



IDENTITY, VOCATION AND THE MISSIO DEI:

*Beloved in Christ, Created in Christ Jesus,
Sent into the Renewal of All Things*

SYLLABUS WINTER 2027

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THEO 101 - 2 CREDIT HOURS

Hybrid: both in person and online

MISSION OF COVENANT SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

Covenant School of Ministry exists to form disciples in the way of Jesus by shaping the heart through ancient spiritual practices, renewing the mind through rigorous theological study, and equipping the hands through apprenticeship for the work of the Kingdom and the renewal of all creation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

We meet on the following Mondays from 6:00pm–9:00pm:

January 11, 25; February 8, 22; March 8, 22; April 5, 12
(27–28 contact hours)

January 11 and **April 12** will be immersive and integrative worship-learning experiences.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar-style course explores the *missio Dei* through the Christ event and helps students discern their vocation within God's larger redemptive purpose. Grounded in the conviction that mission begins in God's action in Jesus Christ—his incarnation, baptism, proclamation of the Kingdom, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Spirit—the course invites students to see mission not first as work done for God, but as participation in what God has accomplished and is accomplishing in Christ.

The course is also grounded in the biblical conviction that humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–28), a vocation fractured by sin yet fulfilled and restored in Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). In the Christ event, God's mission for the world is revealed and enacted. At Jesus' baptism, the Father names him beloved before his public ministry begins (Matthew 3:13–17; Luke 3:21–22), establishing the pattern that identity precedes vocation. Through union with Christ, believers become adopted children of God by the Spirit (Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 4:4–7) and are renewed in the image of the Son (Romans 8:29). Thus Christian vocation is not the anxious construction of a meaningful life, but participation in God's renewing work as his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10).

From this foundation, the course turns to vocation. Students will explore the distinction between identity and calling, along with related themes such as gifts, roles, assignments, discernment, suffering, obedience, and whole-life participation in the Kingdom of God. The course culminates in Romans 8, where the Spirit of adoption, the groaning of creation, the sufferings of the present time, and the hope of glory together frame Christian vocation within God's larger purpose for the renewal of all things.

Through seminar discussion, theological reflection, Lectio Divina, worship practices, and guided discernment, students will be invited not merely to study identity, vocation, and mission, but to locate their own lives more faithfully within the love and purpose of God. The primary aim of the course is to help students emerge with greater clarity about their present calling or with a faithful, biblically grounded pathway for ongoing vocational discernment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Articulate a biblical theology of the *missio Dei* as revealed in the Christ event—God's reconciling and renewing action in Jesus Christ for the life of the world. **(head)**
2. Explain the relationship between the **imago Dei**, Christ as the true image of God, and the renewal of human identity through union with Christ. **(head)**

3. Describe Christian identity as belovedness in Christ, rooted in the baptism of Jesus, adoption by the Spirit, and participation in the life of the Son. **(head/heart)**
4. Distinguish clearly between **identity, vocation, spiritual gifts, ministry role, and present assignment**, so that vocation is understood as participation in grace rather than performance for worth. **(head)**
5. Reflect honestly on interior and cultural distortions that confuse identity and calling, including productivity, prestige, power, shame, comparison, false self, and role-based identity. **(heart)**
6. Interpret key biblical texts—especially **Matthew 3:13–17, Ephesians 2:1–10, and Romans 8**—as foundational for understanding belovedness, vocation, and participation in God’s new-creation mission. **(head/hands)**
7. Practice habits of vocational discernment through prayer, Scripture, theological reflection, community listening, and Spirit-led obedience. **(hands/heart)**
8. Engage in an apprenticeship-based exploration of an unfamiliar vocational context in order to observe how another disciple heard, tested, and embodied their calling, and to practice a process of personal discernment toward “the hope to which he has called you” (Eph. 1:18). **(hands/heart)**
9. Develop either a preliminary vocational statement or a faithful discernment framework for their next season of Kingdom participation. **(hands)**

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The English Standard Version (ESV) Bible

Please ensure you have a physical copy or a digital version of the ESV Bible for course readings, seminar discussion, and assignments.

Wright, N. T. *Into the Heart of Romans*

This text will serve as the primary theological guide for the course’s engagement with Romans, especially Romans 8. Wright helps students see how Paul’s vision of Christ, the Spirit, adoption, suffering, hope, holiness, and new creation converge in the mission of God and in the believer’s vocation within that mission. 241 pages.

