

# Flourish Institute of Theology

## Spring 2023-Fall 2023 Course Catalog



### Foundations Courses

We offer seven classes under Foundations. These classes serve as the blueprint for all that follows in our teaching and training is built upon them. Foundations provide an introduction into the interpretation of Scripture, Christian theology, the history of the church, and essential ministry practices. These seven courses are required of all certificate and degree programs. Three of these courses must be completed before taking classes in Integrated Core, Ministry Essentials, or Mentored Ministry areas.

#### **Introduction to Old Testament Exegesis and Interpretation**

This class is an introduction to the content and interpretation of the Old Testament. Students will explore the historical setting and major issues shaping the various parts of the Old Testament, and the context in which they have been written. The class will look at the different genres, from history to law, poetry to prophets exploring how these different writings may be understood and interpreted for faith and ministry today.

**Professor:** Tom Parker

**Area:** Foundations - Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI501

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

*This class is required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

#### **Introduction to New Testament Exegesis and Interpretation**

This class is an introduction to the content of the New Testament and the methods of proper interpretation. The class will explore the differences between the four Gospels, the message and theological content of Acts, Paul's letters and their interpretation, the catholic epistles, and the Revelation of John. The goal is that students would know the content of the New Testament and be introduced to the skills and tools to rightly use the texts for sermon and class.

**Professor:** Jim Davis

**Area:** Foundations - Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI502

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

*This class is required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

#### **Introduction to Theology I**

This class introduces students to the theology of the church by looking at major doctrinal themes and the historical settings and events which influenced them. This first class will begin by looking at the nature of theology, how we know God, and what makes knowledge of God legitimate. We will move from this to study the doctrines of Scripture, God and the Trinity, creation and

providence, and finally, the Fall. With each of these we will look at major thinkers, insights, controversies, and events that shaped these central doctrines of the Christian faith.

**Professor:** Mark Patterson

**Area:** Foundations - Theology and History

**Number:** TH501

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

*Required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

### **Introduction to Theology II**

This class continues the journey begun in Introduction to Theology I. This class will begin with Christology, exploring the person of Christ Jesus. It will move from this to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ and the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of the church and end, appropriately, with looking at the end times and the doctrine of eschatology. Again, we will look at major thinkers and contributors to each of these areas, how these ideas have taken shape and even changed through controversies, new insights, and the historical settings that influenced the questions and answers.

**Professor:** Mark Patterson

**Area:** Foundations - Theology and History

**Number:** TH502

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

*Required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

### **Discipleship and Disciple-Making in the Church**

The most important work of the church is the making and growing of disciples. Jesus commanded his disciples to "go and make disciples of all the peoples...teaching them to keep everything I have commanded you." This class will explore the meaning of discipleship from Scripture, its role and importance in the church, and practical ways to build a disciple-making church.

**Professor:** Jim Singleton

**Area:** Foundations – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP501

**Trimesters Offered:** Summer 2023

*Required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

### **Preaching Principles and Practices**

An essential part of ministry is proclaiming the truths of Scripture, especially the good news of God at work in Christ Jesus. This can come in a variety of forms including a full sermon before a Sunday congregation, special services across the year, adult gatherings, and youth groups. While each of these are very different settings, there are vital skills to proclaiming the scriptures in ways that connect with listeners and help the message be heard. This class introduces students to the essential practices and principles of preaching.

**Professor:** Marnie Crumpler

**Area:** Foundations – Ministry and Leadership

Number: MP502

Trimesters Offered: Spring 2023

*Required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

### **Spiritual Formation for Ministry**

It is a fatal error to believe that ministry success depends upon professional training, skills, and personal gifts. As important as these can be, they will never be able to produce a fruitful effective ministry on their own. A faithful, successful ministry relies first and always upon God's leading and anointing. Without a personal faith that is deep, real, and transformative, ministry becomes religion and leaders dry up or burn out. This class is an introduction to the spiritual disciplines and practices that make up the foundation of faithful, effective ministry.

