I. Course Description

This course equips students to develop a philosophy of leadership, based upon a biblical, theological, and Christian tradition of the student. This will include both character and competency issues that the leader must know, develop and apply within her/his context of ministry. This course will also orient the student to healthy congregational structures, administration, and stewardship with a particular emphasis on essential financial processes. (M.Div. Core)

II. Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and faithful interpretation and responsible use of Scripture in the student’s conception and practice of leadership.
2. Not assessed
3. Form a missional vision of kingdom ministry within multi-cultural contexts.
4. Demonstrate critical theological reflection that is biblically faithful, historically grounded, contextually relevant, and integrated within pastoral leadership and congregational structures.
5. Not assessed
6. Learn effective ministry skills and processes relevant to pastoral leadership in congregational structures, administration, and stewardship.

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbook(s)

Hollingsworth article must be read prior to the start of class.


B. Attendance
According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours (2 weeks) will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning
Papers submitted in print must include a self-addressed stamped envelope for return. Emailed assignments are preferred. All papers submitted electronically must be in Microsoft Word as an email attachment and sent to mlewis@ashland.edu. Papers will be graded using “Track Changes” and returned as an email attachment. Emails including class submissions must include student’s last name, Class, and assignment in the subject line – i.e. “Miller, leadership, interview.”

1. Interview a leader in your ministry context:

Make an appointment with a recognized senior leader in your ministry context. Explain that you are conducting this interview as part of a class assignment for a leadership class. The interview should last at least 30 minutes. Summarize the interview, give personal reflections on the interview and submit by February 1st. Bullet point notes and reflections are acceptable, but you are expected to write in full sentences. 3-5 pages are acceptable.

Sample interview questions:
   a. How do you define leadership?
   b. Can you identify a significant life experience that shaped you as a leader?
   c. Who are two people who have helped you define your leadership approach and what about them was most meaningful in defining your own leadership?
   d. What do you do to keep yourself vital as a leader?
   e. How do you address situations where individuals you oversee are not performing to expectations? In what ways if any do you handle the situation differently if they are a volunteer or staff?
   f. Describe a time when you led your organization through change. What would you do differently, and what did you do that worked to facilitate the change?
   g. Describe a time when you experienced a significant challenge to your leadership. How did you handle it and how would you handle it differently knowing what you know now?
   h. What is the one thing you want to communicate to a new leader learning how to lead?
2. Write a five to six page reflection paper on each of the following texts:

For *Deep change: discovering the leader within* include: **Due February 22nd**
- A brief summary of the book (two pages)
- Your personal reflection on the text – agreement, disagreement, applicability to your ministry (Three to four pages)

For *The one minute manager meets the monkey* include: **Due March 21st**
- A brief summary of the book (two pages)
- Blanchard writes for the middle manager in a business context. In what ways are his principles applicable/not applicable to volunteer management in the church, giving particular attention to your church context (four pages)

3. In a group of your peers, conduct a class presentation on one of the five leadership practices identified in Kouzes and Posner’s *The leadership challenge*. Your presentation should review the practice chosen demonstrating that you thoroughly understand how Kouzes and Posner describe it. Identify and present both a biblical (not Jesus) and historical church figure who exemplified this practice. Presentations should be 30 minutes. The Leadership Practice that each group will focus on will be chosen the second week of class. The group will receive a grade for the presentation, and each member will be evaluated by others in their group regarding how diligently they contributed to the project. **Due May 9th**

4. Complete a take home, open-book test on the Powers text. It is expected that the student is very familiar with the contents of the book in order to complete the test in a timely fashion. The test will be distributed by email on **April 25th and due May 2nd**.

5. Read an additional 500 pages in an area of interest relative to leadership from the bibliography below. Turn in an annotated reading log including bibliographic information, number of pages, and 2-3 sentences summarizing the book. **May 2nd**.

**Paper are to be submitted before class on the day they are due.** Late submissions will create a grade reduction. Papers must be written in approved Turabian format with an appropriate cover page. Pages must be in Times New Roman, 12 pt. double spaced with one inch margins top, bottom, right, and left.

**D. Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Degree Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper - Blanchard</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper - Quinn</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IV. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

- Register for Coaching Fundamentals and pursue certification in Coaching.
- Sign up for Pastors of Excellence at Ashland Theological Seminary after a few years in ministry.
- Choose one book per year from the bibliography below to read and implement.
- Lead a ministry in a local church. After 6 months complete the 360 Leadership Practices Inventory with the team you are leading.

V. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy
Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the Student Handbook.

B. Writing Assistance
If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Writing Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic writing. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Writing Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu.

