Caring As God's People

DSC 520 WC

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. Gloria Woodland
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Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: none
Course Term: January 25 – March 27, 2027
Online Session: Monday, March 8, 2027 – 6:00p.m.
Intensive: January 28 – 30, 2027 at Willingdon Church

Course Intensive Day 1	Thursday, January 28th	6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Course Intensive Day 2	Friday, January 29th	6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Course Intensive Day 3	Saturday, January 30th	8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Course Instruction

This course begins with participation in an Intensive at Willingdon Church, January 28 -30 2027. The intensives will be followed by three Discussion Groups, meeting in a church-based or virtual discussion group to discuss the questions you addressed in your reflection paper, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. There will be one online session for full class participation on Monday, March 8, 2027, at 6:00p.m.

The course duration is 9 weeks, from January 25 – March 27, 2027.

Course Description

Caring As God's People is a course that will equip you for the practical ministry of caring. Rooted in biblical and theological understanding, we will focus on the development of skills that will help you nurture connections between daily life and the presence of God. You will grasp an understanding of common stressors, and the ministry of connection through care that reveals God is present and active in all of life.

Caring As God's People will equip congregations to care for each other and for those beyond the walls of the church. This course recognizes that God is ultimately the source of all comfort, and that God uses his people to reveal him through compassion-in-action.

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:

- Articulate a biblically integrated, holistic model of caring for others as spiritual care.
- Competently have directed dialogue for spiritual conversation.
- Demonstrate empathic listening and reflection skills essential to good shepherding.
- Identify and reflectively process key issues that influence your pastoral care.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the basic modalities of pastoral care, including knowing when to refer and seek supervision.
- Have a developed confidence in caring ministry for others.

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

- Dombkowski Hopkins, Denise. Michael S. Koppel. *Grounded in the Living Word, The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices* (2010) Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan
  ISBN 978-0-8028-6368-3
- Shepherd, Eleanor. *More Questions Than Answers, Sharing Faith By Listening* (2010) Wipf and Stock Publishers
  ISBN 13:978-1-60899-361-1
- Nouwen, Henri J.M., Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison. *Compassion, A Reflection on the Christian Life* (1983) Image Books, Doubleday ISBN 0-385-18957-5

Schedule of Assignments

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% of Grade	Cumulative
1	January 25	Please post your introduction as directed on the Populi Course Site	-----	------
1	Jan. 28 – 30	Course Intensive (schedule below)		
2	February 11	Reflection Paper 1	8%	8%
3	February 19	Discussion Group1	2	10
4	February 26	Reflection Paper 2	8	18
5	February 27	Discussion Group 2	2	20
	Monday, March 8 6:00 p.m.	Online Session (Zoom) Considering the Nouwen Text	5	25
6	March 6	Reflection Paper 3	8	33
7	March 13	Care Context Assignment – Verbatim & Reflection	25	58
	March 13	Discussion Group 3	2	60
8	March 20	Book Response – Shepherd Text	10	70
9	March 27	Final Paper	30	100
9	March 27	Course Evaluation		

Schedule of Course Intensive

Course Intensive (at Willingdon Church)	
	6:30pm-9:30pm
Thursday, January 28, 2027 Session 1	• Introductions • Being an effective People Helper
Friday, January 29, 2027 Session 2	• G R O W – He asked you! • Pastoral Care as Soul Care • The Four Primary Elements of Pastoral Care
Saturday, January 30, 2027	8:30am-4:30pm
Session 3	• Travelling With Others

	• Spiritual – Religious – Pastoral • Healthy Spirituality / Spiritual Distress
Session 4	• Caring in Reality – FICA • Experiential Learning & Table Talk
	• LUNCH
Session 5	• Phraseology – using the tried and true • Using Prayer & Scripture
Session 6	• Caring in Reality – 4C Conversations • Experiential Learning & Table Talk • John 11
Please note this is a tentative schedule and may be adjusted as needed.	

Note: Attending all in-person and online course sessions is required for passing the course.

Assignments and Evaluation

Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups: There are three sets of Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups, with grading based on two components for each Paper/Group set. During three weeks of the course, you will write a three to maximum four-page reflection paper in response to the instructional content and the required readings. Your reflection paper should answer the questions assigned to each of the three weeks (see below). The week before your reflection paper is due, you will meet in church-based discussion groups to discuss your responses to the questions and explore other related topics. The maximum length for each reflection paper is four pages.

