

# Ministry to the Mentally Ill

## And Their Families

### CL 630

United Theological Seminary  
Spring 2009

Monday: 6:00 – 9:15  
Room – “C”

#### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The phenomenon of mental illness is pervasive in its various manifestations among all people. Effective ministry is contingent upon some knowledge regarding these illnesses as well as strategies for ministering to the whole family. The first half of the course will address itself to the wide scope of mental illnesses that afflict human beings and those who are in a significant relationship with them. The particular and unique pastoral role in relationship to those so afflicted and their significant others who are affected will be examined. In the second half of the course, particular attention will be given to the pastoral role in relationship to people who are depressed and those whom they affect. **Students may register for either half of the course or both half courses.**

#### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. To gain a comprehensive view of the nature and extent of mental illness as it afflicts individuals, families and the wider social system of church and society.
- B. To provide foundational material regarding the major mental illness categories, symptomatology and treatment of these various maladies.
- C. To consider the biblical and theological foundations for ministry to those who are afflicted and affected by mental illness.
- D. To promote a holistic understanding of human illness and health as it comes to expression in dealing specifically with mental illness. This includes the encouragement of a cooperative effort between those in ministry and those in the mental health profession.
- E. To explore the role of advocacy, referral and communal support for the mentally ill both inside and outside of the congregation in order to promote understanding, healing and renewal of life.

#### COURSE TEXTS

Andreasen, Nancy. *Brave New Brain*. New York: Oxford University Press.  
Godwin, Gail. *Father Melancholy's Daughter*. New York: Wm. Morrow.  
Govig, Stewart. *In The Shadows of our Steeples*. New York: Haworth Press.  
Hulme, Lucy and William. *Wrestling With Depression: Spiritual Guide to Reclaiming Life*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Swinton, John. *Resurrecting the Person*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Attendance and participation in class presentations and discussions. **More than one unexcused absence constitutes failure for the course.**
- B. Completion of class readings and assignments *on time* following stipulated directions as outlined below.
1. My personal experience with and/or ideas about “mental illness” and how I see these relating to my ministry. No more than 5 pages double spaced.  
**DUE: February 12**
  2. Report contrasting the stories of Father Gower in *Father Melancholy’s Daughter* and the story of Lucy and Bill Hulme in *Wrestling with Depression*.  
**DUE: March 9 (see instructions for writing with March 9 assignment)**
  3. *Book of YOUR CHOICE dealing with mental illness.*  
Select a book of your choice dealing with mental illness in general or one specific illness that you wish to learn more about for your ministry. Indicate in your report what was helpful, particularly for conducting your ministry with those afflicted and affected by mental illness.  
**DUE: April 6 (No more than 5 pages doubled spaced.)**
  4. Review of Govig’s book, *In The Shadow of our Steeples*
    - a. what is the basic premise of his book?
    - b. how does Govig view the role of the faith community? Do you agree or disagree and why?
    - c. what are the most salient features of the book that you will utilize in your ministry?
    - d. what questions still linger for you? How will you answer them?**DUE: April 27 (No more than 5 pages doubled spaced)**
- C. Final Project
1. A reflection paper relating one of the major mental illness diagnosis to your understanding of how you would do ministry to the person afflicted and her or his family who are affected.  
**(No more than 10-12 pages in length)**
- OR**
2. Develop a curricular piece designed to use with teens or for an adult forum that features how you would provide basic information about a major mental illness diagnosis and how the faith tradition relates to the diagnosis, understanding and recovery of a person and her/his family who are suffering from mental illness.  
**(The curricular piece should be a minimum of FOUR sessions. Provide information about the targeted audience, how you would advertise the course, basic content and method as well as evaluative follow up. Length**

would be 2-3 pages per session.)

**OR**

3. Develop an art project or piece that depicts or illuminates some aspect of the issue of mental illness as it impacts the afflicted or the affected. This may be poetry, painting, sculpture or a short story that communicates to the general public the spiritual dimensions of mental illness.

