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LIM-G886-Y1G0E Syllabus

Pastoral and Educational Praxis

Loyola Institute for Ministry Spring 2027 Online

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Course Dates: January 19 - May 7, 2027

"The deepest struggle for us all is a struggle for communion…. We belong to each other, we belong together. Belonging must become the hermeneutic starting point from which we think the social, political, the individual, the ecclesial and most crucial for this work, the educational."

~Willie James Jennings, After Whiteness: An Education in belonging, p. 10

Course Overview

Pastoral and Educational Praxis is designed to prompt and assist students to look back at what they have learned and accomplished these past few years. It is likewise designed to activate students' imaginations and facilitate their dreams and plans for their ongoing education and practice of ministry.

LIM's capstone course engages participants in a process of critical reflection on your ministry as informed by your coursework and ministry experience, utilizing the model and method that has been practiced throughout your program of study.

As a learning community sharing a common experience, we will "walk through" the reflection process together, identifying and describing our ministry; interpreting our ministry in theological perspective; testing our understanding and practice in light of the perspectives offered in 5

ministry contexts; and finally, discerning next steps and goals.

Each week students will work on one step of the process, draft their understanding/response on Discussion Board, and give and receive feedback in the form of questions and suggestions to one another and with the instructor. Students will revise their drafts in light of this feedback, constructing our "final" paper as we go through the semester.

Course Goals & Objectives

The goal of the course is that participants demonstrate competent utilization of the LIM model and method of reflection in their efforts to serve as informed, professional, and effective ministers and religious educators. We ask that students be mindful of the nature of education in which we have been engaged throughout the program as they undertake the synthesis-praxis process. Our approach is grounded in principles of "adult" education, "professional" education, and "contextual" education. Each of these three characteristics is important to consider as you undertake the synthesis- praxis process.

At the completion of this course, graduate students will have prepared a Pastoral and Educational Praxis Paper and certificate students will have made a presentation giving evidence of an understanding and competence in the following areas:

- articulation of the meaning of practical theology;
- identification and interpretation of their ministry as an expression of practical theology,
- evidence of testing, or critical reflection, and analysis on their understanding and practice of ministry through an examination and responsiveness to the influence and interplay of multiple contexts, and perspectives;
- fully test their initial assumptions about their ministry concerns through various ministerial contexts (personal, sociocultural, institutional, the Christian Tradition as they unfold from the meta-context of Creation);
- ability to identify, integrate and act on instructor and peer feedback, significant learnings, and challenges emerging from engaging the curriculum.

Course outcomes

Participants at the end of this course will:

1. Appreciate, describe, and engage fully with the formative and normative influence of *context* in our lives and ministries;
2. Practice collaboration in soliciting, offering, and integrating feedback with one another
3. Demonstrate a proficient utilization of the LIM reflection process (the Model and Method) as an expression of practical theology and as a methodology for their ongoing practice of ministry;
4. Apply skills and tools of healthy adult communication and self-directed learning;
5. Evidence an integration of the LIM curriculum and ability to reference appropriately and critically specific course content and resources;

6. Recognize the importance of critical reflection (testing assumptions) and contextual analysis in their ongoing ministry practice.

Required Texts

Students should already have these texts in their professional library. If not, please obtain the following texts for our course.

Fleischer, Barbara, et al. *Introduction to Practical Theology*. New Orleans: Loyola Institute for Ministry, 2019 (updated). (*No purchasing required, the course book and individual chapters will be made available weekly through Canvas*).

Keirsey, David, and Marilyn Bates. *Please Understand Me.* Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Books, 1984. ISBN-13: 978-0960695409. **Please be sure to obtain the 1984 edition.** This book is available to read online once you create a free account at the Internet Archive.

Veling, Terry. *Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven.* Orbis, 2005. ISBN: 1570756147 / 9781570756146

Recommended Texts

Cote, Richard G. *Re-visioning Mission: The Catholic Church and Culture in Postmodern America*. Paulist Press, 1996. ISBN: 9780809136452

Cahalan, Kathleen A. *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*. Liturgical Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780814631690 081463169X This text is available from Loyola's Monroe Library in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you can download.

Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization. *Directory for Catechesis*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1-60137-669-5 (*For religious educators teaching in a Catholic context*)

U.S. Catholic Bishops. *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord.* Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2005; Available at: http://www.usccb.org/upload/co-workers- vineyard-lay-ecclesial-ministry-2005.pdf

Additional Texts

I will provide you with other electronic resources on Canvas by way of support for the reflection process however resources should **primarily come from your own texts, research, and experience with the LIM curriculum** as you will draw upon and selectively cite as you test your understanding of ministry.

