Bangor Theological Seminary – Spring, 2013
PTP/SFD 1645 Psychosocial and Spiritual Dimensions of Health and Sickness
(Elective class for the M.S. in Pastoral Counseling at Husson University)
A 3-credit course offered over 4 Weekends (Friday evenings 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) at the Portland Campus of BTS, 159 State Street, Portland, Maine in the State Street Congregational Church (UCC)

4 Weekends: February 1-2, March 1-2, April 19-20, and May 10-11

Instructor: Professor Ron Baard, Bangor Theological Seminary
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Office Hours by Appointment

Introduction: This course introduces students to spiritual, theological and psychological perspectives on health and sickness. Ministers, chaplains, pastoral counselors and health care professionals (including parish nurses) play a critical role in the life of our entire society. A theological and spiritual vision of health and sickness can greatly enrich their professional practices, personal sense of vocation, and capacity to provide leadership, guidance and support in diverse family, spiritual/religious, and community settings. The vision provided by this course will of necessity be interdisciplinary, incorporating awareness of medical knowledge, skills of counseling and care, and psychological, spiritual and religious insights. Topics will include definitions of health and sickness, the concept of Sabbath, and both biblical and family systems theory perspectives. The class will explore all these themes from a variety of perspectives, making use of a respectful and collaborative process that will emphasize the expertise and the developing voices of all the students.

Course Outcomes: Students will be able to
1. Articulate definitions of “health” and “sickness” in a theologically informed manner.
2. Understand and describe the importance of sabbath in the spiritual life, and identify ways in which sabbath is integrated into their own lives, both personally and professionally.
3. Present their family of origin “genogram” and describe Murray Bowen’s concept of “differentiation” and its importance for psychosocial and spiritual health.
4. Understand theodicy as a theological and spiritual concern; discuss it from a biblical perspective, and share how all this relates to a variety of professional expressions of work in the health care field.
5. Describe accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) and its relevance for all health care professionals, especially those in the hospital environment.
6. Discuss the relevance of forgiveness for the work of the minister, chaplain, pastoral counselor and health care professional.
7. Share their life journey in a brief written form that adequately integrates many of the themes of this class.
8. Present one verbatim with theological reflection to colleagues in the class.
9. Design and submit a Final Paper or Project (see below for full description)

**BTS M.Div. Program Goals addressed by this course**

Knowledge of:
- The cultural, social, and ethical realities in which the churches live and respond both globally and locally.
- The arts of ministry

Ability to:
- Develop and express mature personal faith, and with sensitivity and skill, teach the traditions of the church, lead worship and preach, and engage in pastoral care.
- Integrate the elements of the Christian tradition in a theology and practice of ministry; act with moral sensitivity and in accord with professional ethics, and advocate for compassion and justice in personal, congregational, and community settings.

Opportunities for:
- Developing one’s own ecclesiastical identity within an ecumenical ethos, identifying one’s strengths and limits, and learning how to engage in ongoing professional development.

**Course Requirements:** *Please note: points will be deducted for required work that is turned in late.*
1. Active engagement in readings, full participation in class discussions (20%)
2. Seven page (double space) integrative essay describing your own life journey. (Due at Weekend II) (20%)
3. One-page outline of your final paper or project for the class. (Due at Weekend III) (10%)
4. Verbatim and Theological Reflection for Class Presentation (Due at Weekend IV) 20%
5. Final Paper or Project – see options and guidelines below. (Due Friday May 17, 2013 at Noon.) 30%

**Options for Final Paper or Project**

*Option #1:* A research paper on any aspect of health care ministry that you wish to pursue at a deeper level. Length: 15-20 pages (double spaced) with proper footnotes or endnotes and bibliography (absolutely no more than 20 pages). Your research should include significant reading beyond the requirements of the course syllabus. Your topic must be approved by the instructor (see course requirement #3 above). It should be defined in such a way that is it is manageable for the time you have to research and write and still remain within the 15-20-page limit.

*Option #2:* Instead of a paper, submit a Final Project expressing key theme(s) of the class which is a creative work of art of some type: Poetry/Painting/Song/ Drama. This work of art must be submitted along with an “artist’s statement” (5-7 pages)
which interprets your creative work to a wider audience e.g. peers in the classroom, and/or other interested persons in the wider BTS community.

All Final Papers or Final Projects (with artist’s statement) are due on or before Friday May 17, 2013 at Noon.

PLAGIARISM: You are reminded that using others’ words or ideas without attribution and citation constitutes plagiarism, an act of intellectual dishonesty that may result in failing the course. See the Student Guide for a complete description of plagiarism.

**Required Readings:** (In order of use across the semester)


**Grading for the Course:**

*Please note: points will be deducted for required work that is turned in late.*

Also note (only for Husson University students) that a grade of Incomplete will be given only in unusual circumstances, e.g., illness, death in the family, or change in job responsibilities. Procedures outlined by Husson must be followed in order to request an Incomplete Contract. Completion of the course requirements does not assure you of an A in the course. The quality of your work will determine the quality of your grade. *No Incompletes will be granted this semester for BTS students for any reason.*

**Class Calendar:**

**Weekend I: February 1-2, 2013**

Friday Evening

*Introduction to the Course*
Opening Prayer by Professor
- Introduction to this Course – Beginning definitions of “health” and “sickness”
- Overview of Syllabus and Course Requirements
- Verbatim Format Outline and Guide (See course requirement #4)
- Sharing of Students Concerns and Interests in the Course
- Building the Classroom Covenant, Sign ups for daily opening prayers

Saturday morning

Theme: “Sabbath in Relationship to Health and Sickness”
(Read for class Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives, pages 123-232)
Opening Prayer __________________
Presentation on the theme of Sabbath and Sabbath practices
- Discussion on theme
- Work in Triads – Sabbath Practices
- Writing and Sharing a Sabbath Covenant

Lunch (12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.)  Note - you are encouraged - though not required - to bring a lunch and share informally each day with your colleagues in the class during this time.