Smith, Gordon T. *Courage and Calling*

This text will serve as the primary guide for the course’s exploration of vocation and discernment. Smith offers a wise and pastoral theology of calling, helping students distinguish identity from assignment, understand vocation as response to grace, and practice discernment within the life of the Church. 306 pages.

Course Reading Packet

A required reading packet will be provided by the instructors. The packet will include selected chapters and excerpts from theologians, spiritual writers, and practitioners

whose voices deepen the course's themes of identity, vocation, and understanding the *missio Dei*.

The packet will include selections from:

- **Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus and Life of the Beloved***
On the temptations of power, relevance, and spectacle, and the call to ministry grounded in belovedness rather than ambition.
- **R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days***
On vocation beyond church office and the calling of ordinary life in work, home, neighborhood, and public witness.
- **Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation***
On false self, true self, identity in God, and the interior healing necessary for faithful calling.
- **Additional short selections** on the image of God, union with Christ, and the mission of God, as assigned by the instructors.

RECOMMEND MATERIALS

1. Nouwen, Henri J. M. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*

A short but penetrating book on the temptations that distort Christian calling—power, relevance, and popularity—and the invitation to lead from prayer, weakness, and belovedness.

2. Stevens, R. Paul. *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*

A strong biblical and theological treatment of whole-life vocation that helps students see calling beyond clergy categories and into the full texture of daily life.

3. Merton, Thomas. *New Seeds of Contemplation*

A classic work on contemplation, false self, true self, and the hidden life in God. Especially helpful for students wrestling with role-based identity, performance, and the interior life of calling.

4. Palmer, Parker J. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*

A reflective meditation on vocation, listening, failure, and the slow unfolding of a faithful life.

5. Smith, James K. A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*

Helpful for understanding how desire, habit, and cultural liturgies shape identity and vocation.

6. Gorman, Michael J. *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*

A strong theological resource for understanding Christian life as participation in Christ and mission.

7. Sherrill, A. J. *The Enneagram for Spiritual Formation*

A helpful supplemental resource for students seeking greater self-knowledge, especially in relation to the distortions and interior patterns that can confuse identity and calling.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Reading (15 hours) = 150 points

Students are required to read *Into the Heart of Romans* by N. T. Wright, *Courage and Calling* by Gordon T. Smith, and the assigned **course reading packet**.

Into the Heart of Romans will anchor the course's theological engagement with the Christ event, Romans 8, and God's mission to renew all things in Christ. *Courage and Calling* will provide the course's primary framework for vocation, discernment, and faithful response. The **reading packet** will complement these core texts by drawing students into deeper reflection on belovedness, false self, distorted ambition, whole-life vocation, and the practices by which calling is clarified in the presence of God and the communion of the Church.

Additional reading assignments may be given via PDFs throughout the course.

Students are required to read at a **Familiarity Level** unless otherwise noted.

According to accreditation seminary standards there are two levels:

- **Familiarity level.** This level assumes knowledge of the material assigned and leads to accountability in class.
- **Mastery level.** Reading at this level assumes careful reflective interaction with the ideas, note taking, and greater written engagement.

These are intended to serve as flexible guidelines or rules of thumb; they are not meant to be rigid. Each reading assignment should be completed before the class session for which it is assigned so that students will be able to participate fully in seminar discussions, theological reflection, and vocational discernment exercises.

This assignment will test the student's ability to articulate the *missio Dei* as revealed in Jesus Christ, understand identity in Christ as beloved, and discern vocation as participation in God's renewing work in the world. (Course objectives #1, #3, #4, #6, and #7).

Due date: As assigned in the course schedule.

2. Theology of Identity, Vocation, and the *Missio Dei* (15 hours) = 150 points

Students will submit an **8-page theology paper** focused on the relationship between the Christ event, identity in Christ, human vocation, and the *missio Dei*.

The paper should explore the following themes:

- humanity created in the **image of God**
- Jesus Christ as the **true image of God**
- the baptism of Jesus and the declaration of belovedness before public ministry
- Ephesians 2:1–10 and the claim that we are **God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**
- Romans 8 as the larger theological horizon of adoption, suffering, hope, and the renewal of creation

At minimum, the paper should engage substantially with the following biblical texts:

- Genesis 1:26–28
- Matthew 3:13–17
- Ephesians 2:1–10
- Romans 8

Students should demonstrate that Christian vocation is not the effort to secure worth before God, but participation in the life and mission of Christ as those already loved, adopted, and remade in him.