The praxis paper you develop should reference and cite between **25-30 sources** including but not limited to the required reading in your LIM curriculum (note: the course book for Intro and Praxis is **one** source). Use the most recent MLA style in citing sources. Examples of MLA style may be found in the LIM *Guide to Written Theological Reflection.* Access this Manual of Style under Resources » Writing Assistance (*Note: we update this document regularly, so please use the one from our course rather than an old copy you may have saved).*

Course Requirements and Evaluation	Graduate Students	CEU Students
Discussion board and participation	35%	80%
Group Facilitator	10%	10%
Spiritual Formation Journal	5%	5%
Final Project	50%	N/A
Final Reflection	N/A	5%

Learning Activities

Students will engage in a variety of learning activities in this course intended to enhance the process of teaching and learning throughout the semester.

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Discussion Board (35%)

Participate actively and appropriately in the educational process on Canvas. Weekly assignments will be posted on Canvas. This total is comprised of **35% discussion board posts** (major and minor posts). The deadlines and criteria for posting can be found on *Canvas*

Weekly Assignments (Graduate Students)

Your participation posting weekly assignments and offering feedback to group members represents *35% of your grade for the course plus an additional 10% for facilitating your group discussion for one session*. This underscores the importance of the learning process. You will present a draft of each section of your paper on the weekly discussion board posts and the instructor and classmates will offer you feedback. These posts and subsequent feedback will form the draft of your final Capstone paper.

Weekly points vary by assignment and will be earned by your participation and understanding of each step in the process. One substantive response to each question on the discussion board and at least two responses to the posts of fellow students and your professor are required each week. Any additional assignments, including the annotated bibliography, interview and small group virtual sessions will count towards this grade.

I cannot stress enough the importance of **timely posting** in this course, given the responsibility of the facilitator. If any posts are late (major or minor posts), you risk not only a 50% grade deduction, but missing any feedback your peers may have to offer you

on your writing. In these instances, feedback from your instructor will also be delayed. The deadlines, points, posting criteria and group facilitator guidelines can be found on *Canvas.*

Students will also keep a weekly journal documenting their spiritual formation process

Weekly Assignments (CEU Students)

As in previous courses, if you are working for Continuing Education Units and a certificate of course completion, you are expected to engage in the process of praxis-synthesis required of degree students while not being responsible for submitting a formal paper. After all, you are as much dedicated to your education as your colleagues are and you cannot learn without doing the work. Therefore, CEU students will submit a 200-300 word essay outlining the approach you would take in each session based on the weekly prompt. Students will also give feedback to peers in the form of written discussion. *The 200-300 word post and* quality feedback to peers (minimum of 2 students) comprises 80% of the final grade

Small Group Virtual Class Meetings

In our class, you will be organized into smaller groups to host your own virtual learning sessions. We will do this two times, during the semester to help support your research and inquiry. This is a wonderful way to help build community and contextualize your discussions. Tone and humor seldom come across as we intend with our writing.

You should plan to meet for at least one hour with other members of your group to discuss how you plan to frame your paper, depending on the session or ministry context we are focusing on for that week. This will take the place of your minor posts for the week, you will only need to post your major draft.

CEU Students will also keep a weekly journal documenting their spiritual formation process

Additional Learning Opportunities

All-Class Virtual (Zoom) Synchronous Classes

Several times throughout the course, you will be invited to enter into a virtual class session in lieu of the written discussion board postings. This course offers a combination of the traditional asynchronous online course and synchronous class sessions. Most interaction will take place through threaded discussion, with a number of occasions for live classes for all students over the course of the semester via Zoom. As in all LIM courses, the strength of our program is the intentional learning community and its ongoing invitation to disciplined conversation. Through the online courses you will be part of an intentional learning community that will carry on extended and disciplined conversation by way of the internet. See the calendar below. Dates and times will be selected after students complete the availability survey.

Unlike some courses in LIM, the virtual synchronous classes in our **course will *not* substitute your weekly assignments.** They are intended to help support students as they test their initial assumptions regarding their concerns.



Student Self-Evaluations

At certain times throughout the semester, students will submit with their discussion board drafts a self-evaluation checklist, created by the instructor. There will be weeks when this counts as your grade for your draft, other weeks, this evaluation will be calculated into your grade for the week.



Peer Review

The process of peer review is not only used widely in scholarly writing, but equally as helpful other forms of academic writing. For example, students learn the art of careful feedback and review, critical thinking, and to listen deeply to one another. Students might also catch grammatical or citation mistakes they overlook in their own writing. In some sessions, students will submit their draft to a classmate for peer review. The instructor will model the style and quality of feedback on student discussion posts (drafts) as well as some additional instructions for reviewing another students' work Full instructions for peer-peer grading can be found on Canvas



Discussion Board Group Facilitators (10% of DB grade)

Graduate and CEU students will actively facilitate at least one weekly discussion board posts (depending on class size). On weeks you are not facilitating your group, all students are to participate actively. Appropriately, and in a timely manner in the educational process on Canvas. Weekly assignments and full directions will be posted on Canvas.

