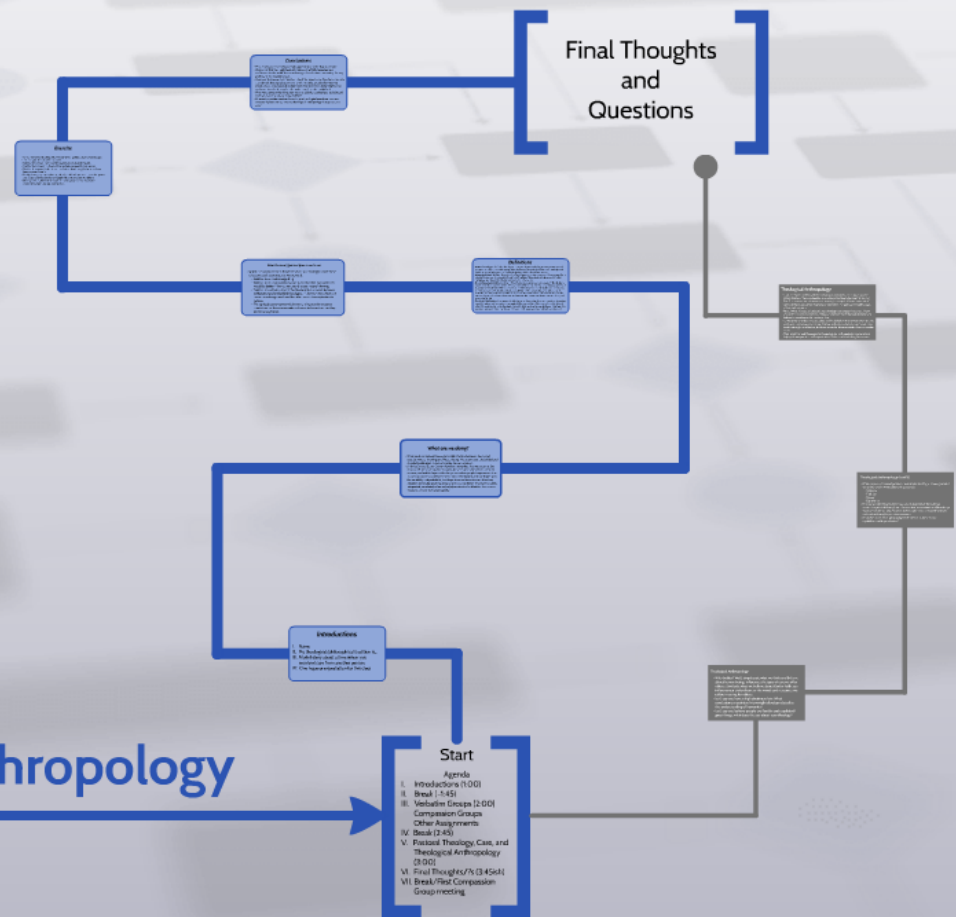


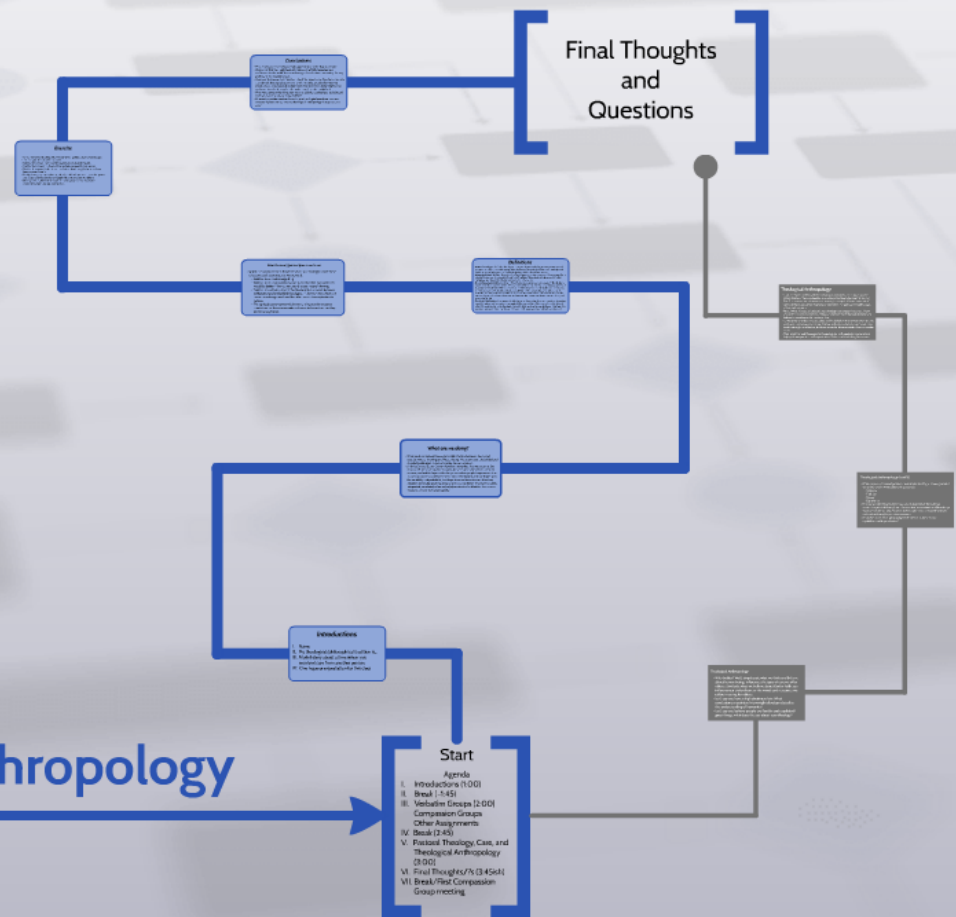
Pastoral Theology & Theological Anthropology

A Brief Primer



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Start

Agenda

- I. Introductions (1:00)
- II. Break (~1:45)
- III. Verbatim Groups (2:00)
Compassion Groups
Other Assignments
- IV. Break (2:45)
- V. Pastoral Theology, Care, and
Theological Anthropology
(3:00)
- VI. Final Thoughts/?s (3:45ish)
- VII. Break/First Compassion
Group meeting

Introductions

- I. Name
- II. My theological/philosophical tradition is...
- III. A brief story about a time when you received care from another person.
- IV. One hope or expectation for this class

What are we doing?

- What we do as pastoral theologians walks the line between theory and practice, ways of knowing and ways of being. We do our best to be skilled and knowledgeable practitioners of a reflective conversation.
- Andy Lester and Elaine Graham have both remarked that we are about the business of hope; we hold out the possibility of hope where there seems to be none; we look for hope in the dark places where people's experiences take us; even our pastoral outcomes from serious theological work are tinged with the possibility and probability that hope is can be found in most if not any situation. Generally speaking we carry with us a positivism that events, rightly interpreted, correlated, reframed, or (re)constructed hold within them some measure of hope from a loving deity.

Definitions

