



Biblical & Theological Foundations of Spiritual Care

CHP 510 OL

The mission of MB Seminary is to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Instructor: Dr. Tiffany Sawatzky

Email: sawatzky.tiffany@gmail.com

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: none

Course Term: October 12 – December 12, 2026

Course Instruction

This course begins with an Introductory Online Session on October 13 at 4:00p.m. Pacific Time. This online session will be facilitated by Dr. Gloria Woodland and Dr. Tiffany Sawatzky. All lessons and course materials are delivered online through the Populi Learning Management System. The course duration is 9 weeks, from October 12 – December 12, 2026.

Course Description

This foundational course recognizes that the practice of contemporary chaplaincy has been enriched by lessons from the human & behavioral sciences, while ensuring that the pastoral practice of chaplaincy is rooted in the foundational disciplines of biblical and theological studies. Students will be challenged to consider how pastoral practice is responsibly informed by biblical, theological and traditional perspectives. Concepts of hope, community and compassion will be examined. The ministry of the professional chaplain / spiritual health practitioner occurs in pluralistic society, and a course emphasis will be on how to carry Christian imperatives in a public ministry context.

Course Objectives

This course's theme and content are consistent with, and taught through the lens of, the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Know the biblical, theological and traditional perspectives that are foundational to spiritual care.
- Express your biblical and theological understanding of the 'Missio Dei' and the call to participate through the ministry of spiritual care.
- Appreciate and understand the possible paradigms of pastoral participation in the lives of others and the contours of pastoral/spiritual care.
- Demonstrate comprehension with the themes of hope, community and compassion and the theological concepts that make them foundational to ministry.
- Have formed a theology of ministry that will be foundational for your ministry in a contemporary society.

The most effective learning occurs as you carefully process information through higher-order thinking skills. Your performance and evaluation in this course will be based on demonstrating your engagement and learning, not simply repeating basic facts. In all that you do in this class, you should use higher-order thinking skills, as described below:

- Comprehension: demonstrates the ability to grasp meaning, explain, and restate ideas,
- Application: demonstrates the ability to use learned material in new situations,
- Analysis: demonstrates the ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between the parts.
- Synthesis: demonstrates the ability to put together the separate ideas to form a new whole, to establish new relationships, and
- Evaluation: demonstrates the ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

Required Texts

Please note that texts should be purchased early and read in advance of the class. Please feel free to use electronic/digital versions of these texts.

- Hopkins, Denise Dombrowski & Michael S. Koppel, *Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices* (2010) Grand Rapids, Michigan; William B Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Stevens, Paul R., *Playing Heaven: Rediscovering Our Purpose As Participants in the Mission of God* (2006) Vancouver, BC. Regent College Publishing
- Dykstra, Robert C. *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* (2005) Atlanta, Georgia: Chalice Press

Recommended: not required reading

- Paget, Naomi K., Janet R, McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain (2006)* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press

Course Schedule & Assignments

Week	Assignments	Due Date	% of Grade	Cumulative %
1 Oct 12 - 17	Post an introduction and greeting for others on the Populi Class site. Continue with course reading Virtually attend the online orientation class on TEAMS. The link will be on the course site. 4:00 p.m. pacific time, Tuesday, October 13	Oct 12 Oct 13		
2 Oct.19 – 24	Online Forum – NOTE: For all online forum posts. You will post your initial response on or before Wednesday, each week, and respond to a minimum of other student posts by Saturday. Please remember there will be a full 1%-point deduction for each day your work is late.	Wed – Oct 21 st initial post Sat – Oct 24 th response to others	3 (2 % for your initial post and 1% for responses)	3
3 Oct 26 - 31	Online Forum Pre-reading Response Paper	Wed – Sat Oct 31st	3 20	6 26
4 Nov 2 - 7	Online Forum	Wed - Sat	3	29
5 Nov 9 – 14	Online Forum	Wed – Sat	3	32
6 Nov 16 - 21	Online Forum	Wed – Sat	9	41
7 Nov 23 - 28	Online Forum	Wed - Sat	3	45
8 Nov 30 – Dec 5	Online Forum Lartey, Chapter 3 - Reflection	Wed – Sat Dec. 5.	3 20	48 68

9 Dec 7 - 12	Online Forum	Wed – Sat	3	70
	Final Paper	Dec 12	30	100

Note: Your participation in all course sessions is required for passing the course.

Assignments and Evaluation

Due to the condensed nature of this course, please ensure you have read the required texts before the conclusion of week one. You will note the pre-reading response is to be submitted early in the course.

➤ Pre-Reading & Response Value: 20% Due: October 31, 2026

After reading each of the texts, compose **one review** encompassing all texts (minimum 8 pages with a maximum of 10 pages) that presents:

- Each Author's purpose in writing the text.
- What each book told you about the ministry of chaplaincy/spiritual/pastoral care.
- How your own theology of spiritual care had been enlarged or challenged by the texts.
- Questions raised by your readings of the texts.
- Points you will incorporate into your pastoral ministry.

