

Flourish Institute of Theology

Spring 2023-Fall 2024 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. Two of these courses (one from Bible and Exegesis and one from Theology and History) 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 2024

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 2024

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: TBD

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 2024

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: Tom Pfizenmaier

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: Spring 2024

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.

Prophetic Leadership

It seems like the church has divided into three different camps in recent generations: those who love leadership models and talk in terms of church growth and health; those who are passionate about theological depth and are concerned that the church has become shallow; and those who are passionate about spirituality and tend to focus on individual spiritual practices. If these passions are siloed, the church suffers division, discipleship suffers, and each of these areas trends toward heresy. In this course, we will explore how individual personalities, leadership styles, and the mission of the church must be integrated for the church to remain faithful, prophetic, and healthy.

Professors: Mark Patterson, Gregory Wagenfuhr, and Christopher DiVietro

Area: Integrative Core

Number: IC603

Trimester Offered: Fall 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.

Catecheses: The Way of Life

Catechesis was the ancient way to make disciples in the early church. This catechetical process played a very important part in shaping the kind of faith that was transferable and resilient in a culture that was not hospitable to the Gospel. This course will focus on both the history and biblical theology of this catechetical process. In terms of practical theology this course will prepare students to craft and create catechetical forms in each local congregation.

Professors: Jim Singleton and Jerry Sittser

Area: Integrative Core

Number: IC604

Trimester Offered: Spring 2024

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 the Flourish Institute of Theology in Irving, TX.

God's Word of Grace

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

The Church

Course Description TBD

Number: GT621

Trimesters Offered: Spring 2024

Locations: Irving, 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.

Biblical Interpretation and Exegesis

This class builds upon the skills and insights gained in our Foundations courses, "Introduction to Old Testament Exegesis and Interpretation" and "Introduction to New Testament Exegesis and Interpretation". The class will provide a deeper look at biblical texts, both Old and New Testament, their exegesis, and how they are to be best and most faithfully interpreted. The class will look at interpretive tools available and ways to move from the biblical text to preparing a sermon or Bible study. At least one of the Foundations – Bible & Exegesis classes must be taken before this class.

Professor: Rob Dalrymple

Area: Ministry Essentials – Bible & Exegesis

Number: BI653

Trimester Offered: Fall 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

This course is a study of the Book of Galatians. As you read it, keep in mind that Paul is writing to real people who are living very much like us and who are struggling with the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how to practice it. Further, the letter is written to address and correct those who are troubling the faith of the believers of the churches of Galatia. From this course, you'll get background, authorship, purpose of writing and discover the key points of the book.

Professor: Kent Meads

Area: Ministry Essentials – Bible and Exegesis

Number: BI652

Trimesters Offered: Fall 2023

Greek I

This course forms the first half of an introduction to the language of biblical Greek. When combined with the Greek II course, the student will have the foundations to begin reading biblical texts, the aim of our Greek III course. In Greek I, students will learn the basics of the alphabet, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Additionally, students will also learn about the important historical and cultural backgrounds that led to a Jewish faith being communicated in the language of conquering nations.

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

Reformed Theology and Essential Tenets

Through the centuries, Presbyterian candidates for ordination are asked if they “receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed tradition.” Yet through most of the church’s history these “essentials” have not been explicitly stated. To provide unity to the church, details of its shared covenant of faith, and clear direction for ministry candidates and church leaders, the *ECO Essential Tenets* were written and made part of the ECO Presbyterians Constitution. This class will look at these in detail at the Essential Tenets and the Reformed theology from which they were drawn. The class will be taught by Laura Smit, the principal writer of the Essential Tenets.

Professor: Laura Smit

Area: Ministry Essentials – Theology & History

Number: TH550

Trimester Offered: Fall 2023

The Pastor's Marriage and Family

This course will teach positive and practical ways to keep one's marriage and family life strong, healthy, and flourishing while being involved in ministry. The forces that fight against the health and strength that is needed to successfully navigate the demands of ministry will be examined. These forces may include: workaholism, the balancing of time and energy between our spouse, work and children, criticism from church members, financial issues, pressure on pastor's children, and other forces pastor's face while living in a "fishbowl". Individual strengths that facilitate health and balance in ministry will also be identified.

Professors: Mike and Amy Flavin

Area: Ministry Essentials – Ministry Life and Health

Number: LH651

Trimester 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

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 2024

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 2024

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 2024

Reformed Confessions

This course will look at the history and use of the Reformed Confessions in the Reformed Tradition. This will entail a look at the historical development of the Reformed Confessions, their unique distinctives, their authority in the life of the church and their enduring importance for the church today - including ECO.

Professor: Troy Onsager

Area: Ministry Essentials – Theology and History

Number: TH651

SoulShaping

It's just plain wrong to not experience the life-changing power of faith. Jesus did not die so we would stay the same. But life is hard on the soul. Ministry is hard on the soul. Leadership is hard on the soul. Unless we are equipped with understanding and practical tools for spiritual vitality, committed with disciplined devotion, and supported by the faith community, we will neglect our souls at the expense of our personal and spiritual well-being. Soul care and spiritual vitality are not automatic. They require intentional effort. God makes, we shape. This course, based on Doug Rumford's book, *SoulShaping (Second Edition): From Soul Neglect to Spiritual Vitality and the SoulShaping Cycle of Spiritual Vitality*, equips and trains participants to develop a life-giving, life-changing pattern of spiritual practices to thrive in life and service.

Professor: Douglas Rumford
Area: Ministry Essentials – Ministry Life and Health
Number: LH652
Trimester Offered: Spring 2024

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 2024

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: Fall 2023, Spring 2024
Locations: Tacoma, WA, Greenville, SC

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.

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