Iliff school of Theology

**IST 20801: Practical Theology (4 credits)**

**Spring 2022 (Online) [update]**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

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

Office hours: By Appointment

**ZOOM CLASSES:** Week 2 (4/06), 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. (MT)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces you to practical theology, a field of critical reflection on the theory and praxis of your current or prospective professional/pastoral work. It explores models of practical theological reflection and methods of reflective professional practice as frameworks for religious leadership in various 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 to propose a faithful and ethical practice related to specific theological questions or concerns.

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.*

**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 hard copies and e-books are available at the library)**:**

1. Cahalan, Kathleen & Gordon Mikoski (eds.) (2014), *Opening the Field of Practical Theology*. E-book. Three Chapters of your choice.
2. Susan L. Engh (2019), *Women’s Work: The Transformational Power of Faith-Based Community Organizing.* Chapter 2, “The Transformation of Local Faith Communities,” 35- 56. E-book.
3. Greenough, Chris (2018), *Undoing Theology: Life Stories from Nonnormative Christians*, Chapter 2, “Perverting Practical Theology,” 37-65. (Available on Canvas).
4. Johnson, Susanne, “Remembering the Poor: Transforming Christian Practice,” in *Redemptive Transformation in Practice Theology,* edited by Dana R. Wright & John D. Kuentzel (2004), Chapter 7. (Available on Canvas).
5. Kim, Eunjoo M. & Deborah B. Creamer (eds.) (2012), *Women, Church, and Leadership: New Paradigms*, Chapters 2, 4, 5 & 6.
6. Kim, Eunjoo M. (2017), *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts*, Chapter 7. E-book.
7. Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. (2014), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, Introduction. E-book. (Available on Canvas).
8. Osmer, Richard (2008), *Practical Theology: An Introduction*.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS** (All hard copies and e-books are available at the library)**:**

1. Choi, Hee An (2021), *A Postcolonial Leadership*, Chapter 2. (Available on Canvas).
2. Kim, Eunjoo M. (2017), *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts*, Chapters 3 & 4. E-book.
3. Miller-McLemore (2014), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 32. E-book. (Available on Canvas).
4. Ward, Pete (2017), *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church*.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Attendance and Participation.** Your regular and punctual participation in online discussion and attendance of a Zoom class is required. The instructor should be informed in advance of any necessary absences. You cannot pass the course if you miss more than two weeks. If you cannot attend the Zoom class, please contact the instructor to discuss a make-up assignment.

You are expected to read all the assigned readings and post the class assignments on Canvas in a timely manner. You are also required to reply to the other students’ posts. You may reply in one or two words or sentences. Yet, you must respond to at least three classmates’ posts in no fewer than 100 words. When you reply, give good feedback by addressing others respectfully, taking their ideas seriously, and giving reasons for your agreements, disagreements, questions, or appreciations.

1. **Three One-page essays (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. or 250-300 words).** See Course Schedule, Weeks 2, 4, and 5.
2. **A proposal of your research topic for Requirement #4 (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words).**
3. Define a theological issue (personal, social, or religious) that matters significantly to you and your community or may have led you to the theological school.
4. Explain why this issue is crucial to be your research topic for yourself, your community, and the larger world.
5. Summarize your pre-understanding of the topic and the research areas you would like to conduct to deepen your understanding of the topic from a practical theological perspective.
6. Share your initial ideas about researching your topic (refer to Richard Osmer’s four interpretive tasks discussed in the Zoom class) and how to disseminate your research results.
7. Post your paper as an attachment by 4/11(Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 4/13 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
8. **A research project:**
* **Part I “The Descriptive-Empirical Task: What is going on?” (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):**
1. Observe how members of your congregation or a larger community think about the issue that you chose for Requirement #3 and how their understanding of that issue has been practiced implicitly or explicitly in your congregational or other professional/pastoral settings (e.g., in preaching, worship, mission and outreach programs, Bible study, administrative and strategic planning, denominational policy, etc.). As observation methods, use one or more ways Osmer suggests in Chapter 1 of his book, such as formal or informal interviews and surveys.
2. Summarize the process and results of your observation, and describe what bothers you most and where you get stuck or have trouble.
3. Post Part I as an attachment by 5/02 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/04 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* **Part II “The Interpretive Task: Why is this going on?” (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):**
1. What is your particular concern or question that you wrote in Part I? Analyze and interpret it deeper through interdisciplinary studies that Osmer introduces in Chapter 2 (e.g., sociological analyses, historical reviews, psychological studies, etc.).
2. Critically summarize your interpretation of the research results.
3. Post Part II as an attachment by 5/09(Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/011(Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* **Part III “The Normative Task: What ought to be going on?” (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):**
1. What is your theological and biblical concern emerging from your research in Parts I and II?
2. Explore your theological and biblical concern by studying relevant biblical and other sacred texts and theological and religious resources and explain your theological position on your issue. In the process of your study, refer to Chapter 3 of Osmer’s book.
3. Post Part III as an attachment by5/16 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/18 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* **Part IV “The Pragmatic Task: How might we respond?” (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):**
1. What is your understanding of leadership?
2. How can you play your leadership role to bring “deep change” into your professional/pastoral setting and the larger world about your theological issue?
3. Based on 1) and 2), explain your long-term and short-term plans to fulfill deep change. Refer to Chapter 4 of Osmer’s book and provide some concrete and creative ideas (e.g., how a Bible study material can be prepared or how a worship service can be designed, etc.).
4. Post Part IV as an attachment by 5/23 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/25 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
5. **An Assessment paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, or 500-750 words).** Write your evaluation of your Requirements #4:
6. What is your understanding of practical theology? In what sense do you consider the work of your research project a discipline of practical theology?
7. How did the process of practical theological reflection help you change or deepen your theological understanding and practice of the topic you researched? Do you have any ideas further to develop your practical theological reflection on your topic?
8. Post your assessment paper on Canvas as an attachment by 5/30 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT) and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 6/01 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m.

