



CM599 Master of Divinity Capstone

Short Syllabus

Instructor: To be arranged by the Dean, based on your primary area of interest and instructor availability.

The director of the E-folio will be Lance McKinnon. He can be reached at the GCS office.

Contact:

To send a message to the instructor, please communicate through the website: go to the course page, right column, in the rectangle labelled “Course contacts.”

GCS Mission Statement

“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.” We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

Course Description

This capstone course integrates previous academic work with ministry experience to reflect and evaluate the student’s educational progress towards biblically and theologically informed ministry applied in the student’s cultural context. Reflection will also contribute to an evaluation of the student’s call and giftedness for ministry in Jesus Christ. Throughout the course students will reflect on personal goals achieved in the degree program and will analyze their growth in ministry. Students will define and analyze the cultural contexts in which they carry out both personal and professional ministry.

Prerequisite

A thesis must have been completed (CM519, TH519, or TM501 option B). CM599 must be taken in the final semester. It may be taken concurrently with one other course maximum.

Required textbooks

Anderson, Ray S. *The Soul of Ministry*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. ISBN: 978-0664257446; Kindle version also OK. Approximate price for new or “very good” used book: \$9.

Please obtain this book before the class begins. To find the lowest prices on this book, you may find it helpful to use www.bookfinder.com.

Recommended textbooks

Purves, Andrew. *The Crucifixion of Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Purves, Andrew. *The Resurrection of Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010.

Student learning outcomes (SLO)

Since this is the capstone for the M.Div. degree, the course learning outcomes are the same as for the M.Div. program as a whole:

1. Students who complete the MDiv requirements will be able to interpret the biblical text, and will be able to describe the biblical text as a historical document and an inspired and authoritative guide for Christian life and ministry. (SLO 1)
 - This objective is verified by the students’ ability to write papers in the introductory hermeneutics course, and is developed and further verified in additional biblical courses.
2. Students will be able to think theologically, to analyze differences between various Christian traditions, and to synthesize central

themes of the nature of God and Christian proclamation of the word of God. (SLO 2)

- This objective is verified through student papers in three required theology courses and additional electives.

3. Students will have a theological foundation for thinking about contemporary social and ethical issues. (SLO 3)

- This objective is developed and verified in several courses, particularly in the course on Theological Ethics.

4. Students will gain a broad perspective on how the Holy Spirit has been working in the church from the first century to the modern era. (SLO 4)

- This objective is attained by two church history courses and verified with papers and exams.

5. Students will grow in spiritual maturity and in leadership skills needed in the church and related ministries. (SLO 5)

- This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.

6. Students will develop pastoral skills such as preaching, counseling, teaching, training, mentoring, and leading in service. (SLO 6)

- This objective is attained and verified by Christian ministry courses.

7. Students will be able to evaluate themselves as unique persons who discern their calling and build strong relationships that draw on and bear witness to the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. (SLO 7)

- This outcome will be verified by CM501 and other ministry courses.

8. Students will see themselves as called by God to serve the church (or church related ministries) in which they continually integrate their personal skills, spiritual gifts, and theological academic training. This will help students see the value of education, leading to a lifelong commitment to continuing education even after they graduate. (SLO 8)
 - This objective is attained and developed throughout the program, but especially in the capstone course.

Requirements and assignments

1. **Compile an electronic portfolio.** Students will compile required artifacts for the purpose of student self-assessment and faculty assessment of student learning outcomes and program outcomes. See instructions under “Electronic portfolio assignment.” A complete list of E-folio artifacts can be found in appendix A.
2. **Review of *The Soul of Ministry*.** Write an 8-10 page paper summarizing the content of the six chapters and use the following questions to reflect on the depth of this text:
 1. How does Ray S. Anderson define pastoral work?
 2. How should that resonate in time of trauma and chaos?
 3. Explain your “basis of ministry.” How has your ministry changed internally and in external dynamics through your academic journey in GCS?
3. **Write four short Academic Discipline papers.** Write a 3-5 page paper evaluating academic integration of learning for each academic discipline: biblical studies, theology, church history, and ministry. Use the corresponding student learning outcomes (SLO) for each paper: biblical studies (SLO 1); theological studies (SLO 2 and 3); church history (SLO 4); and ministry (SLO 5 and 6). Four Academic Discipline papers in all.
4. **Conduct two interviews.** Interview two people who have graduated from a seminary (excluding GCS) within the last five years as to the process and value of their experience. Evaluate your own GCS experience relative to

the insight gained in these two interviews.

5. **Write an Integration Paper.** Write a 6-8 page paper, integrating your reflection on the four academic disciplines with application in your ministry in Jesus Christ. Use student learning outcomes 7 and 8 to evaluate the implications of the four disciplines in your practice of ministry.