This assignment will test the student's ability to articulate a biblical theology of identity, vocation, and the mission of God. (Course objectives #1, #2, #3, #4, and #6)

Due date: _____

3. Lectio Divina Reflection and Discernment Exercise (15 hours) = 150 points

Students will keep a **Lectio Divina Reflection and Discernment Journal** throughout the course. The student will prayerfully practice Lectio Divina with selected course texts, listening for God's voice in Scripture with special attention to identity in Christ, vocational discernment, and participation in the *missio Dei*.

Each entry should move through the classic four movements of Lectio Divina:

1. **Lectio** — What word, phrase, image, or movement in the text draws my attention?
2. **Meditatio** — What is God revealing through this text about his mission, my identity in Christ, or the shape of faithful vocation?
3. **Oratio** — What prayer rises in response to what God is revealing?

4. **Contemplatio** — What invitation toward surrender, trust, healing, obedience, or discernment am I being asked to receive?

Students will also include a fifth vocational movement:

5. **Discernment / Actio** — What concrete next step, question, or practice is this text awakening in relation to “the hope to which he has called you” (Eph. 1:18)?

Students will complete Lectio Divina reflections on the following course texts:

Week 1 — Genesis 1:26–28

Week 2 — Isaiah 42:1–9

Week 3 — Matthew 3:13–17

Week 4 — Ephesians 1:15–23

Week 5 — Ephesians 2:1–10

Week 6 — John 20:19–22

Week 7 — Romans 8:14–17

Week 8 — Romans 8:18–39

The **final journal entry** should include a **2-page synthesis reflection** in which the student names:

- what patterns God has been surfacing through the Lectio practice,
- what distortions of identity or calling have been exposed,
- and either a preliminary vocational statement or a faithful pathway for continued discernment.

Students will share in each class session during a breakout session reflections drawn from their Lectio entry, demonstrating how Scripture can become a place of vocational listening rather than mere information gathering.

This assignment will test the student’s ability to receive Scripture devotionally, discern identity in Christ, and practice vocational listening in the presence of God.(Course objectives #3, #5, #7, and #9)

Due date: _____

4. Vocational Apprenticeship and Discernment Project (10 hours) = 100 points

Students will participate in an apprenticeship-based exploration of vocation alongside an approved leader whose life reflects thoughtful Christian calling. This may include a pastor, ministry leader, nonprofit leader, educator, businessperson, artist, missionary, counselor, or other mature practitioner.

Whenever possible, students should choose a vocational context that is at least somewhat **unfamiliar or unexplored** for them, so that the assignment becomes a genuine act of discernment rather than mere confirmation of prior assumptions.

Students will:

- observe the mentor in their vocational setting
- conduct an interview focused on how the mentor heard, tested, clarified, and embodied their calling
- pay attention to the roles of Scripture, prayer, community confirmation, suffering, gifts, pruning, timing, and obedience in the discernment process
- participate in one appropriate act of service, leadership, or vocational practice within that setting

Students will submit:

- a **3–4 page reflection paper** describing what they observed and learned
- a **1-page personal discernment framework** or vocational next-step plan

The reflection should address questions such as:

- How did this person come to understand their calling?
- What false identities or misconceptions had to be surrendered?
- What role did mentors, community, or the Church play?
- How did suffering, delay, or limitation shape their discernment?
- What did I learn about my own calling by being near someone else's?

This assignment is intended to help students seek “the hope to which he has called you” through proximity, testimony, and practice. (Course objectives #7, #8, and #9)

Due date: _____

5. Final Course Evaluation (15 min.) = 25 points

Before the end of the last Friday of the semester, students will receive an email with a link to the final course evaluation.

6. Class Attendance & Participation = 50 points (27–28 hours)

Because this is a **seminar-style course with multiple instructors**, attendance, preparation, and thoughtful participation are essential.

Class sessions will include:

- lecture
- theological discussion
- guided reflection

- small-group discernment
- receptive and reflective worship practices

Students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings and prepared to engage the material, their peers, and the instructors with attentiveness, humility, and charity.

