

Ministry Praxis Syllabus/Preparation letter Winter, 2012

Dear Ministry Praxis Participant,

We are looking forward to our time together on January 31 and Feb 1, for IST 2061 Ministry Praxis: Funerals. The class will meet Friday afternoon, 1:00-4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. -4:30 p.m. on the Iliff campus. We will take a one hour break for lunch.

A praxis course is designed to provide experiential education in the practices of ministry that students at Iliff are likely to engage in their professional lives. They are an occasion to work on the integration of theory and practice in a specific area of ministry, in this case ministry at the end of life. In this praxis we hope to engage actual practices of ministry involved in accompanying the dying and bereaved, such as meeting with the family, planning a service, providing pastoral care, conducting the funeral using the ritual of your tradition, etc.

In this course, we will be making use of a variety of learning styles including reading and discussion, field research and role play in order to allow participants to have embodied experience with various ministry encounters that may arise at the time of death. It will be important for all the participants to engage in the full range of learning styles. Please note that there are three advanced assignments that you need to complete between now and our gathering on Jan. 31 & Feb 1st. There is not a post seminar paper to write, so your successful completion of this Ministry Praxis depends on your engaged participation and completing the advanced assignments.

We have noticed in planning this praxis that it has brought up many of the experiences in our lives related to the death and funerals of loved ones. The discussions and role playing may elicit similar connections to your own histories. You will want to be aware that the course may have a strong emotional impact on you. We encourage you to plan accordingly and be sure that you have space and/or companionship to process the day on Friday and Saturday evenings.

**Work in Advance of the Praxis:**

In preparation for the class, we ask that you:

1. read the following book and come prepared for discussion during the praxis:
	1. *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and a Community of Car*e, Thomas G. Long and Thomas Lynch, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013. ISBN 10: 066423853X or ISBN 13: 978-0664238537
	2. Read the section of your denomination/tradition’s book of worship resources for the time of death and funerals (e.g. *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, The UCC *Book of Worship*, etc.). The book may have more theologically-oriented terms for this section, such as memorial, thanksgiving, or death and resurrection. Please bring this text to the praxis, as you will likely have opportunity to utilize it in the role playing exercises.
	3. After finishing the readings, by Wed. January 22, post on Canvas a 200-400 word reflection on your most profound learning from the readings. By Wed, January 29, read and respond to several of your colleagues’ postings.
2. Visit a funeral related site (such as a funeral home, a crematorium, a cemetery, a burial society, or columbarium), take and post photos of the site and write about 150-250 words on what the space taught you. Due: Wed. January 29.
3. Talk to a professional at the funeral related site or an experience practitioner in your tradition (in person if possible, or by Skype or phone) who has done multiple funerals about their experience. Some possible interview questions are posted on Canvas.

After the conversation, post 150-250 words on Canvas reflecting on your most profound learning from the conversation. Due: Wed. January 29.

**Grading:** The praxis is graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to receive a passing grade, you will need to complete the preparatory reading and other activities, be present for the two-day praxis event and participate fully in the events, including role plays and conversations.

If you have questions about any part of the praxis, please feel free to contact Katherine Turpin (303-765-3139, kturpin@iliff.edu) or Jeffrey Mahan (303-765-3192) jmahan@iliff.edu.

We look forward to spending this time together,

Jeffrey Mahan Katherine Turpin