

MN714 Crisis Care
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
Fall, 2023
Draft Syllabus

Instructor:

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Letter Grade
3 Credits

This course equips students for pastoral care for individuals, families and congregations in crisis. Students will become familiar with common contexts that precipitate experiences of crisis or trauma, and gain skills in offering practical and spiritual care. Understanding the roles of various other providers of safety or care in times of crisis will enable effective partnership. Resources in preventing and mitigating crises through ministries of community/congregational education and preparedness will be studied and developed.

M.Div. Curricular Goals

This course helps fulfill the following M.Div. curricular goals:

1. Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer and reflection that increase love of God and neighbor and shape personal and professional life
2. Be formed by, live in, and minister out of scripture, and the historical and theological tradition of the church
3. Provide pastoral care for individuals and congregations in daily life and moments of transition and crisis
4. Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry

M.A.M.D. Curricular Goal

This course helps fulfill the following M.A.M.D. curricular goal:

1. Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness.

M.A.M. Curricular Goal

This course helps fulfill the following M.A.M. curricular goal:

1. Develop pastoral and practical theological methods and strategies for cultivating renewed and transformative ministry contexts.
2. Construct a biblically, theologically, and contextually coherent expression of Christian pastoral identity and practice in life and ministry.
3. Apply key practices for personal, communal, and ministerial flourishing and compose a coherent plan for life and ministry.

Class Objectives:

1. To develop understanding of crisis theory and the dynamics of trauma and trauma recovery.
2. To learn to partner effectively with other care providers during times of crisis or disaster – first responders, community and regional agencies, medical and mental health professionals.

3. To gain tools to assist congregations in developing safety plans, and in building resilience and disaster-preparedness.
4. To develop theological understanding and pastoral skill in caring for those experiencing crisis or trauma, including those wounded by the effects of sin in a fallen world (violence, abuse, oppression).
5. To become familiar with common contexts for crisis and trauma.

Bibliography

Selections from each of the following:

ALICE Basic Certification Training for Houses of Worship, for active shooter training. Online portion of training only. Register and complete at <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training/worship/>.

Hunsinger, Deborah van Deusen. *Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel, and Pastoral Care*. Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 2015.

Kraus, Laurie, David Holyan and Bruce Wismer. *Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017.

Stone, Howard W. *Crisis Counseling*. 3rd ed. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2009.

Vander Der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York: Penguin Books, 2015.
(Earlier edition is fine also)

Prepare to Care: Basic Disaster Ministry for Your Congregation. 10th Ed. New York: Church World Service, 2009. Available on the web.

Class Requirements

10 (weekly) exercises in engagement with classmates around the topic for the week. Sometimes this will be discussion, other times it will be sharing resources or reporting on exercises in your home community. Allow 30 minutes each. 30%

Brief midterm quiz on concepts from crisis theory, trauma and trauma recovery. 10%

Completion of ALICE online training and one page write-up of possible application in ministry context. 10%

Four page paper exploring theology related to suffering (including disasters, loss, helplessness, theodicy), per instructions. 20%

Final project: 15 page plan for crisis preparedness and response for your local congregation (or agency) in your home community. Some of this will include resources that you gather, and some of it will include pieces that you write, per instructions. 30%