C. Students with Disabilities
A student who has a specific physical, psychological or learning disability and requires accommodations is encouraged to inform the instructor during the first days of the semester so that learning needs can be appropriately met. It is the student’s responsibility to document the disability with Disability Services located in the Center for Academic Support, Library Seventh Floor, (419) 289-5904, ssalvo@ashland.edu prior to receiving accommodations. Ashland University makes every effort to comply with Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Amendments to the Act (2008).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>Group Participation</td>
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<td>Annotated Reading Log</td>
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D. ATS Grading Scale

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>65-67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. Bibliography

Leading Others

Coaching


**Mentoring**


**Leading Organizations**


**Historical: African American**


Leadership and the Syllabus Problem
James Neil (Dock) Hollingsworth, Jr.
The James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University
February 2009

Introduction

I am an educator. I teach seminary students and, like every seminary professor I ever had, I give out a syllabus on the first day of class. The syllabus is one of the sacred and binding documents of our vocation. I list all the readings and all the assignments. I even put assignment due dates in bold so there is no confusion. I am clear about my attendance policy and my expectations for participation. All papers are written according to the specified style guide and I am clear about which papers are to be 4-6 pages in length and which are to be 6-8 pages. Rubrics for grading and university grading scales and policies about late work make all expectations clear from the beginning. It helps the students if they know exactly what is expected of them, how it will be measured, and when it is due.

The problem is that I am charged with preparing these students for congregational leadership! Most of my students are the traditional aged graduate student. When they graduate, most of them are in their mid-20’s and they have been in school since they were five. They are attached to their syllabus. They understand how to interpret what is expected and how to deliver, but the syllabus attachment is making the transition to congregational leadership very difficult. These recent graduates are not lazy; they are bright and eager and hard working. However, they are leaving school, enrolling in “Full-time Ministry 101”, and nobody is giving them a syllabus. On the whole, they do not know how to transition into a satisfying congregational ministry without the syllabus.

My doctoral study
I came to my conclusion about the syllabus problem after completing my doctoral studies in 2008. I was grant director for a pastoral residency program funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. I studied the residents in my program and asked the question, “What are they struggling with most in their first placements and how can our school better prepare them for the transition?” To identify the struggles, I developed a measurement tool based on “The Four Signature Pedagogies of Theological Education” identified in the book, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*. The book categorizes these signature pedagogies as, Interpretation, Contextualization, Formation and Performance.

The supervising pastors filled out the Likert scale measurement tool on the residents, the residents filled them out on themselves, and a group of lay people in the church filled them out. In addition to the Likert scale instrument, I interviewed the residents, the pastors and the lay Resident Support Committees. I wanted to identify which areas of the curriculum were the most and least effective at preparing our graduates for their first placements. I also wanted to identify strategies for strengthening areas so we could help our graduates begin ministry in a more satisfying way.

A quick summary of my findings might help set the stage. It was clear that *Interpretation* was the strongest of the Four Pedagogies. The residents’ background in the classical disciplines of theological education was strong throughout. There was no indication that there were deficiencies in the cognitive background needed for ministry that were impediments to a satisfying beginning in congregational life. Likewise, the quality of their ministries is not being significantly challenged by struggles in *Contextualization*. The data suggested that they need to do better, more intentional work at reading and understanding the church’s and community’s story. Yet, they were showing respect for the community and congregation’s uniqueness.
and able to translate their ministry with respect for context. They were respecting age differences and learning styles and were “fitting in” with the churches they were serving.

The residents’ struggles with *Formation* were a matter of concern. Residents were learning how to wear a new Pastoral identity. They were learning to become more comfortable with the power and projections of being clergy. This is largely an internal struggle and was not translating into ministerial difficulty. Similarly, issues of poor self-care were diminishing satisfaction for the resident but not causing congregational problems. Supporters of the residents’ ministries want them to take care of themselves but their tendency to overwork was not causing them trouble within the congregation. Clearly, if they do not learn new habits of self-care the accumulated neglect will affect function.

*Performance* was the problem! It was the most troublesome early challenge to clergy competence. While residents were performing well in preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, they were not doing well in any areas of leadership. They are responsive ministers, eager to execute projects or respond to pastoral needs. However, they lacked the needed skills of leadership. They clearly knew how to follow a syllabus but they did not know how to write one. The syllabus problem manifests in (1) an inability to move from ideas to action, (2) an inability to measure their own performance, (3) the limitations of thinking in semester time-blocks, (4) the struggle with adapting to emergencies, (5) the recruitment of volunteers and (6) the shift to thinking as a relational person in community.

