SYLLABUS
Div. 5008: Summer Intensive in Field Education (6 credit hours)
Vanderbilt Divinity School
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THE AIMS OF THIS COURSE:
· To develop the capacity to engage in theological reflection upon one's ministry, i.e. to interpret one's experience through the lens of faith/belief/theology (the thinking of ministry).
· To provide opportunity for you to practice new professional responsibilities and to enhance your ability to engage in particular tasks (the doing of ministry).
· To provide opportunities for attention to the self, i.e. to consider how your experiences in ministry are affecting you personally and spiritually (the being of ministry).
· To provide an occasion for integration of our knowing, being, acting, feeling and intuiting.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:
· The experiences you will have at your placement become the "texts" for this course. To earn 6 hours of credit, you must spend at least 40 hours per week for 10 weeks engaged in ministry/service at the placement. Our suggested dates are May 28 - August 3. (If you need to negotiate different dates, please consult Field Education faculty.)
· One of those hours will be a weekly one-hour consultation with your Field Education supervisor, in which you discuss issues, questions, observations, learnings, etc which emerge from your work at the placement. We expect you to have at least 10 weekly conferences over the course of the summer.
  o During one of these sessions (within the first 2-3 weeks), the agenda with the supervisor will be the discussion of the Context Analysis (see Attachment A), in order that both of you might gain a better understanding of the particular dynamics of your placement.
  o During four of these sessions, the agenda with the supervisor will be the consideration of case studies that you have written around events and experiences from your actual work at the placement (see Attachment B). These case studies are due into the Field Education office at a rate of one every other week.
  o During the last supervisory session of the summer, the agenda will be as assessment of the Field Education experience. Instructions regarding content and processes for evaluating the summer will be sent to supervisors and students in July. They are due in the Field Education Office by Friday, August 10.
  o During the remaining sessions with the supervisor, you are to discuss issues, themes and concerns that arise from your ministry at the placement. It is up to you to bring to these meetings matters that are on your mind, or events in ministry that you have experienced. What are you experiencing that calls out for deeper thought and interpretation? Bring those issues to your
meetings with your supervisor. Your supervisor may want you to make a few written notes in preparation for those meetings together.

NOTE: It will be up to you and your supervisor to outline a schedule for your supervisory sessions, within the parameters of the Field Education requirements outlined above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE:
1. 40 hours a week (for 10 weeks) of engagement in ministry (broadly defined) at the placement.
2. A Field Education Learning Contract, completed in the first 3 weeks, which defines goals, expectations and plans at the placement. Learning Contracts are due in the Field Education Office on Friday, June 15).
3. Weekly sessions with your supervisor. (see above)
4. Context Analysis (see Appendix A) in which you describe several aspects of your placement. Due June 15.
5. 4 case studies (See Appendix B) due into the Field Education Office on the following dates:
6. Final evaluation (guidelines will be mailed to you in July) due into the Field Education Office on August 10.

GRADING IN FIELD EDUCATION:

Grades will be awarded: Credit, No Credit, Honors

HONORS
A grade of Honors in Field Education indicates that one has done distinguished work in all areas of the Field Education program. It is not acknowledgment of good work, but is reserved for outstanding work. Distinction should be evident in these areas:
1) Ministry at the placement should be of a caliber that it is a significant contribution to the church or agency.
2) Quality of case studies should consistently demonstrate a capacity to reflect critically on one's work personally, professionally and theologically.

NO CREDIT
The granting of credit will be jeopardized if one or more of these factors are present:
1) Lack of responsible participation and accountability at the placement.
2) Inconsistent contact with Field Education supervisor.
3) Case studies that are sketchy, unreflective, or do not reflect engagement at the placement.

Viki Matson and Trudy Stringer are accountable for assessment and grading. Cases will alternately be read and graded by the two of them. Grades will be determined, of course, with the counsel of supervisors.
APPENDIX A
CONTEXT ANALYSIS OF A FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT

This exercise is designed to help you reflect on the nature and context of your Field Education placement. It is intended to help you dig deeper into the realities, dynamics, nuances, and contradictions of your placement so that you might better understand your role and function within that placement. It is also meant to prompt your own thinking/feeling about what it will be like to work at this placement for the duration of the field education experience.

Some of these questions will be difficult, if not impossible, for you to answer at this early juncture of your experience. You are asked to simply do the best you can with the information that is available to you. Your supervisor (or others on sight) may be able to help you with this information.

You may want to spend one of your supervisory sessions talking about some of these matters with your supervisor. A written copy of your Context Analysis is to be turned into the Field Education office by June 15.

