**IST 2107 - Ministry Praxis: Premarital Counseling & Weddings**

Winter Interterm 2019

December 9 (Mon.) – December 13 (Fri.)

**INSTRUCTOR**:

Eunjoo Mary Kim (ekim@iliff.edu)

Office Hours: By Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A praxis course is designed to provide experiential education in the practices of ministry that Iliff students are likely to engage in their professional lives. It is an occasion to work on the

integration of theology, theory, and practice in a specific area of ministry.

In this course, the ministry praxis is weddings and preparations for healthy & fulfilling marriages. It aims to encourage the students to reflect upon their theologies of marriage and engage in actual practices of ministry involved in accompanying persons making plans for marriage, such as meeting with the couple for marital preparation and coaching, facilitating family relationships, and planning and conducting wedding ceremonies, while honoring the ritual(s) of their traditions, theologies, and values.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to be a learner-centered course with each student responsible

for maximizing his/her own experience. The instructional responsibility is to create a welcoming

environment where sharing of different views, opinions, critiques, and expertise are valued and

respected. In order to allow the student to have embodied experiences with weddings and premarital counseling, various learning and teaching styles, including readings, class discussion, field research, and role play will be utilized. The students are expected to engage in the full range of learning styles to achieve the following goals:

1. To deepen the theological meaning of marriage.
2. To be confident in conducting various weddings.
3. To be competent to provide premarital counseling.

**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)*.

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (All books are available at the library):

1. Long, K. (2016). *From This Day Forward: Rethinking the Christian Wedding.* Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN: 0664239307.
2. McFarlane, D.M (2007) *Weddings with Today's Families in Mind: A Handbook for Pastors*. Pilgrim Press. ISBN: 0829817379.
3. Your denominational resource for weddings, if applicable (e.g., Book of Worship, Book of Common Prayer, etc.)
4. Prepare/Enrich, “Couples Workbook” (available on Canvas)
5. Case Studies (available on Canvas)

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS** (All books are available at the library):

1. Long, & Maxwell (2015). *Inclusive Marriage Services: A Wedding Sourcebook.* Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN: 0664260314.

**SUGGESTED** **TEXTS** (All books are available at the library):

1. John Witte, Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract, Second Edition: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*. Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN: 0664234321

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Participation**: The regular attendance of all classes and active participation in class discussion and workshop are required. You are required to read the assigned readings and post your assignments in a timely manner. The instructor should be informed in advance of any necessary absences or delays of posting assignments.
2. **Interview Professional/Practitioner (**Due: December 9 (Mon.), 8 a.m.): Interview an experienced practitioner or professional who has done multiple weddings. Ask about his/her experience and process of premarital counseling and conducting weddings. Your interview can be done in person, video, or phone. (Note: The instructor for this course is not eligible for this interview).

**If you are stumped about how to start this conversation, he**re are some of the kinds of questions you might ask of the person you are able to speak with:

* What are your practices or first steps when you get a request for a wedding? What is your entire process?
* What do you know now that you wished you had known when you first started presiding weddings?
* What is your goal and your concern in planning weddings? What are you trying to accomplish?
* How have your practices changed over time?
* What do you do when the family has very different theological understandings of marriage, weddings, and the wedding process than you or your tradition would advocate?

After the interview, write your report (2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman or 500-750 words) focusing the following questions, and be prepared to share what you learned from the interview in class:

1. What are the most profound learning points from this conversation?
2. What did you hear that you did not expect?
3. **A paper on your theology of marriage (**Due: December 10 (Tues.), 8 a.m.; 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman or 500-750 words). Reflect on reading assignments, class discussions, and other activities in class, and write a paper focusing on the following questions:

(1) What is a theological meaning of marriage for you?