Professor: Laura Murray (Fall 2022), Tom Pfizenmaier (Fall 2023)

Area: Foundations – Ministry Life and Health

Number: LH501

Trimesters Offered: Fall 2023

*Required for all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks*

## **Integrative Core**

Our Integrative Core courses endeavor to build competencies in biblical knowledge, theology, church history, pastoral care, and leadership through their integration with one another, while addressing current cultural issues. These courses are designed to train pastoral theologians, leaders possessing deep understanding of the Scriptures and theology and how these may be brought to the culture with wisdom, compassion, and care. They are designed to prepare ministry leaders whose decisions and work are biblically and theologically formed and defined.

### **The Kingdom of God and the Christian Citizen**

This course will boldly explore the tensions that rise as the church sits between the often-conflicting values of God's Kingdom and the world's nationalistic and political interests. In this course we will carefully explore the Kingdom of God, seeking to discern the Bible's teaching regarding a Christian's relationship with the political structures and governments of this world. We will analyze our theological tradition for insights as well as church history and the ways Christians have related to the world's political structures in the past. We will then seek to apply these lessons of Scripture, theology, and history to current events, challenges, and questions.

Professors: Mark Patterson, Bobby Griffith, Gregory Wagenfuhr, Dana Allin, Lisa Johnson

Area: Integrative Core

Number: IC601

Trimesters Offered: Spring 2023

*Integrative Core classes are required of all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks. LLP students must take two classes, MA four classes, and MDiv five classes.*

### **The Redemption of Creation: Ecotheology and the Mission of the Church**

This course is about the gospel of Jesus Christ reconciling all creation to himself, but it's also about so much more. Rather than focusing on the latest news-media hype surrounding issues like

fossil fuels and climate change, this course uses lesser known ecological issues like soil depletion to explore the place of human management, technology, and politics within God's story. By re-reading the story of the Bible in light of narratives of immanent human-caused disaster, we will find fresh ways of hearing the good news of Jesus Christ. This course will then turn to the nature and mission of the church to show how the people of God are to reveal the coming redemption of all things. We will discuss high-level vision and strategy, as well as some practical examples of communities working to be reconciled to all creation. In all of this we'll find that the good news of Jesus Christ is far more radical than is often thought—God has a personal rather than categorical relationship with every subatomic particle, and God alone is capable of rulership without simplification.

Professor: Gregory Wagenfuhr

Area: Integrative Core

Number: IC602

Trimester Offered: Summer 2023

*Integrated Core classes are required of all LLP, MA, and MDiv degree tracks. LLP students must take two classes, MA four classes, and MDiv five classes.*

## **Gatherings**

Gatherings are events held in the fall and spring which offer an opportunity to gather in person with professors and other students. During this time, we gather for meals, worship, teaching, and fellowship, exploring together the many elements involved in being a ministry leader. Gatherings will occur over a weekend beginning with dinner on Friday and ending with lunch on Sunday. Each gathering will center upon a theme that looks at an area that is an integral part of both ministry and the spiritual life of those in ministry leadership. Spouses are invited and they will participate in some of these sessions as well as having a session specifically looking at what it is like to be the spouse of a pastor or ministry leader. Evenings will allow times of fellowship, discussion, and open conversations. Gatherings will occur at different locations to make access easier and less expensive. Each theme will be offered twice before moving to the next one.

### ***Gathering Themes:***

God's Word of Grace explores both the truth of God's grace we proclaim to others and what this word of grace means to those in ministry. Only those touched and transformed by God's grace are able to proclaim and exhibit it to others. We will look at the teaching of Scripture and the insights of our Reformed theology to learn what it means to live and do ministry under God's transformative grace.

Number: GT620

Trimesters Offered: Fall 2023

Locations: Austin, TX

## **Ministry Essentials Courses**

Ministry leadership requires a profoundly broad knowledge and a vast number of skills. It is not uncommon for a pastor to transition from teaching a Bible study, to visiting a dying person in the

hospital, to meeting with a person who has theological questions, and then to leading the long-range planning team, all in the same day! The classes under our Ministry Essentials category cover the diverse areas of ministry knowledge, from biblical studies to theology and church history, from children's ministry and youth ministry to pastoral care and leadership. These classes provide a comprehensive approach into the many areas that form the everyday world of doing ministry in the twenty-first century. Students must take at least one class from each of the four areas: Bible and Exegesis; Theology and History; Ministry Skills; Ministry Life and Health. Other Ministry Essentials courses may be taken as electives to fit personal interests and/or the needs of a student's particular ministry setting.