I. WHAT IS THIS PLACEMENT ABOUT?
· What do you perceive as its reason for being in the world?
· What is its stated mission? (How is that communicated?)
· Who is its constituency?
· Describe demographic characteristics of the people served by this placement (distribution by age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, economic class)

II. BRICKS AND MORTAR
· Where is the placement located?
· What do you know about the neighborhood in which it is located?
· What is the physical plant like?
· Is the physical plant an asset or liability? Why?

III. WALKING THE TALK
· What does this placement actually do or provide to meet the needs of its constituency?
· Do you perceive gaps between needs and programs? Where?
· How does this placement define "success"? OR How would you define "success" for this placement?

IV. WHO'S IN CHARGE?
· Who are the most influential or powerful people? What are their positions?
· Does leadership seem to be concentrated in one or a few people, or widely shared?
· What is the most common style of leadership - autocratic, democratic, collegial, other?
· How is leadership chosen?
· How are conflicts addressed and resolved?
V. YOUR ROLE
· What are your major responsibilities at the placement?
· What personal strengths of yours will help you function effectively at this placement?

VI. SOME EARLY HUNCHES
· Describe a concern in this placement around which there seems to be some heightened feeling, energy, or tension on the part of those at the placement.
· Describe an issue, which you believe you will encounter in a significant way in this placement (It may be an issue of pastoral practice, theology, ethics, etc.)
· What worries you about being at this placement?
· What excites you the most about this placement?

FORMAT FOR WRITING A CASE
IN FIELD EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND: Provide enough information to set the event in context with a description of setting, persons, or related events. Is there any prior history that would serve as context? (Previous interactions, decisions, etc. that are pertinent)

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT: Describe what happened and what you did. Report the event in as much detail as possible. You may describe the event in narrative form, verbatim, or a combination of the two. Try not to evaluate or interpret the event at this point, but focus on describing what happened. It takes a certain discipline to "see" and not to judge.

"(t)here is another kind of seeing that involves a letting go. When I see this way I sway transfixed and emptied. The difference between the two ways of seeing is the difference between walking with and without a camera. When I walk with a camera I walk from shot to shot, reading the light on a calibrated meter. When I walk without a camera, my own shutter opens, and the moment's light prints on my own silver gut. When I see this second way I am above all an unscrupulous observer."
-- Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

III. ANALYSIS: As if you are turning light through a prism, consider the event from the following points of view, so that you might add to your consideration of "what is going on here?"
A. Psychological Concerns
Some ways to get at this might be:
* Reflect on your own feelings and emotions that were present during the event
* Give attention to interpersonal dynamics that took place between people
* Share your "hunches" about psychological dynamics present in the situation
B. Sociological Concerns
Some ways to get at this might be:
* Consider any social forces that might be operative in this situation, e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.
* Reflect on ways in which power, authority, institutional politics impacted this event
* Think about ways in which this event allowed you to think critically about your own culture, and perhaps to consider your own social location from a different vantage point

C. Personal Concerns
Some ways to get at this might be:
* Give some attention to what this situation stirred up in you personally (feelings, memories, etc.)
* Reflect on any "aha moments" you had (any new learnings, insights, awarenesses)
* Recall ways in which this situation challenged your "comfort zone"

D. Pastoral or Professional Concerns
Some ways to get at this might be:
* Think about how you would describe your role in this situation, (i.e. priest, prophet, preacher, pastor, counselor, etc.)
* Consider ways in which this situation raises vocational or identity questions for you
* Articulate questions or dilemmas regarding pastoral practice that might be sparked by this situation

IV. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: Now that you have begun to understand this situation from a variety of viewpoints, it is time to turn to the heart of the matter, or theological reflection. Theological reflection is the disciplined process of making connections between our lived experience and:
* our faith/ beliefs
* our evolving understanding of God, Jesus, Spirit, grace, sin/salvation, conversion, prayer, etc
* the religious tradition that we claim (or with which we struggle, or both)

Give this part of your case your best attention. Some ways to get at this might be:
* Reflect on the ways in which this event intersects with your own faith or belief. Are there ways in which a conviction(s) of yours is challenged, stretched, confirmed or enhanced?
* Consider how you would translate this event into theological language, images, or categories
* Articulate the theological questions or dilemmas that are at stake in the event you described. (e.g., does the event raise the theological question of the efficacy of prayer, or perhaps make you wonder if God really does have a preferential
option for the poor?)

* Consult other sources such as holy texts, other thinkers, poets, denominational statements/creeds: how do others approach the question or dilemma you have named?

V. ASSESSMENT OF YOUR PASTORAL PRACTICE: Briefly indicate the ways in which you thought you were effective or ineffective in this situation

VI. FUTURE ACTION: In what ways might this reflection inform future actions in this situation, or in similar situations you might encounter?