

MS 3P1070 Self Care in Ministry
Syllabus Fall 2024

Instructor: Phil C. Zylla, D. Th.
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Specializations: PS, CS

Format: asynchronous online
Class Sessions: weekly modules online

Bio: Dr. Phil Zylla is *Professor of Pastoral Theology* at McMaster Divinity College. He also holds the *J. Gordon and Margaret Warnock Jones Chair in Church and Ministry*. His research interests include congregational studies, Christian spirituality, pastoral theology, and theology of suffering. He is married to Melodie and lives in Ancaster, ON.

Course Description:

The challenges and obligations of Christian helping professions are demanding and exacting. Ministering persons experience daunting challenges in the expenditure of emotional resources. This course assists the ministering person to set boundaries for ministry, and to establish livable routines that will sustain and nurture their lives while engaging in the tasks of Christian ministry. This course will explore strategies for self-care, resources to endure ministry for the long-haul, and a careful examination of threats to personal, professional, and institutional/ecclesial success. Participants will be exposed to literature that will aid them in the development of a personal plan that addresses areas of concern, depletion, and emotional fatigue. Furthermore, the course will explore a theology of self that enables a holistic concern for the well-being of those who invest in full-time ministry, spiritual care, and other pastoral activities that demand soulful engagement.

Course Objectives:

Knowing

1. To explore a theological understanding of the human person and human capabilities/limitations.
2. To gain facility with current research and literature on self care in the helping professions.

Being

3. To nurture spiritual self-care practices that will enable long-term engagement in helping ministries.
4. To develop spiritual habits that will support the on-going demands of Christian life and ministry.

Doing

5. To formulate a self-care plan for the next five years of one's helping profession.
6. To cultivate practices for self-care and ministry.
7. To enact a ministry resource plan.

Required Course Textbooks:

Capps, Donald *The Depleted Self*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Dykstra, Robert *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Reading*. New York: Chalice Press, 2005.

Wicks, Robert J. *The Resilient Clinician*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Recommended Course Textbooks:

Burns, Bob and Tasha D. Chapman, Donald C. Guthrie. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013.

Richardson, Ronald. *Becoming a Healthier Pastor*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Avenue to Learn:

This course is an asynchronous course. The course modules occur weekly and can be accessed by registered students through *Avenue to Learn*. Purchase the textbooks as soon as possible. For information on Avenue to Learn: <https://avenuehelp.mcmaster.ca/exec/>

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK OF:

September 9, 2024

Module 1: Self-Care and Self-Awareness

*View introductory lecture and Welcome Video

This module will explore the spiritual aspects of nurturing one's own inner spirit as a task that is rooted in the fabric of the gospel. Helping professionals are prone to idealism and often underestimate the capacity for human depletion, failure and disappointment. In order to undergird the course – an initial exploration of the nature of human capacity, limitation, and self-awareness will be explored.

*Introductions – tell us about yourself and post a written or video introduction to your interest in self-care and a little about yourself.

September 16, 2024

Module 2: Stress Management for Ministry

*Post to discussion thread

*download and review primer lectures

This module will identify common stressors for ministry and resources to address those stressors. The focus of the module will pick up three identified areas of stress management identified by Charles L. Rassieur:

1. The Spiritual Journey
2. Marriage and Relationships
3. Creativity, Principle Interests and Time Management.

*Post a one-page reflection in the module discussion thread by Wednesday, September 18/24.

September 23, 2024

Module 3: Images of Ministry and Self-Care - Part I

This module will explore the classical images of pastoral care including those of Anton Boisen, Charles Gerkin, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Seward Hiltner, Alastair V. Campbell and Jeanne Stevenson Moessner. These images identify key approaches to pastoral care. Our task will be to sift them according to the aims of this course. What do these images provide in terms of perspective on self-care? What insights are to be gained from these resources for pastoral care? The module will identify some of the aspects of self-care touched on by these pastoral theologians. The assignment embedded in this module is to do your own reflection on issues of self-care from these classic approaches.

Assignment # 1 Book Review – due Thurs. Sept 26th @ 5 p.m. EST 10 marks

Read: Dykstra Part I Classical Images of Care

Self Care in Ministry

Dr. Phil C. Zylla

McMaster Divinity College

Submit a three page summary (to course assignment dropbox) of the lessons for self-care that you have gleaned from these images by Thursday, September 26th @ 5 p.m. EST

September 30, 2024

Module 4: Images of Ministry and Self-Care – Part II

In part II of Dykstra's book, *Images of Pastoral Care*, he identifies the approaches of what he terms 'paradoxical images of care' including those of Henri J.M. Nouwen, Heije Faber, Alastair V. Campbell, Donald Capps, Robert Dykstra, and James Dittes. In addition to becoming familiar with the work of these important pastoral theologians, the focus of this module will be to discern aspects of self-care in ministry that can be gleaned from these various approaches. Sift through the chapters for insights into your own vision of pastoral care in your vocational context. Delve carefully into the various approaches for discernment of new insights for our course theme.

Record these in your summary.

Assignment # 2 Book Review –

10 marks

Read: Dykstra Part II Paradoxical Images of Care

Post a three page summary of the lessons for self-care that you have gleaned from these images by Thursday, October 3, 2024 at 5 p.m. EST

October 7, 2024

Assessing Vulnerability

This module will come to terms with the issues of fragility and personal vulnerability in ministry. Various aspects of personal self-assessment will be explored. The material will interact directly with Robert J. Wicks' book, *The Resilient Clinician*. As part of the exercise to complete this module, develop responses in a journal to the questionnaire on "Clinicians Vulnerability Profile Questionnaire" (37, in 2009 ed.; 36, in 2024 ed.)