Electronic portfolio assessment

These student papers and projects will help students develop self-assessment skills as well to provide the corpus for faculty assessment of student learning outcomes and program outcomes. This assessment of achievement is to be accomplished by an electronic portfolio (e-folio). This E-folio is required for every M.Div. student; it meets the following purposes:

- a) Serve as developmental learning tool for personal education goals and achievements.
- b) Serve as the storage place for learning documents that demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes.
- c) Provide opportunity to demonstrate integration of service activities with academic and field education.
- d) Provide the basis for assessing program outcomes and institutional goals.
- e) Provide a resource composite for use in employment and career placement.
- f) Serve as a foundation for further developing practical skills in ministry, research, or teaching after completing the degree.

Required Documents for the Portfolio		
	Course	Artifact
1	BI501 Hermeneutics	2-part exegetical paper
2	BI522 Gospels	Multi-part exegetical paper
3	BI524 Epistles of Paul	2-part exegetical paper
4		Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #1
5	Choose between TH501, TH502, TH503 or TH505	One research paper/sermon script from chosen theology course
6	TH515 Seminar in Theological Ethics	Final Ethics Paper

7		Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #2
8	Choose between CH501 or CH502 Church History	One book review from one of the church history courses
9		Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #3
10	CM501 Pastoral Leadership	2-part personal assessment project
11	CM503 Christian Counseling	Final Research Paper
12	CM504 Practice of Ministry	Final Integrative Paper
13	CM511 Homiletics	Two Audio Sermons
14		Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #4
15	FE501 Field Education	Final reflection paper
	FE502 Field Education	Final reflection paper
	FE503 Field Education	Final reflection paper
16		Summative Exam
17	Thesis TM501	Thesis Paper
18	CM599 M.Div. Capstone Course	Integration Paper

If you did not take the GCS course that is required for the portfolio (e.g., you took a similar course at another school and had transfer credit), and did not have a similar final paper, contact our portfolio coordinator, lance.mckinnon@gcs.edu.

Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Assignment	Hours *	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus	2	
Create E-folio	45	25
Interviews and analysis	40	15
Reading textbook	15	
Writing textbook review	5	10
Writing evaluation papers (4)	20	30
Writing analysis and integration paper	10	20
Total – (about 12 hours each week)	137	100

* Some students will complete the course requirements in less total time, and some will take more time. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa.

Weekly topics and assignments (tentative)

Week	Reading Assignment in <i>Soul of Ministry</i>	Assignments to be done during the week
Week 1	chapter 1 – Ministry as Theological Task	Begin compiling E-folio
Week 2	chapter 2 – God’s Ministry in Covenant and Creation	Write Academic Discipline Paper #1: biblical authority
Week 3	chapter 3 – Jesus’ Ministry to the Father on Behalf of the World	Write Academic Discipline Paper #2: theological foundations
Week 4	chapter 4 – The Spirit’s Ministry through Jesus for the Sake of the Church	Write Academic Discipline Paper #3: church history
Week 5	chapter 5 – The Church’s Ministry to the World on Behalf of Jesus	Write Academic Discipline Paper #4: Ministry
Week 6	chapter 6 – Leading God’s People in the Ministry of Christ	Complete Interview/Report #1
Week 7		Complete Interview/Report #2
Week 8		Reflection paper on <i>Soul of Ministry</i>
Week 9		Integration Paper: evaluate integration of the four academic disciplines with application to your ministry

Week 10		Complete work on e-folio
Week 11		Complete work on e-folio
Week 12		Complete work on e-folio

Appendix A: Required Artifacts for Portfolio:

1. Hermeneutics: Final Two-Part Research Paper

BI501 Hermeneutics

Assignment:

One 10-page paper, done in two parts.

Part 1

- a. Choose one of the passages from the book of Hebrews.
- b. Describe the original setting of the readers
- c. Identify the main point being made in that passage for the original readers, and why that point was needed in the original setting.
- d. Outline the passage with 2–5 subpoints, with attention to the grammar of the passage
- e. Describe the literary setting.

Part 2

- a. Verse by verse, explain how the words of the passage help support the point being made in the passage.
- b. Comment on how our own context affects the way we read this passage.
- c. Select one point from the passage that is appropriate in our own context, and outline a message designed to make that point to a contemporary audience.

2. The Gospels: Three-Part Research Paper

BI522 Gospels

Assignment:

Students may choose one of three passages for the focus of these papers.