1. What do you see as the purpose of a wedding?
2. What is your role in the marital preparation, wedding planning, and conducing a wedding ceremony?
3. **A Group Project in Class**: The class will be divided into small groups and role-play various weddings.
4. **Complete the online training of “Prepare/Enrich” and submit your facilitator certificate (Optional)** (Due: December 13 (Fri.), 11:59 P.M.): You will become a certified facilitator of Prepare/Enrich. The online training includes videos, training materials, and a facilitator manual. The materials are accessed at www.prepareenrich.com/training. You need to register the online training by paying $249.99. When you have completed the training, scan your facilitator certificate and email it to me.
5. **An Annotated Wedding (**Due: December 16 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m.): Write an annotated wedding for a couple, real or imagined. For each section of the wedding ceremony, provide detailed explanation, comment, or rationale. Please distinguish your annotated comments with a different color font or use the comment tool in Word or PDF. It should include:
6. A brief description of the couple about to be married and current situations that may be relevant in designing the wedding.
7. Your own theological understanding of marriage and your perspective of the purpose of the wedding for this specific couple (you may refer and cite to any readings, online and in-class discussions, interviews/observances, role playing, and the Prepare and Enrich Premarital Counseling Program).
8. An order of service that includes an explanation about why you selected each part and why you placed it where you did within the service.
9. A script of all words spoken, (e.g., prayers, readings, rituals, vows, etc.)
10. A summary or outline of a sermon (a full sermon manuscript is optional).

You may use any prepared resources that you would like, including your denomination’s service book, wedding prayers, books, etc. for elements of the service. Please be sure that you cite the sources.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Students can take the course using their P/F option. In order to receive the grade of “P,” the students must complete the five requirements listed in the section of Requirements. The students who want to contract for a grade of P/F must email a note to the instructor by the second day of the week. 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%

 Requirement #2……………………..………….. 15%

 Requirement #3 …..…………………………......15%

 Requirement #4………………………………….15%

 Requirement #5………………………………….extra 10%

 Requirement #6.…………………………………25%

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 Total 100% + extra 10%

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 Master’s Student Handbook*). Assignments will earn an A for *exceptional* quality; A- for very good quality; B+ when it *meets and fulfills* all of the minimum requirements of the assignment; B or B- when there *are minor to moderate* shortcomings; C or lower with *major shortcomings*:

 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%)

\*Late submissions (both excused and unexcused) will result in lowering your grade (-5 points/each). In addition, late submissions may not receive written comments from the instructor.

\*The use of inclusive language is strongly urged in all class discussions and writings.

**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.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

NOTE of CAUTION: In the past, the weddings praxis has brought up previous experiences in

the lives of students and instructors and the weddings and marriages of friends and loved ones.

Therefore, please be aware that the discussions and role playing may elicit similar connections to

your own stories, and thus may have a strong emotional impact on you. I encourage you

to plan accordingly and be sure that you have space and/or companionship to process during

your preparation time and the actual class time.

**MONDAY** (12/9): Rethinking Marriage and Weddings

* Readings: Long
* Suggested Readings: Witt, Jr.
* Assignments:
1. Be prepared to share in class your direct or indirect experiences of weddings and marriage life. You may also share some movies and stories that deal with issues on marriage and weddings.
2. **Reflect on one of your denomination/tradition’s key sacred text (scriptures, poems, readings, etc.) regarding weddings or marriage; and share this text along with your thoughts about it in class.**
3. Requirement #2: Post it on Canvas by 12/09 (Mon.), 8:00 a.m. and share it in class.

**TUESDAY** (12/10): Wedding Preparation and Resources

* Readings: Your denominational worship book on marriage
* Assignments:
1. Requirement #3: Post it on Canvas by 12/10 (Tue.), 8:00 a.m. and share it in class.
2. **Research legal marriage requirements in your state.**
3. **Become familiar with your denomination/tradition’s book of worship for weddings. If your faith tradition does not have wedding resources, refer to other sources (e.g., internet, books, liturgies from other traditions, etc.) to answer the following questions:**
4. How do the resources of your faith tradition speak to your theology of marriage?
5. What are the strengths and challenges of your denomination's wedding/marriage resources?
6. What are some helpful resources that you discovered (websites, blogs, videos, documents, books, etc.)? Share these resources in class.

**WEDNESDAY** (12/11): Premarital Counseling and Case Studies

* Readings: Prepare Enrich, “Couples Workbook”; Case Studies.
* Assignments:
1. Be prepared to participate in a small group discussion on Case Studies.
2. Class discussion on Group projects (Requirement #4).

**THURSDAY** (12/12): Wedding Planning

* Readings: McFarlane; your denominational resources for the wedding liturgy
* Recommended readings: Long and Maxwell
* Assignments:
1. Preparation for Group Projects: In class, we will prepare the order of service and rehearse the wedding ceremony.

**FRIDAY** (12/13): The Performance of Wedding Ceremonies

* Assignments:
1. The performance of Group Projects.
2. Requirement #5 (optional)

**Requirement #6: Post it on Canvas by 12/16 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m.**