### **Flourishing Church and ECO Polity**

The goal of this course is to give pastors, church leaders, and students a practical and working knowledge of the polity of ECO. We will present the polity in the larger context of the ethos and culture that ECO has been founded upon; we will uncover how it seeks to enhance and build healthy, flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Professor:** Dana Allin

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP551

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

### **Introduction to Pastoral Care**

Introduction to Pastoral Care is a survey of pastoral care including theological underpinnings, the pastor's role, pastoral care issues, and tools. Much of a pastor's time is spent caring for people, so the purpose of this course is to introduce what it means to pastor, while exploring the breadth of pastoral care. We will spend time discovering the distinctiveness of the pastoral role, while building a foundation for the work of pastoral care. In addition, we will briefly explore several common pastoral care topics.

**Professor:** Barbara Brice

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP553

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

### **The Letters of Paul**

The apostle Paul is arguably the most important and influential person in the history of the Christian faith. Second only to Luke in the amount of writings in the New Testament Paul's letters provide the essential shape and content of Christian theology. As a missionary and church planter Paul's work brought the spread of the gospel message from Israel to Asia Minor and into Europe. This class will explore the Letters of Paul looking at their historical setting, theological content and message. We will study what they teach about the person of Jesus, his work of redemption, and the implications for life and ministry.

**Professor:** Jim Davis

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI651

Trimester Offered: Spring 2023

### **Pastor as Leader**

Focusing on the pastor as leader, this class provides a practical framework for a pastor to understand, assess, and develop their own leadership competencies. Students will consider their calling as pastors, the necessity of character formation, and the formal theories that undergird their leadership. Emphasizing a personal faith that always matures and leadership skills that always develop, students will prepare to bring the best of who they are into the churches that they serve. The class will include personal assessments, practical tools, case studies, and healthy practices for effective parish leadership.

**Professors:** Christopher DiVietro, Dana Allin

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP550

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

### **Student Ministry Fundamentals**

This course is designed to explore the theoretical, theological and practical foundations necessary for the creation of effective and consequential church-based ministry to adolescents (ages 12-18). Students will learn how to construct and implement a ministry that has a life-long impact. This course will also look at the history of student ministry, where it is currently and where it is most likely to go in the future.

**Professor:** Mike Flavin

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP554

**Trimesters Offered:** Spring 2023

### **Children's Ministry - A Narrative Discipleship Course**

This course will provide attendees with a solid Biblical understanding of how to help children, from preschool to middle school, retell Biblical stories in an historically chronological order so that the Word takes root in their lives. The goal of effective Christian Education is to bring children to a maturity of faith that is demonstrated in their actions no matter their age. We live what we know. So, let's help children know the Word God gave us so they can do the Word, live the Word, and share the Word.

**Professor:** Mickie O'Donnell

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP555

**Trimesters Offered:** Summer 2023

### **The Church: The People of God on the Mission of God**

The people of God is right at the center of the story of the Bible, from the creation of Adam through to the book of Revelation. This course lays out a biblical theology of the people of God, investigates systematic theological concepts of the church, discusses the purpose and place of the church in its mission, and links all of this to the telos of the church—becoming the image of

God in Christ. This course will also discuss how to think strategically about church institutional forms and roles based on these theological foundations.

**Professor:** Gregory Wagenfuhr

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Theology and History

**Number:** TH552

**Trimester Offered:** Summer 2023

### **The History and Thought of Evangelicalism in America**

This course covers the growth and development of evangelical Christianity in the United States from the Colonial Period to the Present with a special focus on the development of evangelical life and its role in broader American culture. Themes include: gender, race, capitalism, politics, popular culture, and the growth of evangelical Christianity following the Second Great Awakening with special emphasis given to the post-World War II era with the formation of present-day Evangelicalism. Upon completion of this course, students will have a superior grasp of the diverse history of the Church in the US, particularly in the area of politics, pop culture, and race, three issues that permeate current American Evangelical discourse.