**COURS EVALUATION:**

Students can take the course using their P/F option. In order to receive the grade of “P,” students must complete the five requirements listed in the Course Requirements. Students who want to contract for a grade of P/F must email a note to the instructor by the end of Week 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 (Zoom Class)……….…………..…….4%

 Requirement #2……………………………………… 24% (8% x 3)

 Requirement #3 …..…………….……………… ……12%

 Requirement #4.………………………………............48% (12% x 4)

 Requirement #5 ……………………………..…..…....12% \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 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 Master’s Student Handbook*, p. 80):

 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** **(unexcused and excused)** will lower the grade (-1 points/each). They may not receive written comments from the instructor.

**The deadline for all the late submissions** is 6/06 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT). The instructor may review the late assignments after this deadline since she has other commitments after the initially scheduled work hours.

**If you do not reply to at least three classmates’ posts,** you will lower your grade (-1 point/each)**.**

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

**Inclusive Language:** It is urged that the students use inclusive language in speaking and writing and use terms that do not create barriers to the 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 requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303.765.1146.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (3/28-3/30): What is Practical Theology?**

* Getting acquainted: Post a video that introduces yourself (e.g., your program at Iliff, denomination, professional/pastoral setting and role, plan after graduation, expectations from the course, etc.) by Mon. (3/28), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* Questions about the syllabus: If you have questions about the course syllabus, post them by Mon. (3/28), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* Required readings:
1. Miller-McLemore (ed.), “Introduction.”
2. Calahan & Mikoski, three chapters of your choice.
* Recommended readings:
1. Ward, Chapters 1 & 2.
* Assignments:
1. Prepare for your **One-page Essay 1** due Monday (4/04).

**Week 2** **(4/04-4/08): Theory & Method of Practical Theology (Zoom: Wed., 1–3 p.m. MT)**

* Required Readings:
1. Osmer, Introduction.
2. Kim, Chapter 7.
* Zoom Class
* Assignments: **One-page Essay I** (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. or 250-300 words) about your definition of practical theology. You are required to reflect on the readings in Weeks 1 and 2 and cite them in your writing. Your definition may be tentative at this moment because you will deepen your understanding of practical theology by reading more books and through online and Zoom discussions in the following weeks and will redefine it in the final assignment (Requirement #5: Assessment Paper). Post your essay on Canvas by 4/04 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and reply to at least three classmates’ essays (no fewer than 100 words) by 4/06 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT). Prepare to share your understanding of practical theology in the Zoom class.

**Week 3** **(4/11-4/15): Research Topic Proposal**

* Recommended Readings:
1. Ward, Ch. 9.
* Assignments: A proposal of your research topic for Requirement #4 (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words).
1. Define a theological issue (personal, social, or religious) that matters significantly to you and your community or may have led you to the theological school.
2. Explain why this issue is crucial to be your research topic for yourself, your community, and the larger world.
3. Summarize your pre-understanding of the topic and the research areas you would like to conduct to deepen your understanding of the topic from a practical theological perspective.
4. Share your initial ideas about researching your topic (refer to Richard Osmer’s four interpretive tasks discussed in the Zoom class) and how to disseminate your research results.
5. Post your paper as an attachment by 4/11(Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 4/13 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 4** **(4/18–4/22): Practical Theological Intervention I**

