explore the spiritual and theological foundations of calls.
2. To help students to appreciate the practical implications and challenges of ministerial calls.
3. To introduce students to the dynamics of ministerial discernment and to diverse ways of living into one's call throughout the spiritual journey.
4. To provide spiritual and theological foundation for sustaining and engaging their ministerial calls.

Online Access to Class

The class will be taught online using Zoom. Class attendance and participation is a required element of this class. Please let us know in advance if you will not be able to attend a class.

Use the following link and information to access Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2994874570?pwd=ZW1maXVDUDdaMnhpSUVxREpOK3RXdz09>

Meeting ID: 299 487 4570

Passcode: edsatuts20

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,2994874570# US (New York)

+13017158592,,2994874570# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 299 487 4570

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98061200000>

Moodle

Please see the PT202 page on Moodle for assignment details and submissions, as well as any additional course materials.

Assignments

- Weekly reading assignments and class participation in discussion of reading.
- Weekly short written reflection on reading assignments (300 words max) submitted on Moodle by 11:59 pm on the Friday before class. Reflections should show that the assignment has been read, digested, and is being integrated the course material. They should also include, within the word limit, at least one question for class discussion. The expectation is that after posting you will read your classmates' posts and comment on at least one of them before class. In this way, we will be able to begin class discussion of the material before class begins. The reflections are graded on a pass/fail basis; submission must be on time in order to pass the assignment.
- A two-page (500-word) double-spaced paper describing your understanding of vocation. This means your overall concept of vocation, not your individual call. You should reference the readings, but you need not formally cite sources in the paper. Due on Moodle by the beginning of class on November 9.
- Put together a Rule of Life in whatever format will work for you. It should be accompanied by a two-page (500-word) double-spaced paper, referencing the readings, about how you made decisions on what would be in your Rule. This assignment will also be graded on a pass/fail basis. Due on Moodle by the beginning of class on December 7.
- Portfolio project due and presentations in class on December 14. The presentation material should be posted to Moodle by 11:59 pm on Friday, December 11. More information below.

Requirements for Credit

Class attendance and informed participation, as well as on-time completion of assignments and presentations, are required in order to pass the course. The approximate weighting of the assignments is as follows:

- Portfolio project and presentation: 40%
- Weekly reflections: 20%
- Vocation paper: 15%
- Rule of Life assignment: 15%
- Class participation: 10%

In keeping with the UTS grading policy for Fall 2020, we will grade on a Pass/Fail basis, unless you submit a request for Union grades to the Registrar by Nov. 20.

You cannot pass this course if you do not read all the material. Extensions are typically not granted.

Accommodations

Union Theological Seminary facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, or a temporary disability that results in difficulties accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Office of Student Affairs, AD 108. More information is available on the website at <https://utsnyc.edu/life/student-affairs/health/> or by emailing the office at studentaffairs@uts.columbia.edu. It is the student's responsibility to follow the procedures for properly requesting (and receiving) accommodations. Please let us know as soon as possible about any accommodations you have requested with Student Affairs.

Required Course Texts (plus additional readings as assigned)

Berman, Ari. *Give Us the Ballot*. New York: Picador, 2015.

Braestrup, Kate. *Here If You Need Me: A True Story*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007.

Burridge, Richard A. *Four Ministries, One Jesus: Exploring your vocation with the four gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019.

Dougherty, Rose Mary. *Discernment: A Path to Spiritual Awakening*. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009.

Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Lanham, MD: Cowley Publications, 1992. Pages 1-39, posted on Moodle.

Murray, Pauli. *Song in a Weary Throat: Memoir of an American Pilgrimage*. New York: Liveright Publishing, 1987.

Palmer, Parker. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Placher, William C., editor. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. (Newly Revised Edition.) Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.

Course Schedule

Part I: Theologies of Calling

Class 1 – October 5 – Introduction

Assignment: Review Syllabus and read *Discernment*.

- Introductions and orientation to the class; begin defining key terms.