**Professor:** Bobby Griffith

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Theology and History

**Number:** TH551

**Trimester Offered:** Summer 2023

### **Leadership in the Local Church**

There are many roles that ministers play – teacher, preacher, equipper, pastor, shepherd, etc. Today a congregation yearns for the role of skilled servant leader in a congregational context. As the North American church leaves the context of Christendom behind and heads into a more missionary encounter with the culture, ministers need to gain experience in leading change. Making changes in congregations is a very complicated venture, requiring many different facets of leadership. In this course, we will examine the elements of leadership in a Christian context from a biblical and historical basis. Particular focus will be upon self-understanding, and what parts of leadership will be natural and which ones will need to be acquired.

**Professor:** Tim Dolan

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP556

**Trimester Offered:** Summer 2023

### **Old Testament Survey**

This class will seek to help students know the Old Testament by reading through it twice and looking at three key themes of people, presence, and place. This class will provide an overview of the contents and message of the entire Old Testament

**Professor:** Mark Patterson

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI551

**Trimester Offered:** Summer 2023

## **Church Planting in a Post-Christian Context**

Church planting is vitally important! It can also be difficult, especially in a culture and time when the church is viewed with suspicion and even disdain. In this class, students will look at the obstacles and difficulties of church planting as well as the tools, tricks, and practices to make it successful. In this class, students will see both how important church planting is and the joy and excitement that comes through this outreach as it enters and changes a skeptical community.

**Professor:** Luke Parker

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP558

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

## **Evangelism in the Local Church**

The course provides a comprehensive and practical introduction to the theology and practice of evangelism, particularly in and through the local church. It is designed to prepare pastors and church leaders in fostering the evangelistic outreach of individuals and of the congregation as a whole. The course focuses on the nature of congregational life and how it impacts the type of outreach and missional texture it promotes. Further, there is attention to the change process associated with moving a congregation into a new direction.

**Professor:** Jim Singleton

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP557

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

## **Galatians**

*Course Description TBD*

**Professor:** Kent Meads

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI652

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

## **Greek I**

*Course Description TBD*

**Professor:** Gregory Wagenfuhr

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis

**Number:** BI550

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

## **Leading Change**

There is no time in which skilled and mature leadership is needed more than in times of change. Leading people into a new, and perhaps very different future can raise all kinds of stresses, fears, and even opposition. This class will teach you how to lead people through change, especially the deep change that requires cultural shifts across the community. This course will focus on adaptive

change and the leadership skills and wisdom needed to lead a congregation through this kind of change. Adaptive change requires leaders to go beyond simply addressing immediate challenges. Adaptive leaders look beyond such details to discern the deeper issues and root causes behind them, with the goal of leading people into a better future. This class teaches the theories and skills of leading a church through the big changes often needed for better spiritual and relational health and mission effectiveness.

**Professor:** Christopher DiVietro, Dana Allin

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP560

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

### **Theological Interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew**

This class will dive deep into the Gospel of Matthew, looking not only at its context and history but to a theological interpretation of its contents. To teach the Bible faithfully one must know both what it says and what it means. The Gospels are not mere biographies of Jesus but rather theological interpretations of Jesus' life describing the saving work of God in him. A theological interpretation of Scripture allows the full depth of its meaning to be seen and proclaimed in class and sermon.

**Professor:** Mark Patterson

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis, Theology and History

**Number:** TH650

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

### **Worship in the Reformed Tradition**

Worship is a vital and essential part of the Christian life. In the Reformed tradition a great deal of prayerful preparation and thought have gone into cultivating and nourishing worship which is both biblical and reformed in its practice while being intentional in its focus, accessible in style, and engaging in its content. This class will look at creating a community of worshippers through developing the essential nature and role of worship. This will include consideration of the essential elements within each service while highlighting the importance of Word and Sacrament. It will also explore a variety of worship styles, ranging from traditional to contemporary. We will also review what we are seeking to achieve when preparing and conducting services for Easter, Advent, baptisms, funerals, weddings and other special services. Each class will equip participants with skills for developing a strong, diverse, and relational community of worshippers.