Assignments are due **Mondays at 6:00pm** unless otherwise noted.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Receptive Worship / Course Introduction

Theme: God's Mission, Our Identity, Our Vocation

1. Receptive worship
 - a. Prayer, silence, Scripture, and communal attentiveness
 - b. Worship with David and Nicole Binion
 - c. Receiving Communion together
2. Syllabus overview
3. Introduction to the course thesis
 - a. The *missio Dei* begins in God, not in us
 - b. We are not first workers for God but God's workmanship in Christ
 - c. Identity precedes vocation
4. Framing questions for the course
 - a. What is God doing in the world?
 - b. Who am I in Christ?
 - c. How is vocation discerned within the mission of God?

Instructor: Jeffrey Garner; David and Nicole Binion

Key Texts — Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8; Colossians 1:15–20; Ephesians 2:1–10; John 20:19–22

Reading due: Reading Packet: Jeffrey Garner, "From Image to Mission: Why Identity Precedes Vocation" — 2–3 pp. Carmen Joy Imes, *Being God's Image*, pp. 13–19

Lectio text: Genesis 1:26–28

WEEK 2

The Mission of God and the Human Vocation

Theme: Creation, Imago Dei, and the Christ Event as the Mission of God

1. The *missio Dei* in the biblical story
 - a. Creation, covenant, kingdom, Christ, Church, new creation

- b. God's purpose to bless the nations
 - c. God's mission fulfilled and revealed in Jesus Christ
- 2. Humanity created in the image of God
 - a. Image as dignity, reflection, representation, and vocation
 - b. Human calling before the fall
 - c. Why vocation is bigger than ministry role
- 3. Christ as the true image
 - a. The Christ event as the center of mission
 - b. In Christ, humanity is not only forgiven but restored
 - c. Mission as participation in what God has done in Jesus

Lead Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner and Amie Dockery

Key texts: Genesis 1:26–28; Genesis 12:1–3; Colossians 1:15–20; Ephesians 1:9–10

Reading due: *Courage and Calling*, opening section; packet excerpt on imago Dei / mission: Carmen Joy Imes, *Being God's Image* — “Pattern of Creation,” pp. 13–19; Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God* — pp. 52–57, “Mission Belongs to the Lord” / “A Hermeneutical Map”, John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny* — section: “Christ as God's Image”

Lectio text: Isaiah 42:1–9

WEEK 3

Beloved Before Sent

Theme: The Baptism of Jesus and Identity Before Ministry

- 1. The baptism of Jesus
 - a. “You are my beloved Son”
 - b. Belovedness before usefulness
 - c. Delight before assignment
- 2. Old Testament background to Jesus' baptism
 - a. Psalm 2
 - b. Isaiah 42
 - c. beloved Son and servant vocation
- 3. Identity as the ground of calling
 - a. Why performance distorts vocation
 - b. Why belovedness stabilizes discernment
 - c. Mission flowing from communion with the Father

Seminar Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner

Key texts: Matthew 3:13–17; Luke 3:21–22; Isaiah 42:1; Psalm 2:7

Reading due: packet excerpt from Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus and Life of the Beloved*

Lectio text: Matthew 3:13–17

WEEK 4

The Hope of His Calling

Theme: Identity in Christ, Adoption, and the Healing of False Identity

1. Union with Christ and adoption
 - a. sons and daughters in the Son
 - b. belonging as the basis of vocation
 - c. inheritance, intimacy, and Spirit-led identity
2. False self and distorted calling
 - a. productivity
 - b. prestige
 - c. power
 - d. shame
 - e. comparison
 - f. role-based identity
3. Knowing the hope of your calling
 - a. prayer as discernment
 - b. the Church as context for calling
 - c. how identity confusion produces vocation confusion

Seminar Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner and Pastor Mike Hayes

Key texts: Ephesians 1:15–23; Galatians 4:4–7; Romans 8:14–17

Reading due: *Courage and Calling*, middle section; packet excerpt from Thomas Merton

Lectio text: Ephesians 1:15–23

WEEK 5

God's Workmanship

Theme: Vocation, Good Works, and Participation in Christ

1. Ephesians 2:1–10
 - a. saved by grace
 - b. not self-made
 - c. created in Christ Jesus for good works
2. What vocation is and what it is not
 - a. vocation versus identity
 - b. vocation versus gifts
 - c. vocation versus role
 - d. vocation versus assignment
3. Whole-life vocation
 - a. work, family, friendship, church, neighborhood, public witness
 - b. the Kingdom in the other six days
 - c. faithful presence and ordinary holiness

