**IST 2080 1 (THBRDTH): Practical Theology (4 credits)**

**Spring 2014**

**Tuesdays 8:30-Noon**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Eunjoo M. Kim (ekim@iliff.edu)

Office hours: By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores models of practical theological reflection and methods of reflective

professional practice as frameworks for religious leadership in the variety of contexts in which

students will work. Students will be introduced to disciplined modes of embodying the

integration of theory and praxis that allow them to place their coursework across the curriculum

into regular conversation with their practice as religious leaders and ministry professionals in a

variety of institutional and cultural contexts.

Although this course requires integrative thinking across theological disciplines that you may not have yet had coursework in, we are engaging these skills early in your degree program in the hopes that you see the benefit of rigorous work in these particular areas as you move throughout your degree program. This form of reflective practice undergirds all of the work in other courses as an integrative framework for theological education.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course aims to help students relate their academic studies to the communities of people, institutions, and contextual situations in which they will engage their vocation. Students participating in the course and engaging in its practices will be able to:

1. Gain knowledge about practical theological approaches.
2. Explore and articulate a practical theological question or concern of a community that matters deeply to them.
3. Cultivate critical and analytical thinking necessary for theological reflection grounded in human experience and practices.
4. Utilize historical, religious, and scientific resources in order to propose a faithful and ethical practice in relationship to specific theological questions or concerns.

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (all are on reserve in Taylor Library)**:**

1. Johnson, Susanne, “Remembering the Poor: Transforming Christian Practice,” in *Redemptive Transformation in Practice Theology,* edited by Dana R. Wright & John D. Kuentzel, Chapter 7. 080682689. **(Available in Canvas)**.
2. Kim, Eunjoo M. & Deborah B. Creamer (eds.), *Women, Church, and Leadership: New Paradigms*. ISBN:1608999017.
3. Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, Introduction and Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 32, 34. ISBN: 9781444330823. **(Available in Canvas)**.
4. Osmer, Richard, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. ISBN: 978-0-0828-1765-5
5. Thiemann, Ronald F., *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture*, Chapter 9. ISBN: 0664251307. **(Available in Canvas)**.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Attendance and Participation.**  Your regular and punctual attendance of all classes and active and responsible participation in class and group discussions and feedback to your group members’ projects are required. The instructor should be informed in advance of any necessary absences. You cannot pass the course if you are absent from more than two classes during the course period.

You are expected to read all the assigned readings and post class assignments, including two one-page essays, in Canvas on time.

In this class, we are committed to modeling the values Iliff embraces: diversity, mutual respect, accountability, honest communication, critical self-reflection, curiosity, creativity, and a sense of adventure. In each class, we will do our best to respect differences and diversity in human life and learning experience. Concerning plagiarism, refer to the section of “Academic Integrity” in the *Master’s Student Handbook.*

1. **A 2-3 page paper on your theological issue (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point),** focusing on the following two things: 1) Define an issue (personal, social, or religious) that means a great deal to you and may have led you to come to the theological school. 2) Explain briefly why this issue is important to you and what your pre-understanding of it is. This issue will be used as the research topic for Requirements #3. Post your paper in Canvas one day before Class #4, by **April 14 (Mon.), 8:30 a.m.**
2. **A research project (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point):**

* **Part I “What is going on?” (2-3 pages):** 1) Observe how members of your congregation or a larger community think about the issue you chose for Requirement #2 and how their understanding of that issue has been practiced implicitly or explicitly in your congregational or your actual ministerial setting (e.g., in preaching, in worship, in mission and outreach programs, in Bible study, in administrative and strategic planning, in denominational policy, etc.). 2) Describe what bothers you most and where you get stuck or have trouble with that issue. After studying Osmer’s Chapter 1, use his suggestive methods, such as formal or informal interviews, for your observation and description.
* **Part II “Why is this going on?” (2-3 pages):** Are there any particular concerns or questions about the situation you observed and described in Part I? Analyze that situation and explore the concern and questions at a deeper level by using some interdisciplinary methods Osmer introduces in Chapter 2, for example, sociological analysis, psychological studies, historical review, etc.

**Post Parts I and II in Canvas one day before Class #5, by April 21 (Mon.), 8:30 a.m.**

* **Part III “What ought to be going on?” (4-5 pages):** Research your theological issue from biblical and theological perspectives and try to gain your theological position on that issue, relevant to your particular ministerial context. In the process of your research, use some biblical and theological approaches Osmer explains in Chapter 3. Post the paper in Canvas one day before Class #6, by **April 28 (Mon.), 8:30 a.m.**
* **Part IV “How might we respond?” (2-3 pages):** Provide some insights or new ideas about how your theological understanding of the issue can be practiced in a variety of actual ministerial settings. Refer to Osmer’s Chapter 4 and Kim & Creamer’s book. Post the paper in Canvas one day before Class #7 by **May 5 (Mon.), 8:30 a.m.**

1. **A 7-10 minute presentation of the results of the research project in a creative form (due to the class size, group presentations are encouraged):**  Communicate the results of your research project in a creative ministerial form. First, choose your listeners (e.g., your local congregation, the Iliff community, our class, etc.), and then select a form of communication such as a sermon, a liturgy, a Bible study material, a lecture manuscript, a skit, a poem, a song, a dance, a painting, etc. **Post your rationale (1-2 page, single-spaced),** explaining why you chose this particular communicative form, for what purpose, and how you prepared it, in Canvas one day before your presentation day and present it in class as scheduled.

