

DRAFT v.2
Subject to change. Full
syllabus available in
Canvas Wednesday,
August 13th.

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Contemporary Issues in Pastoral Ministry

LIM-G845-Y1G0E

Fall 2025

Important! You will be notified by email to your Loyola email address when your course web site is available (normally the week before class begins). Please reply to the instructor's email when you receive it to confirm that you are ready to begin the course.

Course Description

This course examines a vision for a vibrant faith community whose mission is oriented to bringing about the reign of God. The course also addresses a number of challenges and issues that pastoral leaders face today, especially within the diverse forms of ministry found in local faith communities. Participants will explore various topics related to pastoral ministry, including evangelization, team ministry, ministry in a pluralistic church, and a spirituality of pastoral ministry. Course participants will also examine in more depth ministry to a particular population in their home community (e.g., youth ministry, family ministry, ministry to the bereaved, ministry to single young adults, etc.) and strategies for addressing their spiritual needs.

Key Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- relate how evangelization and ongoing conversion flow from the mission of the church and how the spiritual needs of various age groups and cultures shape efforts toward contemporary evangelization and parish spirituality.
- describe how pluralism and differing functional religious identities affect the life of faith communities.
- discuss viable strategies that may be used to address some of the important issues, tensions, and concerns in ministry found in local faith communities today.
- explore the spiritual growth needs of ministers and your own self-care and boundaries in ministerial work.
- identify the ministry needs and issues of a specific population group at your ministry site and suggest ways that a ministerial leader, the population group identified, and the local faith community might respond to those needs.

Required Readings

Please purchase the texts for this class as soon as possible from the bookstore of your choice or from the [Loyola Bookstore](#).

Ganim, Carole, editor. *Shaping Catholic Parishes: Pastoral Leaders in the 21st Century*. Loyola Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0-8294-2646-5 This text is available to read online at the [Internet Archive Library](#) after creating a free account.

Hater, Robert J. *The Parish Guide to the New Evangelization*. Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2013. ISBN-13 978-1-61278-642-1 This text is available to read online at the [Internet Archive Library](#) after creating a free account.

Weddell, Sherry A., editor. *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples*. Our Sunday Visitor, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1-61278-834-0

White, Michael, and Tom Corcoran. *Tools for Rebuilding*. Ave Maria Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1-59471-444-3 This text is available to read online at the [Internet Archive Library](#) after creating a free account.

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Course Schedule (Date and Session/Week)

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 8/18–8/25	Introductions	Complete readings, media, personal introduction
Week 2 8/26–9/1	The Shape of Contemporary Faith Communities	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal
Week 3 9/2–9/8	Parish: Center of Catholic Life and Evangelization	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal
Week 4 9/9–9/15	Toward the Reign of God	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, research
Week 5 9/16–9/22	Emerging Church in the 21st Century	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal

Week 6 9/23–9/29	The Challenge of Becoming a More Synodal Church	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 7 9/30–10/6	Nurturing Christian Identity in a Pluralistic Culture	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal; verbatim and analysis due
Week 8 10/7–10/13	Fall Break	
Week 9 10/14–10/20	The Challenges of Collaboration and Conflict	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal
Week 10 10/21–10/27	The Challenge of Empowering Others for Ministry	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal
Week 11 10/28–11/3	The Challenge of Planning for Today and Tomorrow	Complete readings media, discussion questions, journal
Week 12 11/4–11/10	The Challenge to Grow Spiritually	Complete readings, media, discussion questions, journal
Week 13 11/11–11/17	Working Week	
Week 14 11/18–11/24	Wrapping-Up	Complete readings, media, discussion question; spiritual formation reflection due
Week 15 11/25–12/1	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 16 12/2–12/5	Final Assignment and Course Evaluation	Final Paper due

Dec. 15: Due date for posting grades 11:59 pm CT

Assessment

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussions	40%	90%
2	Spiritual Formation Reflection	10%	10%
2	Mid-term Project	15%	—
3	Final Essay, 12-15 page paper	35%	—

1) Participation in Weekly Sessions (40% of graduate student evaluation; 90% of CEU student evaluation)

Each week of this course includes assignments for reading, audio segments (where applicable), videos, and discussion questions. These are provided in the weekly modules in Canvas. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and watching assigned videos, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions.

This course also offers a combination of the traditional asynchronous online course and synchronous webinars using Zoom. The majority of interaction will take place through threaded discussion, with a number of occasions for live webinars for all students over the course of the semester. Several times throughout the course, you will be invited to enter into a video class discussion in lieu of the written discussion board postings. Note: participation in the whole class video discussions are optional. You may also be asked to participate in one or two virtual small group sessions that you will initiate and assess, which would be part of this participation grading.

Specific details regarding the schedule for posting, length requirements, discussion leaders, and small group meetings will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 14th.

2) Spiritual Formation Reflection (10% of graduate and CEU student evaluation)

Specific details regarding the spiritual formation and reflection assignments will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 15th.

3) Midterm Assignment (15% of graduate student evaluation; not required for CEU students)

Specific details regarding the midterm assignment will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 14th.

4) Reflection Paper (35% of graduate student evaluation; not required for CEU students)

Graduate students will complete a final reflection paper, integrating the course material and the student's ministry experience and research. Follow the guidelines provided in the *LIM Guide to Written Theological Reflection*, which is posted in the Resources » Writing Assistance section of your Canvas course, and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (latest edition) for proper writing and citation style in reflection papers.

In an 10-12 page reflective essay, present your vision of evangelization and faith development for a Christian parish or faith community in light of the readings, media, and supplemental materials of this course and in light of your own ministerial experience and research.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82.9	D+	67-69.9
A-	90-92.9	C+	77-79.9	D	60-66.9
B+	87-89.9	C	73-76.9	F	0-59.9
B	83-86.9	C-	70-72.9		

Overall Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Characteristics of Student Work
A	4.0	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.
A-	3.7	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.
B+	3.3	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.
B	3.0	The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.
B-	2.7	The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C+	2.3	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C	2	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C-	1.7	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.
D+	1.3	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
D	1	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
F	0	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time.

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

Course Policies

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the *Bulletin*. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, accessible education, and more.