- a. First, a 5-page paper on the historical and literary setting of the passage. Students must consult and interact with at least two modern scholarly books, not counting the assigned textbooks for this class.
- b. Second, a 5-page paper analyzing the key words and original message of the passage. Students must consult and interact with at least three modern scholarly books, not counting the assigned textbooks for this class, including at least two modern, major commentaries.

c. Last, a 4-page paper discussing how the passage is relevant in our own context, either in theology and/or in ethics.

3. Epistles of Paul Two-Part Exegetical Paper

BI524 Epistles of Paul

Assignment:

Write a 12-page paper on a passage in one of Paul's letters. This paper will be written in two parts. The first part discusses historical and literary details. The second part discusses the original meaning and contemporary significance of the passage. Students must consult and interact with at least one commentary that is more than 100 years old, and at least three modern scholarly books, including at least two modern, major commentaries.

4. Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #1

CM599 M.Div. Capstone Course

Assignment:

Write a 3-5 page paper evaluating your learning in the academic discipline of biblical studies. Use student learning outcome 1 (SLO 1) for developing this reflection paper. These outcomes are represented on the grading rubric for paper #1.

5. One research paper/sermon script from one of the following courses:

TH501 Nature of God and Jesus Christ

TH502 Nature of Humans and Salvation

TH503 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology

TH505 Doctrine of the Trinity

6. Final Ethics Paper

TH515 Seminar in Theological Ethics

Description of this assignment from the current course syllabus:

a) The papers will present facts and organize those facts in such a way as to defend or critique a particular ethical argument from an incarnational and trinitarian theological perspective that is biblical, Christ-centered and historically orthodox.

b) The paper would be either be a thorough analysis of a given Christian or secular

ethical argument or can be the student's own position paper making a theological ethical argument for a particular ethical position.

c) This paper will be revised after the discussion and submitted as a final paper.

7. Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #2

CM599 M.Div. Capstone Course

Assignment:

Write a 3-5 page paper evaluating your learning in the academic discipline of theological studies. Use student learning outcomes 2 and 3 (SLO 2 and 3) for developing this reflection paper. These outcomes are represented on the grading rubric for paper #2.

8. Church history book report

CH501 Church History: The First Millennium or

CH502 Church History: The Second Millennium

Assignment:

Five-page book report of student's choice from a required text or selected book readings. The book report should be a formal, footnoted, well-researched piece of scholarship. In writing the book report consider these questions:

1. What was the author's main point?
2. How did he/she set out to prove it?
3. What evidence was advanced to make the case?
4. Did he/she fail or succeed?
5. How does this work contribute to Church History?
6. Your reactions, opinions.

9. Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #3

CM599 M.Div. Capstone Course

Assignment:

Write a 3-5 page paper evaluating your learning in the academic discipline of church history. Use student learning outcome 4 (SLO 4) for developing this reflection paper. These outcomes are represented on the grading rubric for paper #3.

10. Personal Assessment Project: Part 1 & 2

CM501 Pastoral Leadership

Assignment:

Pastoral Plan, Part One: practical operations of ministry in foundation for leadership, principles of servant-leadership, and equipping followers.

Pastoral Plan: Part Two: Organizational structure

11. Counseling Final Research Paper

CM503 Christian Counseling

Assignment:

15-page final research paper that addresses the material presented in the course, demonstrating critical thinking grounded in an incarnational Trinitarian worldview.

12. Practice of Ministry Final Paper

CM504 Practice of Ministry

Assignment:

Ten-to-12-page final integrative paper that addresses material presented in the course, demonstrating critical thinking grounded in an Incarnational Trinitarian worldview.

13. Audio or Video Sermons

CM511 Homiletics

Assignment:

One sermon from the Old Testament and one audio sermon from either the Gospels or Epistles.

14. Academic Discipline Reflection Paper #4

CM599 M.Div. Capstone Course

Assignment:

Write a 3-5 page paper evaluating your learning in the academic discipline of ministry studies. Use student learning outcomes 5 and 6 (SLO 5 and 6) for developing this reflection paper. These outcomes are represented on the grading rubric for paper #4.

15. Final Reflection Paper from each semester of Field Education

FE 501

Assignment:

Final Reflection Paper

FE 502

Assignment:

Final Reflection Paper

FE 503

Assignment:

Final Reflection Paper

16. Summative Exam

17. Thesis

CM519, TH519, or TM501 option B

18. Integration Paper

CM599 M.Div Capstone Course

Assignment:

Write a 6-8 page paper, integrating your reflection on the four academic disciplines with application in your ministry in Jesus Christ. Use student learning outcomes 7 and 8 (SLO 7 and 8) to evaluate the implications of the four disciplines in your practice of ministry. Refer to the grading rubric for integration paper.