Course Description

Pre-Requisite Course: Intro to Pastoral Care
This course focuses on developing frames of reference for responding to the unique concerns women present for pastoral care and counseling. It is designed to develop knowledge about particular social and cultural concerns related to women as both care provider and care seeker. Texts will introduce Womanist and Feminist pastoral theologians and practitioners as dialogue partners who in examining the cultural assumptions and practices that impact women’s notions of God and sense of herself in community. Attention will also focus on cultivating students’ own self-awareness of how they experience and respond to these cultural assumptions and practices. The intended outcome of bringing these bodies of knowledge together is to develop a caring response that is ultimately liberating and empowering for women who seek the support of pastoral professionals.

Course Objectives

By the end of the term, students should be able to:

➢ Cultivate cultural sensitivity and pastoral theological reflections that privilege women’s narratives and experiences
➢ Identify paradigms of care at play in student’s personal experience in order to determine how they help and/or hinder empowering pastoral praxis with women
➢ Examine the impact of globally oppressive systems like patriarchy (sexism/male supremacy), racism (white supremacy), classism (economic oppression), and trans/homophobia (heteronormativity) and on spiritual identity and formation

Course Activities

Over the term of the course students will reflect in group conversations and written form on selected readings, and conclude the semester as scholars contributing discourse on a chosen topic of interest.

Required Texts


*Additional required readings for the course will be posted online for download as Pdf files through Moodle.

**Key Terms/Concepts**

**Feminist Pastoral Theology and Care**

Pastoral theologian Emma Justes wrote one of the first essays on women and pastoral care. She boldly declares, “Pastoral counselors who find that they are unable to travel the route of hearing women’s anger, or exploring with women the painful depths of experiences of incest and rape, or enabling women to break free from cultural stereotypes that define their existence, should not be doing pastoral counseling with women.” Good skills in pastoral counseling alone are not sufficient. Caregivers must deal with the impact of a variety of sexist attitudes and expectations, from economic matters of unequal pay in the workforce and the unequal second shift of domestic work, to identity issues of low self-confidence and esteem, conflicting roles of paid work and family, and changing lifestyles, to bodily struggles of bulimia, anorexia, rape, incest, and battering to central religious notions of male headship, female submission, and self-sacrificing love. Secular and pastoral counseling must connect internal psychic dynamics to “pathological” forces in culture that uniquely damage women. Goals then encompass several new components: reevaluation of female gender roles; redefinition and valuing of female sexuality, embodiment, and sensuality; an emphasis on self-worth and on women defining themselves; differentiation between external conditions and internal feelings and reactions; recognition of anger, conflict, pain as a legitimate response; social political action as an integral part of healing’ criticism of women’s tendency to put themselves last; and awareness of abuse of power in relationships.¹

**Womanistcare**

In developing a pastoral theology of WomanistCare, one must examine the traditional images and roles used in describing those giving and receiving care within the context of the church. Traditionally, the images of the pastor as “shepherd” and the parishioners as “flock” are predominant. WomanistCare is a response to this form of pastoral theology that is predominately white, male, linear, and fraternal, and that traditionally lifts up such images of shepherd and served as the primary means by which care is given and received… WomanistCare enables African American women to take their healing into their own hands through the communication of their needs among a supportive network of sisters… WomanistCare encourages African American women to see themselves as

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the subject of the conversation, no longer the object. A line is drawn as the African American woman claims her story and establishes her own boundaries. In WomanistCare, the telling of one’s story and finding comfort and power in that story are essential for healing and transformation.²

Course Requirements
Students are required to read all of the required reading for the week, to participate in reflection with colleagues and participate fully in the online communal dialogue. Written assignments are designed to assess students’ knowledge of the material, ability to critically reflect, and formulate relevant practices of care. All assignments should be submitted online through Moodle, typed in 12pt font, double spaced, and include a cover page. All sources (journal articles, essays, quotes, movies, music, etc.) must be footnoted (not endnotes), and documented in a bibliography (not a works cited page). **Wikipedia will not be accepted as a scholarly source.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Evaluation</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Community/Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2/14 &amp; Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiography of Female Connections</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploratory Summaries</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Begins 3/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Integrative Research Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5/9</td>
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Assignment #1: Building Community (Counts towards class participation grade)
Due: 2/12
Write an intro paragraph that includes:
• Name, brief summary of your ministerial background and previous career work
• Ministry context (church/parachurch, theological education, non-traditional settings)
• Particular issues and questions concerning women that you are interested in exploring in this course
• ***A possible research topic for your final integrative paper***

