

## *SLS Course List*

as of 12/1/2015

### Academic Courses

#### **Christian Systematic Theology**

This course provides participants with an overview to the central tenants, philosophical and theological, of the Christian faith. The course will, briefly, cover topics such as: theology of God, theology of Christ, theology of the Holy Spirit, theology of salvation, theology of sin, theology of the Bible, theology of the church, and the theology of things to come. All of these elements will be presented with an eye to anthropology and a theology of people. The course should be delivered with a focus upon exposing the participant to a number of views within each unit, allowing the participant to consider and adopt/reject elements as they see fit. Upon completing the course, participants should be able to briefly summarize their understanding of each section in a written personal creed.

#### **Global Spirituality**

This course is a survey of the spiritual practices of various religious groups in the world in an attempt to define the relationship between humanity and "divinity." As a part of the course, participants will be introduced to both Western and non-Western practices and begin the process of shaping personal spirituality while respecting Western and non-Western spiritualities.

#### **History of Christianity**

This course provides an overview of historic metamorphosis of the Christian church. The course briefly covers topics such as: the origin of Christianity and its differentiation from Judaism, the Roman persecution of the church, Constantine's establishment of legitimized Christianity, the centuries of the great councils, high medieval/scholastic theology, the Protestant reformation and the confessional age, nineteenth century theology (continental vs. American), and theology of the twentieth/twenty-first centuries. (The mainline/fundamental divide.) Upon completion of the course, participants should be able to briefly chart the progression of Christianity and also identify how past occurrences might or should influence Christianity in the present age.

#### **Introduction to the Greek Scripture of the New Testament**

This course equips participants with an understanding of a methodology for contextual biblical study, the tools with which to practice that methodology, including a time-line of first through fourth century Christian history, documentary development of the New Testament, theological development and organization of New Testament canon, as well as the opportunity to apply those tools in providing critical review of a New Testament text.

## **Introduction to the Hebrew Scripture of the Old Testament**

This course equips participants with an understanding of a methodology for contextual biblical study, the tools with which to practice that methodology, including the time-line of Hebrew history, documentary history of the Old Testament, theological development of Hebrew history and the organization of the canon, as well as the opportunity to apply those tools in providing critical review of an Old Testament text.

## **United Church of Christ History and Polity**

This course will introduce participants to the history, theologies, liturgical traditions, polity, organization, ministerial authorization policies and practices, and mission of the United Church of Christ. The intent is to equip lay leaders to interpret and participate in the witness of the denomination to the church and the world.

Specific topics to be covered:

- Congregational Historical Roots

- Reformed Historical Roots

- Christian Historical Roots and Union with Congregationalists

- Evangelical Historical Roots, Union with the Reformed Church, and Formation of the United Church of Christ

- Local Church

- Associations and Conferences (middle judicatories), Authorization for Ministry

- National Setting

- Autonomy, Community, and Covenant

- Vision and direction of the UCC

## **Practical Courses**

### **Christian Education (Faith Formation)**

This course is a study of Faith Formation practices for life long learning. Participants will gain an understanding of the theory and practices of Christian Education/Faith Formation as they are introduced to a practical method for developing Christian Education/Faith Formation practices in the local congregation.

### **Christian Ethics**

This course includes the basic principles and fundamental themes, concepts, and terminology of contemporary Christian ethics, and how those elements compare to Western ethics in general; the distinctive moral challenges contemporary issues, such as human sexuality and marriage, environmental ethics, biomedical ethics, prejudice and discrimination, gender equality, and violence and warfare, pose to Christian ethics; and how Christian community affects decisions about the good or right course of action, as God speaks in and to the community, and the people listen for God's messages in community.

Specific topics to be covered:

- Christian ethical perspectives, themes and concepts

- Ethical dimensions of biblical literature

- Articulating personal moral identity and perspectives

Collaborative solutions to moral problems  
Applying of Christian Ethics to questions or problems to practical ministry situations.

### **Introduction to Preaching**

This course will enable participants to construct a sermon using the skills of exegesis. Participants will gain experience explaining and applying a biblical passage and delivering a sermon based on that passage. Throughout the course, participants will incorporate basic elements from public speaking and deliver two sermons to their classmates. They will also have ample opportunity to observe a wide spectrum of different sermons being given.

### **Pastoral Care**

This course will equip participants to shepherd the church, including:  
the role of the shepherd,  
a philosophy of pastoral care and the skills required for its practical application,  
the spiritual foundations for pastoral care,  
duties of the shepherd including weddings and funerals,  
essentials of pastoral counseling: visitation (writing a verbatim),  
care to the dying,  
congregational accountability.

### **Practical Ministry**

This course introduces participants to practical areas of ministry and assists them in applying their personal theology to these areas in order to prepare them for the daily practice and demands of ministry.

Areas that will be included in the *Practical Ministry* course are:

- working with boards and committees
- church finances (including reading financial statements)
- stewardship
- staff/volunteer supervision
- communications: newsletters & social media
- conflict management
- strategic planning
- personal and professional boundaries
- time management

### **Worship & Sacraments**

This course explores the elements of worship with attention to thematic organization. Topics for discussion include: following the Lectionary (or not), inclusion of Sacraments, selection of music, Children's Message, the value and burden of tradition, the action of the leader and the action of God, time and space in worship, and the role of the visual image in our liturgies. Participants will be asked to put their abstract understandings of worship and Sacraments into practice in their final projects.