Lead Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner and David and Nicole Binion

Key texts: Ephesians 2:1–10; Romans 12:1–8; 1 Peter 2:9–12

Reading due: packet excerpt from R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days*

Lectio text: Ephesians 2:1–10

WEEK 6

Sent as the Son Was Sent

Theme: Discernment, Community, and the Practice of Calling

1. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you”
 - a. Christ-shaped mission
 - b. the Spirit and sentness
 - c. vocation as participation, not self-invention
2. How calling is discerned
 - a. Scripture
 - b. prayer
 - c. holy desire
 - d. community confirmation
 - e. suffering, pruning, and timing
3. Seminar discernment workshop
 - a. listening exercises
 - b. vocational interview preparation
 - c. identifying next faithful steps

Seminar Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner and Pastor Amie Dockery

Key texts: John 20:19–22; Romans 12:1–2; Acts 13:1–3; Philippians 1:9–11

Reading due: *Courage and Calling*, final section

Lectio text: John 20:19–22

WEEK 7

Into the Heart of Romans

Theme: Romans 8, Adoption, Suffering, Hope, and New Creation

1. Romans 8 as the heart of the course
 - a. no condemnation
 - b. life in the Spirit
 - c. adoption and sonship
2. Creation’s groaning and the revealing of the children of God
 - a. vocation inside cosmic renewal
 - b. suffering and glory
 - c. hope as a vocational category
3. The love of God and steadfast calling
 - a. discernment without anxiety
 - b. intercession of the Spirit
 - c. no separation from the love of God in Christ

Seminar Lecturer: Jeffrey Garner and Pastor Mike Hayes

Key texts: Romans 8:14–39

Reading due: Wright, *Into the Heart of Romans*

Lectio text: Romans 8:14–17

WEEK 8

Reflective Worship / Integration / Commissioning

Theme: Beloved and Sent in the Mission of God

1. Integrating the course
 - a. imago Dei
 - b. beloved identity in Christ
 - c. vocation as participation in the *missio Dei*
2. Student synthesis
 - a. what God has clarified
 - b. where discernment remains open
 - c. next steps in faithfulness
3. Reflective worship and commissioning
 - a. worship with David and Nicole Binion
 - b. shared prayer and blessing
 - c. offering our lives again to the purposes of God
4. Final course synthesis
 - a. Who am I in Christ?
 - b. What is my present vocation?
 - c. How does my life participate in God's renewal of all things?

Primary Instructor: Jeffrey Garner; David and Nicole Binion

Key texts: Romans 8:18–39; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20

Reading due: final packet readings

Lectio text: Romans 8:18–39

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

Seminar Lectures

Seminar lectures will provide structured instruction in the key biblical, theological, and practical themes of the course. Through Christ-centered teaching, close engagement with Scripture, theological reflection, and vocational application, lectures are intended to deepen student understanding of the *missio Dei*, identity in Christ, and personal vocation within God's renewing work in the world.

Because this course is taught in a seminar format with multiple voices, students will receive instruction from the Primary Instructor, and Seminar Lecturers each contributing

a distinct emphasis while serving the course's unified theological arc. Students are expected to listen actively, take notes, and come prepared to engage thoughtfully with the material presented in class.

Receptive and Reflective Worship Practices

Each course session will include worship-based practices designed to support the spiritual formation of the student. The opening portion of the course will emphasize receptive worship practices that help students slow down, attend to God, and consecrate their learning through prayer, Scripture, silence, song, and communal attentiveness. The closing portion of the course will emphasize reflective worship practices that invite students to prayerfully process what they are learning, discern God's activity in their lives, and respond through worship, reflection, and embodied surrender.

In this course, worship is not incidental to learning but integral to it. These practices are intended to cultivate not only theological understanding, but also spiritual attentiveness, beloved identity, vocational listening, and readiness to participate in the mission of God.

Lectio Divina and Discernment Practices

This course will incorporate Lectio Divina as a central instructional and formational method. Students will learn to approach Scripture not merely as material to analyze, but as a living word through which the Spirit reveals God's mission, clarifies identity in Christ, exposes distortions of calling, and invites concrete response.