**Ideas to Action**

A debilitating missing competence was expressed in one resident’s statement: “I have ideas, but I don’t always know how to translate that into action.” Someone else had always plainly communicated what she needed to do and what success would look like. The syllabus gave clear direction about what was
expected. Since her education had never pushed her to set her own priorities, dream, plan, and execute, she did not know how to get started.

Another resident told me an embarrassing but illustrative story. She went to her first committee meeting as a full-time minister. She was the staff liaison for the Children’s Ministry and she called her first meeting of the committee, sat at the head of the table, initiated introductions around the table, and then they all stared at each other. The lay committee members were eager to hear all about the new ideas this newly minted seminary graduate had come to share. They were excited about the vitality she would bring to that area of ministry. She was new to ministry and new to the church. She thought this committee of older church members was going to give her some direction about how to start her ministry. They were looking for leadership. She was looking for the syllabus.

Measures for Success

The seminary curriculum offers clear and timely feedback on project performance. Students take tests; they are scored and handed back. Papers are returned to students with misspelled words circled, praises and critiques written in the margins, and a final grade given. How are they supposed to know how they are doing in this new ministry assignment? Many of the residents have become anxious about the lack of feedback on their performance, discouraged by the lack of praise, and distraught by the first hints of critique or conflict. One resident was getting regular critique from his supervising pastor. The pastor kept offering ways he could improve the structure of the Invocation prayer or how he could strengthen his sermon delivery or jazz up his newsletter articles. The resident felt beaten down. The resident thought he was a failure. He later learned that the pastor was very high on his gifts and promise for ministry. The pastor’s critique was intended to help “A” work become “A+” work, though the resident was questioning his calling and aptitude for vocational ministry.
The lack of regular and balanced feedback on the performance of ministry is a stressful adjustment for the traditional student. After a lifetime of knowing their grades, they are unsure about how to measure their success. The lack of feedback is causing some to feel invalidated and worry about their effectiveness. It is causing others to think they are doing a more effective job than the congregants think they are doing.

**Fifteen Week Semesters**

The traditional student has lived life in 15-week blocks of time. The 15-week fall semester is followed by Christmas break. The 15-week spring semester is followed by the 15-week summer break. The more organized students calendar and schedule their time but the syllabus has trained them to schedule their world within 15-week time blocks. They are trained by the academic calendar to schedule only four months at a time. There is no reason for them to think about next year’s objectives, or a five-year strategic plan.

This four month training is creating a problem for new ministers as their ideas about planning ahead conflicts with the ideas of those with whom they work. My favorite example is the Youth Ski Retreat that the resident was to plan for January. Every year, the church youth group went skiing in the mountains of North Carolina – usually in January. The resident began his ministry at the church June 1 and at the end of the summer, he was being asked for dates for the ski trip. Families were compiling their calendars for the academic year. Football games and Christmas vacations, academic holidays and band practices were getting logged onto family calendars but no one was sure when the winter ski retreat was taking place. The resident was staggered by the push. “It was summer and people wanted to know when they were going skiing in January?” He did not appreciate that church calendars are expanded beyond the 15-week time blocks that he had been trained for.
Adapting to Emergencies

There are no academic emergencies. Well, that is not completely true – students sometimes create academic emergencies by planning poorly. However, the syllabus is clear about when everything is due. There are no surprises. Congregational ministry is not structured the same way. One resident was blocking off Wednesday afternoons to study and prepare for his Wednesday night Youth Bible Study. As you might imagine, he was running into problems! Students would stop by his office after school; the pastor would ask him to help with something; parents would call. He quickly learned that he would need to study earlier in the week to accommodate possible interruptions. These “usual” interruptions were disturbing enough but funerals and other major disruptions to the calendar were jarring for most residents. They were accustomed to scheduling their work and never having to allocate for “flex” time, but the untidy demands of being a responsive minister was often unsettling.

In my Mentoring I class at the seminary, I decided to add an “emergency” to my course to see how students would respond. I was teaching a Tuesday/Thursday class and at the end of the class one Tuesday, I announced a fictitious death. I told them that just before class I emailed them a one-page description of his life and relationships and that his funeral was scheduled for Thursday at 1:00 (the beginning of my class period). I told the students that I needed them to come to class, two days from now, with an order of service and the full text of the sermon and eulogy they would deliver. After class, one of my students rushed forward and asked for an extension on the assignment! He told me that his Capstone paper was due Thursday and that there was no way he could get to this assignment by then. I tried to be kind but I explained to him that the family was gathering at 1:00 on Thursday – there are no extensions on a funeral!
The syllabus generally has no surprises. The students are having a difficult time adjusting to a life of ministry that is responsive and adaptable. Clearly some personalities are more structured and ordered than others. Some students “go with the flow” quite well, but many young ministers are having difficulty with the emergencies and interruptions that the academic world did not foreshadow for them.