1. **Reflection Papers** (3 reflection papers x 8% = 24% of final grade): The following are the questions you should address in your three reflection papers (there are three questions for each week, so aim for one page per question):

   All Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups will focus on the text *Grounded in the Living Word.*

   - **Reflection Paper 1 - A Hearing-Healing-Heeding Community** (p.17 to 23)
     Give your perspective on the concept of A Hearing-Healing-Heeding Community and include your response to the three questions for reflection listed on page 23.
     1- In what ways do you use the Bible as an answer book?

2- Have you experienced the equivalent of Job's friends in your life? Explain. How did this experience make you feel?
3- Can you think of a time when your mirroring activity brought comfort to someone else or when someone else's mirroring activity comforted you?

- **<u>Reflection Paper 2 - The Verbing of Care</u>**
  Respond to the questions presented on page 95.
  1- What non-verbal clues are you aware of exhibiting when you listen to someone? List them.
  2- Which of these clues might be off-putting to another person? Which of thse might be welcoming?
  3- How does love get 'verbed' (expressed) between generations in your family? In your church?
  4- Where or with whom have your experienced meaningful empathic connection?

- **<u>Reflection Paper 3 - Lament & Liturgy</u>** (p. 120 – 145)
  Based on a reflection of the questions on page 143 describe how do you see lament being used in pastoral care?
  Respond to the questions on page 145.
  1- Do the liturgies of your worship service make room for chaos stories that reflect real experience?
  2- Does your church or faith community use lament in its worship? Why or why not?
  3- Do you think lamenting belongs in worship? Why or why not?

2. **Discussion Groups** (3 discussion groups x 2% = 6% of final grade): For the three Discussion Groups, you will meet in a church-based or virtual discussion group to discuss the questions you addressed in your reflection paper, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. A designated leader from the church will facilitate the church-based discussion groups. Leaders are free to use the group activities as presented in the text. The assessment of participation in discussion groups involves attendance and actual participation in the group sessions (both are worth 50% of the discussion group mark). The discussion group leaders will use the following rubric to assess each group member's participation:

Excellent participation	47-50/50	The group member consistently engaged in the group conversations. The person did an excellent job listening to other group members and consistently added meaningful content to the conversations.
Great participation	43-46/50	The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.

Good participation	40-43/50	The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.
Fair participation	35-39/50	The group member did not often engage in group conversations. The person seemed out of touch with the group conversation and would rarely add relevant content.
Poor participation	<35/50	The group member rarely, if ever, engaged in the group conversations. The person seemed distant and uninterested in the group discussion and even other group members.

3. **Online Session – Considering the Nouwen Text** – Monday, March 8, 2027 – 6:00p.m.
   - Prior to attending this online session, you are to have completed reading Nouwen, Henri J.M., Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison. *Compassion, A Reflection on the Christian Life* (1983).
   - In the online session we will have a brief interactive discussion of the text. Be prepared to participate in the discussion.
   - We also will have time dedicated to respond to any course related you may need discussed.

4. **Care Context Assignment - Verbatim & Reflection**
   - Meet with someone for the purpose of a pastoral care conversation, and (This can be a church, non-church or friend encounter – Please Maintain Confidentiality.)
   - Write a verbatim of the conversation using the directions that follow.

Conversation is the very heart of a pastoral care encounter. It can be defined as addressing the "depth dimension" of life. It could include discussion on issues that touch on: meaning, purpose, grief, loss, loneliness, hope, suffering, stage of life, values, belonging, creativity, relationships, forgiveness, peace, anxiety, shame, fear, God's presence or absence etc.

A verbatim is a close, though not exact representation of your conversation. It designates speakers as well as statements. Please use a format similar to the following.

Background Information – Describe the person you are meeting, their life circumstances, your history with the person and why you are the one meeting with them. State the reason and context for the conversation.

Verbatim of Conversation

Pastoral Care Giver (PCG) 1 - dialogue

Person 1 – dialogue
PCG 2 - dialogue
Person 2 – dialogue

Continuing on as needed…

Assessment

1. What method of engagement did you use? (FICA / 4C's …)
2. What is the client's need? Practical – Spiritual – Emotional
3. What are the client's personal spiritual resources that they can draw on at this time in their life?
4. What will be your next steps with this client?