Be sure to submit your reading response on or before October 31, 2026.

➤ Online Forum Participation Value: 30% Submissions weekly as listed

Each week you are required to participate in the online forum, where you will have an opportunity to interact with others in the class around key questions, and lecture material. The total value of the forum posts will contribute to 30% of your total grade for the course. Note: In the online forums you will need to post your initial substantive response by Wednesday of each week. Then by the Saturday of each week, you will respond with conversational contributions to at least two other students. You are welcome to enter discussion with more than two, if you would like to. By conversational contributions, I mean simply joining the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said). By substantive responses, I mean responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this should take 200-300 words maximum).

We have a tremendous opportunity to build upon one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. We anticipate that the forums will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to take place, we

must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. When expressing disagreement it should be done in an edifying manner.

Substantive participation may include (among other things):

- Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

What Substantive Participation is NOT:

- Very basic comments such as “I agree” or “I disagree.”
- Restating what someone has said (unless there is a direct purpose in doing so).
- Disrespectfully disagreeing.
- Pat answers that are not thought-provoking. Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others’ thinking:
 - What would happen if... • Other times it may be helpful to... • It is my understanding...what is your experience with this? • You might approach this from... • Is it possible that... • Would you consider... • Maybe... • Possibly... • Sometimes... • I'm wondering if... • Do you think...

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class!

➤ **Lartey, Chapter 3 Reflection** **Value: 20%** **Due: December 8, 2026**

“Chapter 3” is taken from the text *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* written by Emmanuel Y. Lartey. This required reading is posted on the Populi course site. After reading the material provided, please submit a short summary, a minimum of one page for each of Lartey’s methods. Be sure to clearly state your understanding of the method. Then follow your summations with an explanation on how you might use two of the methods in your pastoral ministry and why. Maximum 10 page submission.

➤ **Final Paper** **Value: 30%** **Due: December 12, 2026**

- Personal Theology of Spiritual Care

Write a paper that is a minimum of 13 pages in length (maximum 15 pages) that shows your exploration and construction of your personal theology for ministry as a chaplain or spiritual care provider. Be sure to include a clear biblical and theological frame for

your ministry. Demonstrate with supportive references the theoretical concepts that have been developed for ministry effectiveness.

If you have an image that portrays and supports your ministry theology, be sure to include it. You are welcome to present your theology in a metaphorical construct. Include your answer to the question “How do I understand and participate in God’s mission?” The paper should be written in Turabian using a 12-point font with double spacing. The paper can be submitted on Populi. Marks will be deducted for late submission at 1% (one percent) for each day beyond the due date.

Late Assignment Policy

- There will be a deduction of one percent for each day the assignments are late, including the forum postings. (1% per day)
- Please contact the professor to discuss necessary extensions, as soon as you are aware of the need.
- Students must process an Incomplete Grade Contract with the MBS Registrar if there will be course work outstanding after the course end date. A fee accompanies this request.

Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important to us, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Populi classroom in Week 8.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skillful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision or references and resources not taken fully into account or examples are basic or not completely convincing or barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Important Academic Notes

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire MB Seminary community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at MB Seminary. Instances of academic misconduct are taken seriously at MB Seminary, and appropriate consequences for plagiarism and academic fraud will be applied.

Artificial Intelligence

The inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools is also a form of Academic Misconduct. Generative AI, when properly cited, may support a student's work, but it may not be used to transform it. Therefore,

When students use generative artificial intelligence tools to **research** any course-related work, the generated material must be clearly and correctly indicated and cited using the Chicago/Turabian referencing style for generative AI. Additionally, students must also cite the exact prompts used.

Citation is not required to document the use of simple proofreading. However, generative **AI tools may not be used to translate, paraphrase, or increase the fluency of a student's original work**. Therefore, if the AI tool's results produce material changes to your wording, structure, phrasing, language, or style, you are in contravention of this policy.

Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material or any use of AI paraphrasing tools that alter syntax, originality and/or clarity will be considered a violation of academic integrity and reported as academic fraud.

For specific issues related to your course, students are encouraged to contact their course professors directly.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the [Turabian Citation Quick Guide](#) for information or:

Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal an assignment's grade to the course instructor by stating their reasons for contesting the grade in writing. The deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has received their grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Director of Student Development, briancooper@mbseminary.ca. These must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the grade being posted.

Web Support-Student Portal — <https://mbseminary.populiweb.com>

All students at MB Seminary will receive an MBS-Populi username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application. If you have any difficulty with your password or your login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Church Equipping, keithreed@mbseminary.ca.

Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate class cancellation. You should also check the Populi classroom for updates.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the MB Seminary Director of Student Development (briancooper@mbseminary.ca) of this fact **before the start of a course** so that necessary arrangements can be made to support the student's learning. Medical documentation is required, along with a description of the accommodation the student is seeking. Students are encouraged to have any accommodation granted in place well before the start of their course.