

McMaster Divinity College Self Care in Ministry

Professional Degree Course Code: MS2XS3

Specializations: PC (Pastoral Care and Counseling) and PS (Pastoral Studies)

Winter Term 2013

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Online Hybrid - weekly
beginning January 6th

Class Sessions:

February 18 and 19, 2014

Course Description:

Whether in a counseling setting or in a church ministry, the challenges and obligations of Christian helping professions are demanding and exacting. Ministering persons experience daunting challenges in the use of emotional resources, setting boundaries for ministry, and establishing 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 ministry 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 counseling, pastoral 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 a hybrid course with two full days of face to face instruction. The course modules occur weekly and can be accessed by registered students through McMaster University's *Avenue to Learn*. Sign up early and purchase the textbooks as soon as possible. For information on Avenue to Learn:

http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/help/manuals/A_Quick_Guide_to_Avenue.pdf

Pre-Class Modules

WEEK OF:

January 6th Self-Care and Self-Awareness

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.

January 13th Stress Management for Ministry

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 on the material identified in the module for discussion by Wednesday, January 15th at 5 p.m. EST.

January 20th 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 in 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.

Book Review –

10 marks

Read: Dykstra Part I Classical Images of Care

Post a three page summary of the lessons for self-care that you have gleaned from these images by Wednesday, January 22 at 5 p.m. EST.

January 27th 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.

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 Wednesday, January 29th at 5 p.m. EST.

February 3rd 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 p. 37, "Clinicians Vulnerability Profile Questionnaire".

Read: Wicks, *The Resilient Clinician* Introduction and Chapter 1

Post responses to the readings in the threaded online discussion by Wednesday, February 5th.

February 10th Self-Care Plan – Part I

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 on pp. 50-54
- b. response to time management issues on pp. 59-61

c. circle of friends types, pp. 68-75

d. *Self Care Protocol Questionnaire*, pp. 76-79

Your plan should include responses to the key issues identified.

Project length: 5-7 pages 15 marks

[n.b. Prepare to share parts of this material when we come together in class.]

Class Sessions February 18 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

n.b. The face to face class sessions are a crucial component of this course. Please be on time and plan to stay through to the end of our two days together.

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 9:00 a.m. Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Stress in Ministry
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee break
- 10:45 a.m. Self-Knowledge: Family of Origin, Spiritual Type, Strengths Inventory, Stress Indicators, Managing Boundaries in Ministry
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Conflict and Self-Care
- 2:45 p.m. Coffee break
- 3:15 p.m. Overcoming the Depleted Self

Class Sessions February 19th 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- 8:30 a.m. Spiritual Exercises
- 9:00 a.m. Spirituality of Self-Care
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee Break
- 10:30 a.m. Personal Self-Care Plan – Group Work
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Coping with Personal Crises in Ministry
- 2:45 p.m. Coffee break
- 3:15 p.m. A Road Map for Sustainable Ministry

Post-Class Modules

Week of : February 24th, 2014

The Depleted Self and Ministry

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 and chapter 7 of Donald Capps' book, *The Depleted Self*. Follow the module instructions to complete a one page reflection on this theme and post on course drop box by Thursday, February 27th at 5 p.m. EST. Add your comments, reflections, and ideas to the course discussion thread for this module.

Read: The Book of Jonah

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

Week of: March 3rd, 2014**Professional Interview – Lessons on Self-Care in Ministry**

Use the self-care protocol you developed before and 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? Turn in to course drop box by Monday, March 10th by 5 p.m. EST

10 marks**Week of: March 10, 2014****Images of Ministry – Part III****Book Review – Part III****10 marks****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?

Post a three page summary of the lessons for self-care that you have gleaned from these images by Thursday, March 13th, 5 p.m. EST to the course drop box.

Week of: March 17th, 2014**Literature Review****20 marks**

From the course bibliography 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 Friday, March 28th, 2014 at 5 p.m. EST.

Week of: March 24

Update your self care plan for the next five years as you anticipate the path of your professional career.

Based on the research and reading you have done in the course, update your self-care plan to a five-year plan. This assignment is purely for your own benefit and will not be graded. Feel free to adapt it in whatever way is useful for your own vocational ministry. ****If desired, book a Skype/Google/Facebook conversation** with Dr. Zylla to review your self-care plan and to discuss final essay.**

Weeks of: March 31, and April 7th**Final Essay - Choose one of the following essay topics:**

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)

- demonstrated knowledge of course textbooks
- evidence of graduate level research
- demonstration of a working knowledge of key principles from course materials
- a growing self-knowledge and agency with one's own issues/needs/patterns
- evidence of conversations with professional colleagues
- theological reflection and integration

Week of April 14th Exam Week**Final Essay Due:****25 marks**

Final essay is due in course drop box by Monday, April 14, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. EST.

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

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.

Statement on Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g. failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one’s academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php.

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Contacting the Instructor:

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