**Recruiting and Motivating Volunteers**

The academic pursuit is a solitary venture. Ministry is not. The syllabus has trained students to do their own work and congregational ministry requires the skills for recruiting and motivating volunteer leaders. Some of the residents I have worked with have even voiced reluctance to recruiting and motivating volunteers. They worry that they will be perceived as “dumping” their responsibility onto someone else.

Some academic classes have tried to offset this problem by requiring group projects. Group projects are supposed to teach students to work in teams and to learn skills for collaboration. It has been a partially effective strategy. Generally speaking, students with group project assignments get together as a group and decide which part of the assignment each member is responsible for. Then, each student goes home and works in solitude until the group comes back together and assembles a collage of the individual projects. This exercise is very different from what is needed in parish leadership. In congregations, the leader must post a project, a ministry, an idea and inspire enough belief in the ministry initiative that volunteers will give up their personal time to throw themselves into the project. This vital skill for congregational life is not practiced in the formation of pastoral leaders and the missing skill is hurting some of our newest ministers.

**Relational Initiative**
As already mentioned, the academic pursuit is solitary work. Accordingly, students are not evaluated by how well they initiate relationships and work easily in social settings. In elementary school, students were graded in the area, “plays well with others”. Their later academic formation dropped this vital category. While the seminary syllabus does not require that students learn to initiate and maintain relationships, congregations demand it. Poor skill development in this area is causing more difficulty in the transition into ministry than any other category. Congregants are expecting ministers to approach them, ask about their day, and ask to meet their guest and so on. Affable, relational, gregarious ministers are making other mistakes in their first placements and being treated with patience and grace. Those who lack the skills for easy, light, relational initiative and banter are being judged far more harshly.

One of the residents in my program was functioning well in preaching, teaching, pastoral care and leadership, yet he was regularly in trouble. In an interview with his Resident Support Committee I located the problem. One of the lay leaders said, “He just ain’t real good at neighborin’ around.” (This is a good Georgia term for relational initiative.) While I’m not sure how to teach “neighborin’ around”, I am fully convinced that this skill is vital for a satisfying ministry.

Another resident reported that he had very different expectations about relational initiative than the congregation’s expectations. When he first arrived at the church he assumed that people would approach him and introduce themselves and initiate a relationship. To his thinking, he was the new one in town. They should be coming to him and asking to take him to lunch. Their expectations were quite different. He learned (painfully) that he was being judged for not initiating relationship with them. He was their minister. They were expecting him to reach out and connect and begin forming relationship with them.
This same resident was being judged harshly because of his routine at the Wednesday night church supper. He would get his meal, find an empty place at a table, sit and begin a conversation with the person next to him. In his mind, he was being highly social. He was initiating a conversation with a member of his congregation. The perception of members of his Resident Support Committee was, “He doesn’t talk to anybody on Wednesday nights.” The pastor of this church is very outgoing. He walks to each table and has some level of small talk with nearly everybody in the room. Since the resident was only talking with the person next to him, he was judged to be unfriendly. By contrast, one of his colleagues in the Pastoral Residency Program decided that he would assume responsibility for passing out water and tea for the Wednesday night meals at his church. He was able to greet nearly everybody as they came by for their drink. He was judged as being one of the friendliest ministers his church had ever seen.

The skills for “neighborin’ around” are not required or tested in the seminary syllabus. However, the need for this area of skill development cannot be overstated. More than any other area, this is causing problems for ministers in first placements. Many of them were among the top academic achievers in our school. Because they have been praised so effusively for their high academic achievements, this “failure” in ministry is devastating for many of them. Furthermore, since most of them do not even know that “neighborin’ around” is part of the way they are being judged by congregants, they often do not know that they are not meeting this expectation until they are in deep trouble because of it.

**Concluding Thoughts**

If you are reading this chapter as a seminary student or a minister in early vocational development, it may serve as foreshadowing. If we can name and identify the areas of difficult transition that are common, it may help you anticipate and collaborate with peers and mentors in the areas you might struggle with most.
My hope is that some of these struggles will be normalized for you and be less devastating.

If you are a fellow educator, I hope this stimulates some questions about how we form persons for vocational ministry. We must find ways for some syllabus reform. We must find ways to honor the agency of our students and give them a platform for exercising their own creativity and potency. How do we help them move from ideas to action? How do we help them initiate relationships and inspire others? The transition from being a graduate student with a backpack to being a holy person in community is drastic enough. We need to anticipate and think more creatively about how to make some parts of this transition easier.