Assignment #2 – Autobiography of Female Connections (20% of Final Grade)
Due: 2/28
Begin this assignment by first building a connections map of the personal connections and encounters with girls and women who have had a significant impact on you. You may include as many women as you like, however at least three of them should be:

• One girl or woman who is a family member (blood relative/extended family)
• One girl or woman who is not a relative

After completing the connections map, choose the two most significant women on the map to write (2) verbatim accounts (one for each female) of a:

- Decision making moment (when she or you were an influential presence during a decision in either her or your life)
- Conflict (a moment of discord that significantly impacted how you feel/think about females)

Each verbatim should be two single-spaced pages in length, and include a reflection on what it brings to light about your experience of women, issues and questions it raises about women’s lives. During the course of the semester, refer back to the connections map and verbatims to consider if/how they present a particular issue or experience that you would like to research for your final integrative paper.

An example of the connections map and the verbatim account are posted online for review. Submit the verbatim through Moodle.

**Exploratory Summary of the Neuger and Sheppard texts (20% of the Final Grade)**

**Due: Beginning 3/7 - Presenters submit by noon on Wednesday of the assigned week, respondents post by Friday of the same week**

The Neuger and Sheppard texts are read side by side to bring Womanist and feminist voices into conversation with one another. Each week we will engage a chapter from Christie Cozad Neuger’s *Counseling Women: A Narrative Pastoral Approach* and a chapter from Phyllis Sheppard’s *Self, Culture and Others in Womanist Practical Theology*. Students will sign up for their slot. Exploratory summaries should be posted in the weekly group forum and serve as the lead point for the week’s online discussion.

Using 400-500 words, address the following:

- (1) Question the text raises about your connections with women
- (1) Theological issue
- (1) Social/cultural dynamic (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc)
- (1) Personal insight (ah-ha moment)
- (1) Concept, idea, approach that you personally find challenging and worthy of critique

Students who are not presenting an exploratory summary that week will post at least one response (100 word minimum), including (2) questions related to the material presented for discussion.

**Response comments and questions are due on the Friday following the Wednesday presenter’s post.**

**Midterm (20% of Final Grade)**
Due: 3/21
Select two theorists from readings covered during Week 2 & Week 3. Summarize key points in each writer’s article. Additionally, consider how the theory helps you identify and examine some of the experiences in the lives of the women on your connections map. This paper (5-7 double spaced total pages) should demonstrate your understanding of the theory and how it helps or does not help you respond to women’s issues.

Final Integrative Research Paper (25% of Final Grade)
Due: 5/9 by 5pm
Write a 10 page final paper engaging course readings, primary sources, and your own research. You may choose to focus on an issue or theme that comes directly out of your autobiographical connections map and one of the verbatims you wrote, or you may chose something else. The paper should begin with a statement of the particular pastoral care issue related to girls and women that you have researched. The body of the paper should address the areas listed below:

• Social/Cultural Dynamics
  Identify and discuss how paying attention to race, gender, class, age and sexuality matter in the topic you have chosen to research. Be specific and give examples.

• Psychological Processes
  What psychological and emotional processes do you observe at play in the lives of the women in the particular circumstance that you have chosen to research?

• Theological Concerns and Resources
  What spiritual themes/faith challenges do you notice in your research topic, and what resources do women currently use to work through them?

  What resources (scripture, denominational tradition/texts, culture, the arts, fiction, media, relationships, etc;) can you offer to support them?

• Personal Reflection
  Discuss a particular moment during the class and/or in your research process when you felt challenged/conflicted (this is your countertransference). What did your countertransference teach you about yourself?