Class 2 – October 12 – Call to Social Justice Ministry

Assignment: Read *Give Us the Ballot*; and pp. 3-12 (“Introduction”) and pp. 91-123 (“Mark”) of *Four Ministries, One Jesus*.

- Guests: Mr. Miguel Angel Escobar (Director of Anglican Studies, EDS)

Class 3 – October 19 – Definitions; Exploring Call through Scripture

Assignment: Read pp. 13-20 of *Callings*; as well as these sections of the Bible: Jonah, Luke 1:5-25, John 21, Acts 9:1-22, and Acts 16:11-15; and review *Discernment*.

- Discussion with instructors; Ignatian imaginative prayer practice

Class 4 – October 26 – Exploring Call through the Tradition and Reason

Assignment: Read the Introduction to *Callings* as well as the Introductions to its four sections as well as (at least) these essays: *The Martyrdom of Perpetua* (pp. 39-47), Augustine (pp. 83-103), Thomas Aquinas (pp. 154-75), *The Mission of Joan of Arc* (pp. 190-96), John Calvin (pp. 232-39), Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (pp. 254-61), John Wesley (Sermon 28) (pp. 319-22), John Henry Newman (pp. 343-49), Howard Thurman (pp. 385-89), Dorothy Day (pp. 413-20).

- Discussion with instructors

Part II: Experiences of Calling

Class 5 – November 2 – Call to Chaplaincy and Spiritual Direction

Assignment: Read *Here If You Need Me*; pp. 1-39 of *Holy Listening* (posted on Moodle).

- Guest: Linda S. Golding (Staff Chaplain, Coordinator Pastoral Services at Millstein Hospital, New York Presbyterian Hospital CUMC)

Class 6 – November 9 – Call to Parish and Pastoral Counseling Ministries

Vocation Paper due on Moodle.

Assignment: Read pp. 53-88 (“Luke”) of *Four Ministries*; pp. 1-228 of *Song in a Weary Throat*.

- Guest: The Rev. Canon Victor Conrado (Canon for Congregational Vitality and Formation, Diocese of New York)

Class 7 – November 16 – Call to Academic and Teaching Ministries

Assignment: Read pp. 15-49 (“Matthew”) of *Four Ministries*; pp. 229-447 of *Song in a Weary Throat*.

- Guests:
 - The Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas (Dean of EDS)
 - The Rt. Rev. Dr. William Franklin (Lecturer in Anglican Liturgical History, EDS)

Part III: Discernment of Calling

Class 8 – November 23 – Life-Long Discernment (*Second Career, Women, People of Color, LGBTQ*)

Assignment: Read pp. 127-182 (“John” and “Conclusion”) of *Four Ministries*; pp. 448-572 of *Song in a Weary Throat*.

- Guest: The Rev. Canon Steven Lee (Vicar, The Congregation of Saint Saviour and Canon Pastor, Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine)

Class 9 – November 30 – Discernment and Contemplative Practice; Religious Orders

Assignment: Read *Soul Feast*.

- Guest: The Rev. Sr. Marie Promise Atelon, Society of Saint Margaret

Class 10 – December 7 – Afternoon Retreat

Rule of Life due on Moodle.

Assignment: Read *Let Your Life Speak*.

- Quiet afternoon led by Susan Hill

Class 11 – December 14 – Student presentations

Assignment: Portfolio project, including artifacts and commentary paper, is due on Moodle.

- Each student presents on their portfolio to the class; presentation materials posted by 11:59 pm on December 11 to Moodle.

Portfolio Assignment

This assignment gives you the opportunity to demonstrate over the semester your increasing knowledge of the theological and spiritual foundations of call, vocation, and discernment, as well as the impact that a sustained exploration of these topics has had on your own sense of call. The project is a way to document your journey over the course of the semester by collecting artifacts that reflect your various experiences and then reflecting upon how select artifacts fit into the arc of your call.

Questions for you to engage include:

- What readings, discussions, and experiences have resonated most deeply for you? Which have you reacted strongly against?
- What assumptions about yourself, God, the church, and your call have changed during the semester?
- How has the class interacted with other aspects of your experience at seminary this semester?
- What future goals does your work suggest? How will your journey continue?