Through the movements of lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio, and a fifth vocational movement of discernment / actio, students will practice listening to Scripture for the sake of deeper communion with Christ and clearer participation in their present calling. These practices are intended to train students in vocational listening so that discernment becomes not merely a concept discussed in class, but a habit cultivated in the presence of God.

Discussions

Class discussions will provide students with opportunities to engage course material in a collaborative and thoughtful learning environment. Through guided conversation, students will be encouraged to ask questions, test ideas, listen carefully to others, and articulate their own insights with clarity and charity.

Because this is a seminar-style course focused on identity, vocation, and mission, discussion is intended not only to strengthen critical thinking and deepen comprehension, but also to foster a shared learning community in which theological reflection, spiritual discernment, and practical application are explored together.

Assignments

Assignments are designed to assess understanding, theological reflection, discernment, and practical integration of course material. These may include reading responses, a theology paper, Lectio Divina reflections, apprenticeship-based learning, and other forms of written or guided assessment. Clear instructions and expectations will be provided for each assignment.

It is the responsibility of the student to adhere to deadlines and submit assignments in the format and manner outlined by the instructor. Feedback on assignments will be provided in a timely manner to support student learning and growth throughout the course.

Apprenticeship / Applied Practice

This course includes apprenticeship-based learning experiences designed to help students translate theological content into lived discernment and embodied vocation. These may involve observation, mentoring, vocational interviews, guided reflection, contextual learning, and participation in real-life settings where Christian calling is being faithfully lived out.

The purpose of this component is to cultivate practical wisdom, vocational clarity, and embodied faithfulness so that students not only understand identity, vocation, and the *missio Dei*, but also begin to practice discernment in real-life contexts.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

We prioritize academic excellence, spiritual integrity, and personal responsibility in the completion of coursework. We also recognize that students may encounter unexpected challenges that affect their ability to complete assignments on time or participate fully in the course. The following policies are intended to establish clear expectations while allowing for appropriate pastoral wisdom when needed. This policy structure follows the same framework as your template, including deadlines, late-work penalties, attendance, academic honesty, and AI guidance.

Submission Deadlines

All assignment deadlines are clearly stated on the course calendar at the end of this syllabus. Students are responsible for adhering to the specified deadlines for each assignment and participating in scheduled course activities.

Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, **weekly assignments are due Mondays at 6:00pm.**

Late Work Policy

Assignments are expected to be submitted by the specified deadlines. Late submissions will incur a penalty of **10% deducted from the total grade for each day past the due date**, up to a maximum of **5 days**. After 5 days, late submissions may not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the School of Ministry Administrator due to extenuating circumstances.

Students are responsible for communicating any challenges or circumstances that may affect their ability to submit work on time. Extensions may be granted at the instructor's discretion when requested in advance and supported by appropriate circumstances.

Attendance Policy

Because this is a **seminar-style course** with multiple instructors and a strong emphasis on discussion, worship, Lectio Divina, and vocational discernment, attendance is essential. Students are expected to attend each session, complete assigned readings in advance, and participate thoughtfully in class discussions, Lectio practices, and formation exercises.

If a student must miss a session due to illness, emergency, or other serious circumstance, the student is responsible for notifying the instructor as soon as possible and for making arrangements to recover missed material. **More than two absences may require additional make-up work at the instructor's discretion.** Excessive absence may affect the student's participation grade and, in some cases, the successful completion of the course.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be responsible and honest in all academic matters. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of sources, or misrepresentation of another person's work as one's own are serious offenses and may result in disciplinary action. This carries forward the same academic-honesty expectation from the template.

Because this course includes theological reflection, vocational discernment, and apprenticeship-based learning, students are expected to submit work that reflects their own prayerful engagement, honest reflection, and faithful study.

AI Usage for This Course

AI tools (such as ChatGPT) may be used to support research, locate resources, summarize material, or generate study questions, provided that any substantive AI contribution is cited. Students whose primary language is not English may also use AI translation tools to aid in writing reflection papers, noting this use at the end of the paper.

AI may **not** be used to generate original theological reflection, personal discernment work, Lectio Divina reflections, apprenticeship reflections, or vocational statements in place of the student's own work. AI may not be used to fabricate sources. All AI-assisted content must be verified for accuracy and integrated thoughtfully into the student's own study,

reflection, and discernment. This follows the same basic AI-use distinction in the template between research support and replacing a student's own theological or spiritual work.