Starting with week 2, there will be a different Group Facilitator (leader) assigned each week. This means fully respond to each student's major post showing evidence of healthy adult communication skills and concrete feedback (see the facilitators guide and instructions on Canvas). If you cannot post by the deadline or serve as the group facilitator one week, you must and find someone to switch the weekly responsibilities with you (via email or the Student Lounge) then instruct your group on Canvas and let your instructor know who the new facilitator will be. Facilitating your group is worth 10% of your overall discussion board grade.



Spiritual Formation (5%)

The Spiritual Formation Program for the Loyola Institute for Ministry courses is based on the dynamic and graces of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola. Students will keep a spiritual formation journal throughout this final course as outlined in the Spiritual Formation exercises each week. You will turn this in as a separate document the day after your capstone paper is due.

Final Assignment (50%)

Graduate Students: Preparation and submission of a **30-40 page paper** using the LIM model and method of reflection in relation to a ministerial concern. Your paper will require **25-30 sources**. This represents *50% of your grade for the course*. **Due Monday, May 3 @ 11:59 PM CT.**

CEU Students Final Reflection (5%): Students who are working for Continuing Education Units and a certificate of course completion, are not responsible for submitting a formal paper Rather, CEU students will record a 4-5-minute video presentation via FlipGrid identifying key insights from the reflection process and how they plan to move forward with their concern. **Due Monday, May 3 @ 11:59 PM CT.**

Policy on late work

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.

Discussion Board

In this online course, your presence is determined by your active participation in the weekly threaded discussions. Lack of participation in these is considered an absence. **Two or more weeks of absence on discussion board results in a failing grade in this course**. If you foresee a hindrance that would have an impact on your full weekly participation, please contact your instructor ahead of time. Excused absences with plans to make up missed work do not count toward a failing grade.
Late posts receive, at most, half-credit. If there are extenuating circumstances regarding your weekly posting, you must request an extension from the professor at least three days in advance of posting.

Spiritual Formation

Journals received after the due-date receive half-credit.

Final Paper

Papers submitted past the deadline lose half a letter grade for each day it is late. For example, if the paper is due on Monday, and you submit it on Wednesday, the highest possible score would be a B^+.

Graduate Research Symposium: TBD

All Loyola graduate students are invited to present their research to the Loyola community either remotely or in person. Students create a poster or video presentation sharing their research and methodology and typically display them in the Monroe library, or they host a zoom session to discuss their research. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your research and ministries, enhance your professional presentation skills, and network with other graduate students on campus, and even online. See Dr. Lamont for more information on this event.

Grading Scale

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.

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		

Policy for Requesting Incomplete. 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.

Weekly Schedule

Our course runs from Tuesday to Tuesday

Weekly Session	Topic	Additional Activities[1]
Week 1, January 18–25	Introductions and Theology of Ministry or RE 1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday	Complete Student Inventory Form and Surveys
Week 2, January 26 – February 1	Method of Reflection and Concerns	**Optional Zoom Class**
Week 3, February 2 – February 8	Concern	**Small Group Virtual Session**
Week 4, February 9 – 15	Mardi Gras, No class	
Week 5, February 16 – 22	Initial Understanding	**Optional Zoom Class**
Week 6, February 23 – March 1	Personal Ministry Context	**Optional Zoom Class**
Week 7, March 2 – 8	Sociocultural Ministry Context	
Week 8, March 9 – 15	Research and Revision Week	Students should use this week to conduct and/or evaluate listening sessions, engage in library research, speak with wise practitioners, and revise drafts.
Week 9, March 16 – 22	Institutional Ministry Context	Interview summary report due
Week 10, March 23 – 29	Holy Week/Easter Break, No class	
Week 11, March 30 – April 5	Context of the Christian Tradition	**Small Group Virtual Session**
Week 12, April 6 – 12	Meta-Context of Creation	**Optional Zoom Class**
Week 13, April 13 – 19	Deciding: Next Steps	
Week 14: April 20 – 26	Revising and Completing the Capstone Paper	**Optional** Small Group Virtual Session
Week 15, April 27 – May 3	Submitting Final Assignments	
Week 16, May 4 – May 7	Submitting Final Assignments, Evaluations	Please complete Course and End of Program Evaluations
Final Paper Due	**Monday, May 3, 11:59 PM CT**	Submit through Canvas
Spiritual Formation Journal Due	**Tuesday, May 4, 11:59 PM CT**	Submit through Canvas
Final Grades Due	**May 18, 11:59 PM CT**	Posted on LORA

[1] Additional activities are in addition to the weekly spiritual formation, discussion board posting and other assignments on Canvas.

University Policies

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