- **Pastoral Theology** is the field of theological thought and practice that begins with experience and interprets it through the critical appropriation of secular and theological sources of knowledge with the intent of developing practical and theological possibilities that inform ministry.
- **Intercultural Spiritual Care** - this intercultural paradigm is “a creative response to the pluralism that is a fact of life in present-day society. It calls for affirmation of three basic principles: contextuality, multiple perspectives and authentic participation” (Lartey, p. 33).
- **One Anthropological Understanding** - “Every human person is in certain respects: (1) like all others, (2) like some others, (3) like no other” (Murray and Kluckhohn as quoted by Lartey, 2003, p. 34). David Augsburger (1986), described this statement as the “three dimensions of being human: the universal, in which a person is ‘like all others’; the local or cultural, in which one is ‘like some others’; and the individual, in which each is ‘like no other.’ These three dimensions allow us to examine our essential humanness, our cultural embeddedness, and our individual uniqueness: human nature, culture, and personality” (p. 49)
- **Theological Reflexivity** - The process of reflecting on and integrating how one is putting into practice meanings, values, religious beliefs, and symbols that connect one with a sense of the sacred. Such reflexivity monitors how one's theologies formed in childhood and young adulthood... interface with ongoing meaning-making... and how social systems influence meaning-making. (Doehring, p. 24)