• Pastoral Practice
  Give a concrete example of the kind of ministry you would like to develop in response to the issues that emerged in your research. Examples may include: book clubs, art exhibits, women’s retreats, social justice ministries, soup kitchens, public policy advocacy, prayer groups, bible study, homeless shelters, women’s circles, men’s fellowships, youth communities, special interest support groups, community education forums, preaching series, liturgical development, rituals of care, and others.
Be sure to state the intent of the ministry, provide examples of activities, identify professional partners who will help you build the structure of your ministry work, discuss how you plan to maintain balance and healthy pastoral boundaries.

**Grades**
Grading will be based on faithful class attendance, sensitive and thoughtful participation, evidence of integration of the readings and written assignments. More than two absences from class will result in a failed grade for the course.

**Scale**
Course grades are determined according to the following formula. Individual assignments are graded numerically and final grades are letter grades. Numerical grades translate into the following letter grades:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 – 95</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>94 – 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 – 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85 – 82</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>81 – 79</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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**What Grades Mean?**
- “A” Work of exceptionally high or superior quality
- “B” Good, not just average or adequate quality
- “C” Adequate, average or passing
- “D” Only meets minimal requirements, but shows potential for growth
- “F” Submitted late, doesn’t meet minimal standards and/or plagiarized work

**Course Policies**

*Late Policy*
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class session on the date indicated on the syllabus. In the case of an emergency, extensions may be available, but only after contacting the professor in advance to discuss possible options. If you do not turn in your assignment when it is due, or by the agreed upon date in the case of an extension, expect to lose at least 1/3 of the total grade for the assignment.

*Accommodations*
Anyone having a documented condition or learning disability that will require an accommodation should let the instructor know the first week of class so that arrangements can be made.

*Plagiarism*

Plagiarism occurs whenever anyone takes credit for someone else’s *words or thoughts*. It can range in severity from inadvertently omitting a citation to printing an entire paper off the Internet. When in doubt, cite. Feel free to discuss assignments with one another. To help avoid plagiarism, however, do not share your papers with anyone else in the class. See section 9, page 33 of the student handbook for the seminary policy on plagiarism.
Course Schedule

SECTION 1: ORIENTATION TO WOMANIST/FEMINIST VOICES AND CONCERNS

• Feb 7  Introductions, Syllabus and Overview of the course
In order to offer care that is relevant and responsive to girls and women, we must first get acquainted with what we mean when we use the words, ideas and images commonly associated with them.

• Feb 14  “Powers, Principalities and Pathological Forces”
• Due: Building Community
Girls and women are impacted daily by social and cultural processes that inform how they see themselves in relation to others. This week’s readings and discussion focus on theoretical lenses and narratives that help practitioners identify intersections of oppression that negatively impact girls and women. Additionally, the readings consider how Womanists and feminists engage intersections of oppression within the disciplines of pastoral theology, care and counseling.

Required Reading
  Emmanuel Y. Lartey, “Liberation as Pastoral Praxis” (posted online)
  Lilian Comas-Diaz, “Ethnocultural transference and countertransference” (posted online)
  Bonnie J. Miller McClemore, “Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology” (PDF on Moodle)
  Carroll A. Watkins Ali, “A Womanist Search for Sources” (PDF on Moodle)
  Bonnie Miller McClemore, “How Sexuality and Relationships Have Revolutionized Pastoral Theology” (PDF on Moodle)
  Monica A. Coleman, “Must I Be a Womanist” (PDF on Moodle)

• Feb 21  “Theoretical Orientation to Care and Counseling”
Required Viewing/Reading
  Article on Self Psychology (posted online)
  Article on Narrative theory (posted online)

SECTION 2: PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS/PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

• Feb 28  “Female Interiority”
• Due: Autobiography of Female Connections
This week’s readings introduce students to two full length texts (one written by an African American Womanist pastoral theologian, one written by White Feminist pastoral theologian) on pastoral care and counseling with women. The first readings in these texts focus on the
theoretical concerns that bring them to the work of writing about response to the gendered, racialized, classist, and sexualized dimensions of women’s identities and experience.