* Required readings (choose one of them):
1. Susanne Johnson, “Remembering the Poor: Transforming Christian Practice.”
2. Engh, “The Transformation of Local Faith Communities.”
* Assignments: **One-page Essay 2** (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt, or 250-300 words). Read one of the required readings and write One-page Essay 2, focusing on the following questions: What kind of the practical theological approach did the author use? How did the author help you deepen your practical theological reflection on the topic? Post your essay on Canvas by Mon. (4/18), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three classmates’ essays by Wed. (4/20), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 5 (4/25–4/29): Practical Theological Intervention II**

* Required readings (choose one of them):
1. Kim & Creamer, Chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6.
2. Greenough, “Perverting Practical Theology.”
* Assignments: **One-page Essay 3** (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt, or 250-300 words). Read one of the required readings and write One-page Essay 2, focusing on the following questions: What kind of the practical theological approach did the author use? How did the author help you deepen your practical theological reflection on the topic? Post your essay on Canvas by Mon. (4/25), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three classmates’ essays by Wed. (4/27), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 6 (5/02–5/06): Research Project/Part I (“What is going on?”)**

* Required Readings:
1. Osmer, Ch. 1.
* Recommended Readings:
1. Miller-McLemore (ed.), Ch. 8 (Daniel Schipani, “Case Study Method”).
2. Miller-McLemore (ed.), Ch. 11 (Hans Schilderman, “Qualitative Method”).
* Assignments: Requirement #4/Part I (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):
1. Observe how members of your congregation or a larger community think about the issue that you chose for Requirement #3 and how their understanding of that issue has been practiced implicitly or explicitly in your congregational or other professional/pastoral settings (e.g., in preaching, worship, mission, and outreach programs, Bible study, administrative and strategic planning, denominational policy, etc.). As observation methods, use one or more ways Osmer suggests in Chapter 1 of his book, such as formal or informal interviews and surveys.
2. Summarize the process and results of your observation, and describe what bothers you most and where you get stuck or have trouble.
3. Post Part I on Canvas as an attachment by 5/02 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/04 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 7** **(5/09 – 5/13): Research Project/Part II (“Why is this going on?)**

* Required Readings:
1. Osmer, Ch. 2.
* Recommended Readings:
1. Miller-McLemore (ed.), Ch. 9 (Lee Butler, Jr., “Psychological Theory”).
2. Miller-McLemore (ed.), Ch.10 (Sally Brown, “Hermeneutical Theory”).
* Assignments: Requirement #4/Part II (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):
1. What is your particular concern or question that you wrote in Part I? Analyze and interpret it deeper through interdisciplinary studies that Osmer introduces in Chapter 2 (e.g., sociological analyses, historical reviews, psychological studies, etc.).
2. Critically summarize your interpretation of the research results.
3. Post Part II on Canvas by attachment by5/9 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and reply to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/11 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 8** **(5/16 – 5/20): Research Project/Part III (What ought to be going on?)**

* Required Readings:
1. Osmer, Ch. 3.
* Recommended Readings:
1. Kim, Chapters 3 & 4.
2. Ward, Ch. 3.
* Assignments: Requirement #4/Part III (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):
1. What is your theological and biblical concern emerging from your research in Parts I and II?
2. Explore your theological and biblical concern by studying relevant biblical and other sacred texts and theological and religious resources and explain your theological position on your issue. In the process of your study, refer to Chapter 3 of Osmer’s book.
3. Post Part III on Canvas as an attachment by 5/16 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and reply to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/18 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 9** **(5/23 – 5/27): Research Project/Part IV (“How might we respond?”)**

* Required Readings:
1. Osmer, Ch. 4.
* Recommended Readings:
1. Choi.
* Assignments: Requirement #4/Part IV(2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point, or 500-750 words):
1. What is your understanding of leadership?
2. How can you play your leadership role to bring “deep change” into your professional/pastoral setting and the larger world about your theological issue?
3. Based on 1) and 2), explain your long-term and short-term plans to fulfill deep change. Refer to Chapter 4 of Osmer’s book and provide some concrete and creative ideas (e.g., how a Bible study material can be prepared or how a worship service can be designed, etc.).
4. Post Part IV as an attachment by 5/23 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT), and respond to at least three of your classmates’ posts by 5/25 (Wed.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).

**Week 10 (5/30 – 6/03): Research Project/Assessment**

* Assignments: **Requirement #5** An assessment paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, or 500-750 words). Write your evaluation on your Requirement #4:
1. What is your understanding of practical theology? In what sense do you consider the work of your research project a discipline of practical theology?
2. How did the process of practical theological reflection help you change or deepen your understanding and practice of your theological issue? Do you have any ideas further to develop your practical theological reflection on your issue?
3. Post your assessment paper on Canvas as an attachment by 5/30 (Mon.), 11:59 p.m. (MT).
* **Student Course Evaluation**