What Pastoral/Spiritual Care is and is not

- Spiritual or pastoral care is the place where our theologies meet these crises and seek a constructive way forward.
 - Spiritual care is not evangelizing.
 - Spiritual care is not convincing someone that their ruptured faith would be better if they came around to your way of thinking.
 - Spiritual care often resides at the theological crossroads between deliberative and embedded theologies, in the moment where one seems to no longer work and the other seems too mysterious to believe.
 - The spiritual care of someone's broken and ruptured theologies meets them at these crossroads and seeks to honor them as they discern a way home.

Exercise

- Take a moment and call up a blank document or get out a blank sheet of paper.
- Write or type the numbers 1, 2, and 3
- Next to the number 1, write one thing you believe about the world.
- Next to the number 2, write one thing you believe about human beings.
- Next to the number 3, what is one conclusion about caring that you can draw from numbers 1 and 2.
- Finally, looking at your conclusion, what does this tell you about the active power and presence of the deity (or philosophy) that informs your worldview.
- Once you have written these down. Gather in groups of 2 or 3 and take a moment to share what you have written.

Conclusions

- What might you find in these simple statements of belief that you wrote?
- My guess is that they might be brief statements of faith, based on your experiences in the world that draw theological conclusions concerning the why and how of the practice of care.
- They may draw some tentative ideas about the importance of pastoral care, give you a simple theological statement for why you treat people the ways you already do, or simply provide a statement of what it means to be fully human and sometimes broken and hostile world, as well as what might heal.
- What were some of the things you heard or said that sparked your curiosity and made you want to explore things further?
- How are these statements reflected in your theological worldview, or more importantly how do they inform a theological anthropology that guides your care?

Theological Anthropology




- Why bother? Well, simply put, what we think and believe about human beings influences the type of care we offer others. Similarly, what we believe about God or faith, can influence our style of care or the words and resources we utilize in caring for others.
- Let's say you have a high doctrine of sin. What conclusions or points of view might develop related to this understanding of humanity?
- Let's say you believe people are flexible and capable of great things, what does this say about your theology?

Theological Anthropology (cont'd)

- What sources of knowledge inform your understanding of theology and of humanity? (and in what order of importance)
 - Scripture
 - Tradition
 - Reason
 - Experience
- How are our identities formed? Social constructionism (knowledge created/negotiated through social interaction) or constructivist (knowledge constructed internally) or "essentialist" our identities are fixed from birth and hidden through layers of experiences.
- What does our faith or philosophy of life inform us about human capabilities and dependencies?

Theological Anthropology

- A lot of what we believe and think plays out overt and covert ways in a care-giving situation. These embedded and deliberative theologies work at varying levels to connect and disconnect us from a given experience or conversation.
- Some of these are useful, they help us connect in life-giving and healthy ways, others, not so much.
- Part of what this course is about is you developing a burgeoning sense of how you understand human beings, of how you believe the deity or philosophy you believe in describes and interacts with us.
- As we come to understand ourselves and the beliefs that orient our attention, we can begin to practice care in ways that feel authentic; otherwise we merely have tools that might be effective, but leave us cold or disconnected when we practice them.
- Thus, a well formed theological anthropology (or anthropology in general) can help guide our practices and expectations for the results of caring experiences.



Final Thoughts and Questions

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