Theological & Personal Reflection

1. What theological themes/issues can you identify?
2. Do you see God in the situation – where?
3. What psychological themes can you identify?
4. What did you do to affect healing or to sustain, guide, nurture or facilitate reconciliation?
5. How did the person respond to you – personally and to your pastoral care endeavours? Why?
6. What could you have done differently? Why?
7. What might you do in future encounters to further pastoral conversation and an enriched spiritual encounter?

5. Book Response

Following a complete reading of Shepherd, Eleanor. *More Questions Than Answers, Sharing Faith By Listening* (2010) write a book response that shows your personal engagement with the text. Please focus on spiritual accompaniment, discussing how you as a pastoral care giver will engage the elements, uniqueness and challenges of spiritual accompaniment in your ministry to others.

6. Final Paper

Please submit a minimum of 13 pages and a maximum of 15 pages.
Select and research an issue that would be typically encountered by persons in the context of your pastoral care ministry. Write a paper that expresses your understanding of the topic/issue and the role of spiritual/pastoral care ministry (theory & praxis). The topic and perspective you write on should be supported by academic, theological, and scriptural references.

A possible format for the paper:

Overview of the issue/topic (maximum of 2 pages)
Exploration of the following themes: (10 pages)

a) The psychosocial and spiritual concepts and resources that would be valuable for the person involved and/or to you as the pastoral care giver responding to the issue.
b) Theological themes arising in the situation and how the theological teachings of your tradition could help you respond appropriately.
c) Discuss any rituals, customs and practices you might use that could provide support.
d) Reflect on the person of the pastoral care giver in the provision of spiritual/pastoral care in this situation.
e) Describe resources for your personal spirituality that could assist in your response.
f) Discuss any experiences in your life narrative that may help you understand and respond in the situation. . . .

Conclusion (1 page)

Please submit your paper to the instructor using the Populi Course Site.

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.

Academic Notes & Policies

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 are expected to adhere to the principles of sound academic scholarship at MB Seminary. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's words, ideas, or work as one's own without proper acknowledgement, whether intentional or unintentional. This includes copying text without citation, closely paraphrasing a source without attribution, submitting work written by another person (including use of AI tools, per the policy above), and resubmitting one's own previously submitted work without the instructor's permission. Students are expected to cite all sources in Turabian format as outlined below. Suspected plagiarism will be addressed and may result in a reduced or failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or further disciplinary action, depending on the severity and circumstances of the violation.

Artificial Intelligence

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot) to assist with research for assignments in this course, provided that any assistance or content provided or created by the AI tools is appropriately identified as a source and fully cited. This includes citing the exact prompts used. Citation is not needed for simple proofreading; however, AI tools may only be used to support your work, not to produce it. **AI may not be used to rewrite, augment, transform, translate, paraphrase, or increase the fluency of your original work in any way.**

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

Students should consult their instructor if they have any questions about using generative AI tools.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. This is the standard for theological education. Please consult the following manual for instructions:

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

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a grade to the course instructor by submitting written reasons within one week of receiving the grade. Formal course grade appeals go directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Academic Dean (briancooper@mbseminary.ca), or, in the case of Dr. Cooper's courses, to Dr. T. Anderson, Academic Director (tanderson@mbseminary.ca). The result may be a higher, lower, or unchanged grade. This decision is final, and no further appeal is available.

Populi Student Portal — https://mbseminary.populiweb.com

All students at MB Seminary will receive a username and password to the Seminary's Learning Management System, Populi. If you have difficulty with your password or login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Church Relations and Ministry Implementation (keithreed@mbseminary.ca).

Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergencies, every effort will be made to communicate any class cancellations to your church host and contact. Please also refer to your course's classroom page in Populi.

Equity of Access

Students with a learning disability are responsible for informing the seminary and requesting accommodation before the course begins, so that necessary arrangements can be made to support their learning. Accommodation requests will be taken seriously, and every effort will be made to implement them. However, blanket extensions to due dates or other deadlines are not an appropriate request and will not be granted, and accommodations cannot be arranged retroactively once a course is underway.

For further information, please contact Dr. Brian Cooper, Academic Dean (briancooper@mbseminary.ca) or Dr. T. Anderson, Academic Director (tanderson@mbseminary.ca) for assistance.