Required Reading
Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 1
Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 1

• Mar 7  “Cultural Context and Theoretical Perspectives”
• Exploratory Summary Presentations Begin Here

This week’s chapter from the Neuger text focuses on identifying and critiquing theologies, and personality/ counseling theories for how they shape practitioners’ understandings and approaches with women. Special emphasis is place in narrative theology and counseling theory. This week’s chapter from the Sheppard text focuses on identifying three areas in Black women’s lives (religion, race and gender) around which she develops the framework for pastoral care and psychoanalytic counseling.

Required Reading
Neuger, Chap. 2
Sheppard, Chap. 2

• Mar 14  “Naming the Sources, Identifying the Silence”

This week’s chapter from the Sheppard text offers a historical overview and critique of Womanist pastoral theological scholarship in order to clarify the contributions and gaps. This week’s chapter from the Neuger text offers a similar overview of feminist contributions, while also constructing an understanding of silence/loss of voice as the central issue in care and counseling with women.

Required Reading
Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 3
Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 3

• Mar 21  Midterm (Take Home Midterm due by 5pm)

• Mar 28  “Intimate Violence: Suffering, Pain, Longing and Love”

This week’s chapter from the Neuger text defines intimate violence while asking questions about the church’s complicity and/or role in response to it. Her central concern is how to help women break their silence and reclaim voice in the context of counseling. This week’s chapter in the Sheppard text examines how Womanist practitioners and scholars have examined these kinds of pains, and in so doing, have offered up a particular psychological perspective on pain and love.

Required Reading
Audre Lourde once declared that “the master’s tools will never dismantle his house.” In this week’s readings, Sheppard examines Black Psychoanalysts who dismantle racial, gendered, and economic privilege in classic personality theory. The Neuger chapter focuses on dismantling oppression by helping women identify, name and gain clarity about the primary problematic narratives that inform girls and women’s sense of themselves, God and others.

Required Reading
- Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 5
- Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 5

This week’s chapter from the Neuger text examines depression as a primarily cultural phenomenon in women’s lives, triggered by gender oppression and traumatic experience. This week’s chapter from the Sheppard text examines Self Psychological theory as a primary lens for understanding the intrapsychic consequences of interpersonal and cultural relationships.

Required Reading
- Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 6
- Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 6

This week’s readings from the Sheppard text focus on Black women’s layered experience of personal and cultural trauma that occur when churches fail to acknowledge their truths and needs. This week’s readings from the Neuger text examines decision-making moments as pivotal experiences in care with women, especially when coming to an authentic voice involves risk the loss of important connections.

Required Reading
- Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 7
- Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 7

This week’s readings from the Neuger text examine the role of sexist and ageist stereotypes in making elder women invisible – even in the eyes of helping professionals. Emphasis is placed on helping elder women make choices that acknowledge and honor the seasons of life their bodies have experienced. This week’s readings from the Sheppard text interrogates both the
noise and the silence the surrounds Black female embodiment, with particular emphasis placed on the social/cultural intersection where sexuality and gender meet in their lives.

Required Reading
Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 8
Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 8

• May 2  “New Traditions in Interpretation and Connection”
   Final Class Session
This week’s readings from the Sheppard text examine the impact of theological language on Black women’s self-image and understanding, with special reference to colorism in the Biblical text. This week’s readings from the Neuger text focus on practical methods of providing community connections for women when they come to voice, gain clarity and make decisions that disavow dominant cultural understandings of women’s roles and agency in family and society.

Required Reading
Christie Cozad Neuger, Chap. 9
Phyllis Y. Sheppard, Chap. 9 & 10

• May 9  Assignment: Final Integrative Paper Due by 5pm.

Bibliography
*Indicates a required text that must be purchased for the class


Coleman, Monica A. “Must I Be a Womanist?” In The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,


Gorsuch, Nancy. *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001


Kyung, Chung Hyun. *Struggle to Be the Sun Again.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993


Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. and Melinda Garrah Sharp. “Are There Limits to


