

PRTH 70970/80970 Special Topics in Practical Theology: The Person as Leader  
(Three Credit Hours)

Fall 2022

Instructor: Barbara J. McClure, Ph.D.

Prerequisites: none

Description of Content:

The church and the world are in great need of participants who are clear on their own mission and calling, and who can lean into their gifts and passion to address the needs of persons, address issues, and lead organizations effectively. This course assumes that organizations are networks of relationships that create cultures, politics and values. Consequently, learning how to lead well requires understanding extant organizational dynamics. It also assumes that learning to lead well requires significant self-awareness and other-awareness. These will be increased in this course.

Students will be provided opportunities to understand themselves better, ways to leverage what they bring for the good of the world, and to imagine how to participate in the life of God in positive, even transformative ways as leaders, no matter their institutional role. To these ends, we will explore participants' personal values and senses of vocation, some of the dynamics of human development and group processes, theories of leadership, and perspectives on organizational change.

Class time will include lecture, discussion of assigned texts, skill-building exercises, journal-keeping, case studies and reflection, creative engagement with the material, and a final paper.

Class Procedures:

Class time will include lecture, discussion of assigned texts, role plays, case studies and reflection, papers.

Requirements:

1. *Attendance:* Consistently on-time attendance is required for this course.
2. *Computer policy:* You cannot fully participate in class and surf the web at the same time. If you choose to have your computer in class to take notes, you must send a copy of your notes at the end of each day to the professor. If you fail to do so, or if your notes do not demonstrate full participation, this will be reflected in your participation grade.

3. *Discussion participation:* Class participation is critical in this course. One cannot learn the arts of personal growth and leadership without engagement and practice. This course is geared toward helping students gain confidence and proficiency at providing growth in a variety of ways and for a variety of contexts. This will be done through the use of exercises and role plays in class. Participation in role plays is required but not graded. Careful preparation of readings, plus consistent, worthwhile participation in class sessions including role plays and discussions is expected. Class participation will be graded on thoughtfulness of questions and comments, evidence of preparation and knowledge base, and general willingness to participate in a community of learners.

The standard grade for average participation is a “B+” (87). Outstanding participation will raise this grade and poor participation will lower it.

### Course Requirements:

Master’s level students:

- a) Keep a journal of notes and reflections for the semester
- b) create a “collage of values and a metaphor of leadership” with reflection.
- c) read two books on a particular leadership issue (e.g. “the challenge of leading volunteers,” “women in leadership,” etc.) Write a 12-15 pp paper integrating this research with key lessons from the class (see description below)

DMin level students:

- a) b) and c) as above, plus
- d) analyze a challenge of leadership you are facing and reflect on what effective leadership might look like *for you* in the context of that particular challenge (parts a-c are equally weighted 20% each. Part d) is worth 40% of your final grade.

Final paper details:

Using your journal entries over the course of the class (including the notes from your readings) write a 12-15 page paper reflecting on your own leadership strengths and challenges. You should include a leadership experience you have had (or are having), and the challenges you face. What has worked and what has not? (b) Define your personal leadership vision. Include your values metaphor (we will discuss this in class). (c) Using material from the course, reflect on ways you might bridge the gap between your vision and your current reality. (d) Analyze an organization of which you have been a member (whether a leader or not). What are some of the dynamics you now see that you did not before and what implications do these have for effective leadership of that organization?

Texts and Other Course Materials:

**Two texts** are required for purchase for this course (they will be read before the first day of class):

Bennis, Robert, *Becoming a Leader* (Basic Books, 2009) \$10 new

Doohan, Leonard, *Spiritual Leadership: The Quest for Integrity* (Paulist Press, 2007) \$19 new

*Other readings will be posted on Brightspace to be read over the semester.*

**A personal values assessment** will be required (a “values assessment”. I may also require a “brain dominance” assessment about learning and thinking preferences). Together they will not exceed \$175 in cost. These will be taken online and paid for by the student, usually by credit card. Participation in these is required but not graded.

Grading Procedures:

*Master’s level students:*

\*Participation: Participation in class discussion and journal of notes and reflections for the week = 30% of total final course grade (Not taking assessments will be a 0% for 5% of the total participation grade).

\* Collage with reflection = 30% of total grade.

\* Final paper: 12-15 pages integrating this research with key lessons from the class (see description below) (40% of total grade)

Doctoral level students:

a) b) and c) as above, plus

d) analyze a challenge of leadership you are currently facing and reflect on what effective leadership might look like *for you* in the context of that particular challenge (parts a-c are equally weighted 20% each. Part d) is worth 40% of your final grade.