Read: Wicks, The Resilient Clinician Introduction and Chapter 1

Post responses: to the readings in the course discussion thread by Thursday, Oct. 10th at 5 p.m. EST. What is valuable for us to notice with respect to secondary stress and ministry burnout?

October 14

Reading Week – no class (Practice self-care)

October 21, 2024

Self-Care Plan – Part I

Module completion includes reading and a draft of your self-care plan.

Assignment # 3

Read: Wicks, The Resilient Clinician, Chapter 2

Develop your own self-care plan for your current or a soon expected ministry situation.

Reflect carefully on Chapter 2 of Robert J. Wicks' book *The Resilient Clinician*. In your self-care draft plan pay special attention to:

- a. the questions to ponder on developing a self-care protocol 50-54(2008); 49-53 (2024)
- b. response to time management issues on 59-61(2008); 58-60 (2024)
- c. circle of friends types, 68-75 (2008); 67-73 (2024)
- d. *Self Care Protocol Questionnaire*, 76-79 (2008); 74-77 (2024)

Your plan should include responses to the key issues identified.

Assignment length: 5 pages

15 marks

Due: October 24, 2024 @ 5 p.m. EST

*submit to course dropbox for assignments

October 28, 2024

The Depleted Self and Ministry

*Post to discussion thread

This module explores the concept of depletion and emotional fatigue in ministry. It will draw on the story of Jonah in the OT as commented on by pastoral theologian, Donald Capps. Read the story of Jonah in scripture and chapter 7 of Donald Capps' book, *The Depleted Self*.

Read: The Book of Jonah

Read: Capps, *The Depleted Self*, Chapter 7

*Post to discussion thread Was Jonah a narcissist?

Write a one page reflection on this theme and post in course discussion thread by Thursday, October 31st at 5 p.m. EST.

November 4, 2024

Spirituality of Self-Care

*review posted lecture – *Spirituality of Self-Care*

Assignment #4 Professional Interview – Lessons on Self-Care in Ministry

Use the self-care plan you developed in course **to interview a leading professional in your area of ministry** (pastoral care, chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, etc.). Take notes on your conversation. Summarize the lessons learned from this interview in a **four page summary**. What changes/adjustments do you want to make to your own self-care plan based on this interview?

Submit to course dropbox by Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 5 p.m. EST

10 marks

November 11, 2024 Conflict and Stress in Ministry; Images of Ministry Part III

*review posted lecture *Conflict and Stress in Ministry*

Read: Dykstra Part III Contemporary and Contextual Images of Care

This module completes our careful review of the approaches to care identified by Dykstra in his *Images of Pastoral Care*. This final module focuses on contemporary and contextual images of care by noted pastoral theologians Paul W. Pruyser, Gaylord Noyce, Edward Wimberly, Donald Capps, Karen Hanson, Margaret Zipse Kornfield and Brita L. Gill-Austern. Continue to probe these summative images for insight into the theme of our course, *Self-Care in Ministry*. What observations, insights, learnings have you gleaned from this set of images?

Submit a three page summary: (to assignment dropbox) of the lessons for self-care that you have gleaned from these images by Thursday, November 14th, 2024 at 5 p.m. EST. **10 marks**

November 18, 2024

Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Stress in Ministry

*Review posted lecture

*Participate in discussion thread

*Conduct Literature review for final paper

Assignment # 5 Literature Review

20 marks

From your research on the course themes select an **additional 300 pages of reading from chapters of books or journal articles** to engage on the theme of self-care in ministry. **For each chapter/article** use the following template for a one page summary:

Title

- Reference information
- One sentence description of the author
- A defining quotation from the book or article
- Key codes: phrases, words, concepts that are pertinent to the course themes
- One or two paragraph reflection on the reading

Submit to course dropbox by Saturday, Nov. 23rd, at 5:00 p.m. EST

November 25, 2024 Managing Boundaries in Ministry

*Review posted primer lecture *Managing Boundaries in Ministry*

*Update your self care plan.

December 2, 2024 A Road Map for Sustainable Ministry

*Review course primer lecture

December 9, 2024

Zoom Meeting with Professor – sign up for 30 min. session This session is to review your self-care plans and to discuss your ministry aspirations. By appointment.

Assignment # 6 Final Essay - Choose one of the following essay topics:

Assignment Length: 10 pages

*Contemporary Practices of Self-Care in the Helping Ministries

*A Theology of Self and the Practice of Self Care

*A Biblical Theology of Self-Concern in Christian Ministry

*Burnout in Ministry: Prevention and Remedy

*A Spirituality of Self-Care in Ministry

(Other topics by permission)

Grading Criteria:

a. demonstrated knowledge of course textbooks

b. evidence of graduate level research

c. demonstration of a working knowledge of key principles from course materials

d. a growing self-knowledge and agency with one's own issues/needs/patterns

e. evidence of conversations with professional colleagues

f. theological reflection and integration

Final Essay Due:

25 marks

Final essay is due in course assignment drop box by Monday, December 9, 2024 at 5 p.m. EST

“The seeds of commitment and the seeds of burnout are the same seeds.” - Robert Wicks

MS 5P1190 DPT Syllabus Supplement:

DPT students who wish to take this course for five unit credit must contact the professor to obtain the DPT syllabus supplement. This supplement involves additional reading requirements and assignments appropriate to the doctoral level study of the subject. Contact: zyllap@mcmaster.ca requesting the syllabus supplement.

Late Papers: Late papers will be docked 1% each late day including weekends. (Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances such as extended illness, etc.)

Spacing: All assignments are to be double-spaced.

Contacting the Instructor: Dr. Phil C. Zylla

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College Style for Submission of Written Work:

All written work—unless informed otherwise by the professor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you “tidy up” your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Bookstore

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.