**(Please consult with instructor with regard to the art project.)**

**DUE: May 4 – for those graduating**

**May 11 – for non-graduating students**

## COURSE OUTLINE

February 5

Basic introduction to the course with presentations dealing with the purpose and design of the course, the perspective of the course from the psychiatric angle of vision as well as the theological foundation for the course and its implications for ministry. Share goals, expectations and concerns will be particularly noted.

DSM IV Categories: Axis outlined and explained

February 12

The history of mental illness as it has developed over the years. Particular attention will be given to the issue of the stigmatization of mental illness and the consequent sense of 'disgrace shame' in those afflicted and affected. Biblical and theological considerations.

**Required reading: Swinton, Introduction**

**Andreasen, chapters 1-3 and 7**

**DUE: Paper on Personal Experiences/Perceptions of Mental Illness**

**(No more than 5 pages double spaced)**

February 19

and

February 26

**Schizophrenia and Psychotic Disorders I/II** with schizophrenia as representative disorder.

**Required reading: Swinton, chapters 3-5**

**Andreasen, chapter 8**

**Film: "A Beautiful Mind"**

March 2

**Mood Disorders I: Various manifestations of depression**

The categorization of various types of depression as the basic mood disorder.

**Required reading: Andeasen, chapter 9**

March 9

**Mood Disorders II: Stories to Consider**

The ‘stories’ of those afflicted and affected by depression are as unique as the illness itself. Continued discussion from the previous session as well as discussion of two contrasting stories of depression will be considered.

**Required reading: Godwin, *Father Melancholy’s Daughter* (novel)  
Hulmes: *Wrestling With Depression* (true story)**

**DUE: Paper Contrasting These Two Stories: Considering the following questions:**

1. What do you find that is alike in the two stories?
2. What do you find that is different in the narratives?
3. How did the fact that both were clergy impact the stories?
4. How would you evaluate the way in which the depression affected others?
5. What theological and pastoral issues do you consider as paramount?

**(Paper should be no longer than 8 pages double spaced)**

**Film: “Nobody Knows”**

March 16

***Happy Reading Week!!!***

March 23

**Dementia:** with Alzheimer’s disease as the representative disorder.

**Required reading: Swinton, chapters 6-7  
Andreasen: chapter 10**

March 30

**Anxiety and Panic Disorders:** with anxiety as the representative disorder.

**Required reading: Andreasen, chapter 11**

April 6

**Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality** as the representative disorder with some attention also given to obsessive compulsive behavior.

**Required reading: TBA**

**DUE: Book of Choice**

**(No more than five pages doubled spaced)**

**April 13**

*Happy Easter!!!*

April 20

**Narcissistic Personality Disorder** as a particular manifestation of self-serving as a principle mode of expression.

**Required Reading: TBA**

April 27

**Demystification of Drugs for Various Mental Illnesses**

**Guest Speaker: Dr. William Meller, Staff Psychiatrist, University of Minnesota**

**DUE: “*In The Shadow of our Steeples*”**

**(No more than 5 pages double spaced)**

May 4

**The Role of the Faith Community in Mental Illness**

The specific role of ministry to the afflicted and the affected with regard to the church’s ministry by clergy and lay people alike! What are the salient issues and concerns?

**Required reading: Swinton, chapters 8-11**

**Suggested Reading: Andreasen, chapter 12**

**DUE: FINAL PROJECTS – GRADUATING STUDENTS**

May 11

**Wrap up of the course, sharing of final projects and a final opportunity for concerns, questions and issues not addressed previously.**

**No required reading**

**FINAL PROJECTS FOR NON-GRADUATING STUDENTS**

**COURSE INSTRUCTOR**

Bob Albers, Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Pastoral Theology

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**Office Hours:**

Monday 12:30 – 4:30

Tuesday 10:00 - 11:30

Thursday 10:00 - 11:30

**OTHER TIMES BY PERSONAL APPOINTMENT!!**

**COURSE GRADING**

The grade for the course is determined by:

- A. Regular attendance and participation in class sessions.
- B. Participation in class discussion groups and plenary sessions
- C. Quality of papers written - *submitted on time*
- D. Quality of final assignment for the class – *submitted on time.*