The portfolio is a way to document the milestones of your journey. As the class progresses, you will **collect** artifacts (see below) that illustrate your engagement with the material. As you begin to shape your project, you will **select** those artifacts that are most relevant and put them together in a digital portfolio. Choosing 7-12 artifacts might be most effective, but you will know what suits your particular project best. The last step is to **reflect** on the portfolio of artifacts, and your journey, through a 5-7-page double-spaced commentary paper that will accompany the portfolio. You might think of this paper as a travelogue for your journey. Be sure to make reference to the course readings (formally cited) in the paper.

Artifacts are items that demonstrate your engagement with the material of the course. They can be as creative as you'd like. For example, if the class has inspired you to begin a spiritual discipline, what kind of artifact might demonstrate that commitment? If you have reached out to a particular class

guest, or researched more about an Episcopal church organization, or had a meaningful experience outside of class, what might provide evidence of your engagement? Your statement of vocation and your Rule of Life might be included as artifacts, as well as any creative work that you produce in response to your experiences during the semester.

In your selection process, you may choose to draw from most or all of the areas of the course, or you might do a deeper dive in one or two of those areas. The project should be shaped by your creative engagement with your own personal journey of call.

- In-class presentations on some aspect of the project on December 14. The presentation material should be posted to Moodle by 11:59 pm on Friday, December 11.
- Portfolio project, including artifacts and commentary paper, due on Moodle by the beginning of class on December 14.

SUGGESTED COVENANT:

1. We will respect the texts, the authors, and each other.
2. We remember that we are all learners, and we are prepared to examine our own assumptions and perceptions.
3. We will live in the tension of data-gathering about our texts and subjects, and be patient with the learning process.
4. We accept ambiguity, tension, and discomfort as part of the learning process.
5. We will follow accepted Zoom norms, including muting ourselves when we are not speaking.
6. During the entire class session (except the break), we refrain from interacting with any other person or entity by means of any electronic device.
7. We will share our thoughts, ideas, and experiences by using “I” statements.
8. We listen carefully to other speakers, doing our best not to rehearse what we will say next. We will let the speaker finish without interrupting or jumping in to speak the second they are done. We will avoid sidebar conversations.
9. We will avoid cross-talking, i.e., responding directly to the speaker’s experience by contradicting or modifying their experience.
10. We will be generous with each other, giving each other the benefit of the doubt and supporting each other. We will hear and speak caring rather than criticism.
11. We will participate in every class discussion, remembering that no one of us is as smart as all of together are smart.
12. We will always be attentive to how the Holy Spirit is at work in our learning, our conversations, our experiences, and in silence.
13. We will honor the confidentiality of the class discussions, and we will not tell other individuals’ stories outside of class.
14. We will find room to be playful and have fun!

Recommended Reading List

These texts are not required but may be helpful to you on your journey through our class and beyond.

Discernment and Practices:

Holmes, Barbara A. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church* (2nd edition). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017.

Lee, Jeffrey D. *Opening the Prayer Book*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1999.

Call Stories:

“Acts of Paul and Thecla” – <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0816.htm>

Booker, Vaughan. *From Prison to Pulpit: My Road to Redemption*. London: Cadell & Davies, 1994.

Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2016. (Unabridged republication of the work originally published by The Aldine Printing House, Xenia, OH, 1892.)

Kidder, Tracy. *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*. New York: Random House, 2009.

Miles, Sara. *Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2007.

Moore, Darnell L. *No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black & Free in America*. New York: Bold Type Books, 2019.

Reyes, Patrick B. *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community, and Surviving to Adulthood*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2016.

Ethics and the Practice of Ministry:

Moore, Honor. *The Bishop's Daughter: A Memoir*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Shared Governance: The Polity of the Episcopal Church, essays compiled by the House of Deputies Special Study Committee on Church Governance. New York: Church Publishing, 2012.

Westacott, Emrys. “The Ethics of Gossiping.” *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 14(1): 65-90 (2000).