Saturday afternoon

Theme: “Health and Sickness and Forgiveness”
(Read for class When Bad Things Happen to Good People)
Opening Prayer________________
- View DVD The Power of Forgiveness (Martin Doblmeir producer/director Journey Films, 2007)
- Reflections and Discussion: The nature of forgiveness, its relationship to health and sickness, and its relevance for the health care professional.
- Forgiveness exercises: individual and triad groups
- Large group reflections: theological and spiritual
- Forgiving the unforgivable and its relationship to health
- Discussion of “Life Journey Integrative Essay” Assignment (Due at Weekend II)

Weekend II: March 1-2, 2013

Friday evening

Theme: “Health and Sickness – A Systems Perspective”
(Read for class Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor’s Own Family by Richardson)
Opening Prayer___________
-DUE: Life Journey Integrative Essay (see Course Requirement #2)
- Family of Origin Work – Introduction and Genogram Exercise
- Work in Triads: Sharing family of origin journeys; discussion of differentiation from the perspective of family systems theorist Murray Bowen
Saturday morning

Theme: “When Bad Things Happen to Good People/Theodicy Concerns”
(Review for class When Bad Things Happen to Good People by Kushner)
Opening Prayer________________
- Film and Discussion: Wit (directed by Mike Nicols, starring Emma Thompson)
- Systemic, theological and spiritual reflections on the film, including theodicy.

Lunch (12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.)

Saturday afternoon

Theme: “Health and Sickness in Biblical Perspective”
(Read for class Job, plus assigned work in Bible commentaries)
Opening Prayer________________
- Perspectives from the Old Testament – Deuteronomy, Job
- Discussion: Why do bad things happen to good people? (Theodicy).
- Small group discussions of ideas for final papers or projects

Weekend III: April 19-20, 2013

Friday Evening

Theme: “Health and Sickness and the New Testament”
(Read for class - 3 assigned gospel stories from NRSV text, plus Bible commentaries)
Opening Prayer______________
- Due: One-page outline of your final paper or project for the class (see Course Requirement #3).
- New Testament Perspectives: Three gospel stories of healing
- Work in triads – roles plays of gospel stories
- Systemic, theological and spiritual reflections

Saturday Morning

Theme: “Health and Sickness and The Hospital Environment” (Part I)
(Read for class – Professional and Spiritual Pastoral Care – Intro and any 5 articles)
Opening Prayer______________
- Presentations and Discussions
  1) Hospital Chaplaincy as a Profession
  2) The Contemporary Hospital Environment and Health and Sickness
  3) Accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)

Lunch (12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.)

Saturday Afternoon

Theme: “Health and Sickness and The Hospital Environment” (Part II)
(Read for class – Professional and Spiritual Pastoral Care – 5 additional articles)
Opening Prayer______________
- A Case Study for Group Discussion
- Spiritual and Theological Reflections
- Discussion of Methods for Theological Reflection
Weekend IV: May 10-11, 2013

Friday Evening

Theme: “Verbatims: A Window into Your Pastoral Soul” (Part I)

Opening Prayer________________

- **Due: Verbatim and theological reflection (see Course Requirement #4)**

(Read for class Fragile Connections: Memoirs of Mental Illness for Pastoral Care Professionals by Donald Capps.)

Verbatims will be processed in the small group setting in a confidential manner.

Group One: ___________________, ___________________, __________________

Group Two: ___________________, ___________________, __________________

Large Group Discussion of Verbatim Themes

Biblical and theological reflection

Saturday Morning

Theme: “Verbatims: A Window into Your Pastoral Soul” (Part II)

Opening Prayer________________

- **Due: Verbatim and theological reflection (see Course Requirement #4)**

(Read for class Fragile Connections: Memoirs of Mental Illness for Pastoral Care Professionals by Donald Capps.)

Verbatims will be processed in the small group setting in a confidential manner.

Group One: ___________________, ___________________, __________________

Group Two: ___________________, ___________________, __________________

Large Group Discussion of Verbatim Themes

Biblical and theological reflection

Lunch (12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.)

Saturday Afternoon

*Review and Wrap up of the Course*

Opening Prayer________________

-Wrap up: Review and discussion of major themes of the class.

-Tying up “loose ends” including course evaluation, group closure.

Reminder: All final papers and projects are due by Friday May 17, 2013 at Noon.

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**Recommended Readings: (On Library Reserve Shelf)**


*Your Brain Goes to Church: Neuroscience and Congregational Life* by Bob Sitze (The Alban Institute, 2005) ISBN 1-5669-9299-0 $18.00


Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues by Donald Capps (Fortress Press, 1987) ISBN 1-5791-0247-6 $20.00


Note: All retail book prices are taken from Amazon.com