**Professor:** Richard Gibbons

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Ministry and Leadership

**Number:** MP552

**Trimesters Offered:** Fall 2023

## **Intensive Courses**

Some courses are held in person and are called "intensives". These full credit courses will meet twice during a trimester at a predetermined location. Students will do coursework before and after

these face-to-face gatherings. These courses will not be available online. Dates will be determined prior to the trimester. Locations will be varied in order to accommodate people from around the country.

### **The Seventh Day: The Sabbath in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry**

For many the Sabbath commandment seems to mean little more than being a regular church attendant and “giving God” a little time each week. Many believers might be surprised to learn that the Sabbath is the most often repeated commandment in the Bible. And they might be shocked to learn that the number one reason given in Scripture for God’s anger and judgement is the people’s breaking of the Sabbath. In fact, the Sabbath commandment is the most important one to uphold in the Bible as it touches upon and defines all others. How this is so, what it means for ministry, and how it impacts every aspect of life will be the subject of this class. *As an “intensive” this class will meet once during the trimester at a particular site. Students will do course work before and after these face-to-face gatherings.*

**Professor:** Mark Patterson

**Area:** Ministry Essentials – Theology and History

**Number:** IN580

**Trimesters Offered:** Summer 2023

**Locations:** Houston, TX

## **Mentored Ministry**

The goal of FIT’s Mentored Ministry field education is to apprentice all emerging pastors in churches through life-on-life discipleship and mentoring, after the image of Jesus with his disciples. Students learn ministry alongside experienced practitioners who lead students through real ministry tasks and experiences. Mentors coach students through planning, preparation, and theological reflection and evaluation. Our Field-Education is meant to integrate classroom learning and practical ministry experiences into a unified whole so that ministry leaders work from a very livable theology. This is designed to train, prepare, and equip healthy Pastors and ministry leaders who are ready to lead people, churches, or organizations into flourishing places.

### **Internships and Practicums**

Our Mentored Ministry classes take two basic shapes: Internships and Practicums. Internships look broadly at the life and ministry of the church and will have students participating and learning several areas of ministry. Practicums, on the other hand, are more focused, looking at specific areas—such as youth ministry, adult-ed, worship, pastoral care, etc.—in order to specialize learning and ministry skills. Internships and Practicums requires min. of 10 hours a week of ministry/ministry preparation (140 hours total) with a trained and validated FIT Mentor. These hours include preparation for and participation in Mentored Ministry Labs which run concurrent with Internships and Practicums.

Finding Mentors and Field Education Locations for Internships and Practicums

Students are responsible for finding a mentor and a field education location where their internship or practicum will take place and submitting this to the Mentored Ministry/Field

Education office. Mentors must be willing to complete approximately 5 hours of training before the trimester begins. Mentors must also commit to working with their student(s) 2–3 hours a week for the 14 weeks of the trimester. Mentors and Internships/Practicums must be determined two weeks prior to the start of the trimester. For more information, please contact Lisa Johnson, Director of Mentored Ministry, at [mentoredministry@flourishinstitute.online](mailto:mentoredministry@flourishinstitute.online).

### **Mentored Ministry Lab**

All Mentored Ministry classes require concurrent participation in The Mentored Ministry Lab. These sessions are a vital part of all Mentored Ministry Practicums and Internships, teaching the foundations of the FIT model of Theological action-reflection. Students will learn and apply the model in real-time by analyzing a ministry experience from their internship through a theological lens, reflecting on what that has taught them and prayerfully asking what action (if any) God would ask them to take. Students will learn to analyze each ministry experience through the overarching Biblical themes of: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration while incorporating other relevant doctrines as well. By the end of the trimester, students will be able to understand and dialogue with their own theological action reflection as well as those of their peers. Labs takes place online and are held five times during the trimester.

**Professor:** Rev. Lisa Johnson and other FIT Faculty

**Area:** Mentored Ministry

**Trimesters Offered:** Every Trimester