## THEO 6202/IST3041 Theological Themes in Pastoral Care

**Current Event Guidelines**

**Introduction**

Caregivers are always working within a social and public context. The context constructs the mental furniture of the caregiver and the careseeker and sometimes limits or expands what kind of care is possible or not. The caregiving we provide can also have positive or negative consequences for the larger community and national milieu. This assignment is an attempt to help caregivers link the personal and the public in their practices of pastoral and spiritual care with, with particular attention to the religious and spiritual and theological assumptions and discourse operating in the event.

**Select a Current Event**

There are many public issues that have theological themes, spiritual meanings, and assumptions about world-views embedded in the public discourse. These call for spiritual and theological understanding and engagement at the public as well as the personal level.

Check the newspapers, periodicals, television, and other media resources for current events that might have pastoral significance for you.

**Describe the Current Event**

In about one page, describe the event and its significance for you. Be sure to be clear about what you hope to accomplish from studying this situation and how your Care Team might assist you.

**Analyze the Event**

In about two pages, identify the core pastoral issues that you see here. What could be the challenges for those seeking or needing care? What moral or ethical issues are central? What theological themes are most critical? How do you assess intersections of race, class, gender and sexual orientation in this circumstance? What are the main challenges to the pastor and spiritual caregiver in this situation? Use your readings from the course and others to help you with this assessment.

**Explore Pastoral Responses**

In about two pages explore the options for responding pastorally to this situation. What is the “response plan” you will follow? Specifically, how will you respond to the individuals, families, congregation, and larger public as you help them address this situation? Why are you proceeding this way? What are the possible outcomes or consequences of your response? How will you deal with potential negative outcomes?

**Explore Public Advocacy Options**

In about one page, address how this situation might require pastoral involvement in public advocacy or political action? Who would best be motivated and positioned to carry out this action? Why kinds of public actions are already occurring that the pastor might link to? How might the pastor preach on this subject? What other possibilities occur to you, or do you know about?

**Conclusion**

In about a half a page, identify what you have learned from this exercise and what questions or concerns remain for you.