**COURS EVALUATION:**

Students can take the course using their P/F option. In order to receive the grade of “P,” students must complete the 4 requirements listed in the section of Course Requirements. Students who want to contract for a grade of P/F must email a note to the instructor by the date of Class #2.

For a letter grade, normal school grading system is used. In order to ensure accountability and fairness, the following grading system will be applied:

Requirement #1 .…..……………………………30% (7% for each one-page essay)

Requirement #2…………………………………10 %

Requirement #3 …..…………….………………40%

Requirement #4.………………………………...20%

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Total 100%

The Iliff grading system is a five-letter system from A through F with pluses and minuses. In computing grade point average (GPAs), grades are assigned the following numerical values (*The 2013-2014 Master’s Student Handbook*, p. 79):

A : 4.00 (100 − 96%)

A-: 3.75 (95 – 91%)

B+: 3.25 (90 – 86%)

B : 3.00 (85 – 81%)

B-: 2.75 (80 − 76%)

C+: 2.25 (75 – 71%)

C : 2.00 (70 – 66%)

**Extra credits** (a maximum of +5 points) will be granted to students who revise their presentation materials (Requirement #4) based on feedback and resubmit it by May 30 (Fri.).

**Late submissions** **(unexcused and excused)** will result in lowering your grade (-2 points for each late submission). The deadline of late submissions is May 30 (Fri.).

**Both unexcused and excused absences** will result in lowering your grade (-3 points for each).

**Writing Lab:** Grammar and organization are important for all written assignments. A variety of tutorials and resources are available at the writing lab website on my.iliff.

**Inclusive Language:** It is expected that all course participants will use inclusive language in

speaking and writing, and will use terms that do not create barriers to classroom community.

**Incomplete Policy:** Students are responsible for following the procedures outlined in the *Master’s Student Handbook*.

**ADA Policy:** Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303.765.1146.

**DEGREE LEARNING GOALS:**

Theology and Religious Practices (PR): engage in analysis of contemporary religious traditions and institutions in order to assess, design, and perform meaningful leadership practices with sensitivity to contextual realities and relationship (*Master’s Student Handbook, 2013-2014, p. 12)*.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Class #1** (03/25): What is Practical Theology?

Meditation: Kim

Getting Acquainted

Introducing Course Syllabus

Readings: 1) Thiemann, Ch. 9; 2) Bonnie Miller-McLemore, “Introduction,” & Ch. 34.

Assignments: After reading the chapters, write **One-page Essay I** (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. or 250-300 words) on your own definition of practical theology. Post the essay in Canvas by Mon. (3/24), 8:30 a.m. (MT) and prepare to share it in class.

**Class #2** (04/01): Exploring Methodology

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Readings: 1) Susanne Johnson, “Remembering the Poor: Transforming Christian Practice”; 2) Richard Osmer, Introduction; 3) Miller-McLemore (ed.), Ch. 32.

Assignments: After reading Osmer and De La Torre, write **One-page Essay II** (single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt., or 400-500 words) focusing on the analysis of the method Susanne Johnson used in her essay by comparing it with Osmer’s and De La Torre’s methods. Post the essay in Canvas by Mon. (3/31), 8:30 a.m. and prepare to discuss it in class.

**Class #3** (04/08): No class. Reading week (the instructor will be out of town).

**Class #4** (04/15): Descriptive and Critical Analysis of Present Practice (“What is going on?”;

“Why is this going on?”)

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Formation of Discussion Groups for Requirement #3 (“a research project”)

Readings: 1) Osmer, Chs. 1 & 2; 2) Miller-McLemore (ed.), Chs. 8, 9, 10 &11.

Assignments: Post Requirement #2 by April 14, 8:30 a.m.

**Class #5** (04/22): Seeking a New Theological Model (“What ought to be going on?”)

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Readings: 1) Osmer, Ch. 3; 2) Miller-McLemore, Ch. 15; 3) Kim and Creamer, Introduction & Ch. 2.

Assignments: Post Requirement #3, **Part I and Part II** by April 21, 8:30 a.m.

**Class #6** (04/29): Toward a New Practical Paradigm (“How might we respond?”)

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Readings: Osmer, Ch. 4; Kim and Creamer (eds.), Ch. 4.

Assignments: Post Requirement #3, **Part III** by April 28, 8:30 a.m.

**Class #7** (05/06): Praxis

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Readings: At least three chapters in Kim & Creamer at your own choice.

Assignments:

1. Post Requirement #3, **Part IV** by May 5, 8:30 a.m.
2. After reading chapters in Kim & Creamer’s book, prepare to share your reflection on them in class. In your reflection, focus on: 1) What is the pressing issue the author describes? 2) What does the author use as the authoritative (re)source(s) to create a new theological model? 3) Where do you find yourself in agreement or disagreement with the author? 4) What is the practical insight or idea you learned for your ministry such as preaching, worship, counseling, education, leadership, etc.?
3. Think about Requirement #4 and prepare to share your idea in class.

**Class #8** (05/13): Presentations of Requirement #4

Assignments: For those who are scheduled to present Requirement #4 in Class #8, post the written material in Canvas by May 12, 8:30 a.m.

**Class #9** (05/20): Presentations of Requirement #4

Assignments: For those who are scheduled to present Requirement #4 in Class #9, post the written material in Canvas by May 19, 8:30 a.m.

**Class #10** (05/27): Presentations of Requirement #4

Assignments: For those who are scheduled to present Requirement #4 in Class #10, post the written material in Canvas by May 26, 8:30 a.m.

Course Wrap-up