

Bivocational Ministry (PM240-T)

Master Syllabus

Course Description:

Bivocational ministry is a reality for pastors in the twenty-first century. Whether they have a career that supports their ministry or they need a part-time job to help make ends meet, many pastors today are bivocational. Bivocational ministry may also be the wave of the future in other areas of ministry besides pastoring. This course will address the need for, and various incarnations of, bivocational ministry. It will also cover practical aspects of bivocational ministry such as time management, self-care, financial concerns, and matching ministry-learned skills with secular employer needs. 3 credit hours. Two-week intensive format. Open to all students.

Relation of Course to Other Courses:

Bivocational Ministry fulfills an elective, and/or practice of ministry requirement. No prerequisite is required.

Goals and Objectives:

The goal of this class is to help students understand and appreciate bivocational ministry as a vital part of today's church and to become better equipped to minister bivocationally. The course contributes to the M.Div./M.Min. Program Objectives in the following ways:

- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about issues of faith and ministry.
- Demonstrate the capacity for theological reflection grounded in both scholarship and experience.
- Show evidence of growth in commitment to personal and spiritual formation.
- Recognize, interpret, and respond to cultural dynamics from a multidisciplinary point of view.
- Demonstrate integration of learning according to their ministry gifts and experience.

Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- 1) Identify the importance of and various opportunities for bivocational ministry in the church today.
- 2) Define "bivocational ministry" within various contexts including, but not limited to, parish pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, church planting, and "entrepreneurial" ministry. Recognize the cultural variants operant in these contexts.
- 3) Articulate the value of the bivocational minister and her/his ministry as it contributes to the overall work of the church.
- 4) Recognize the value of the bivocational minister's non-church employment and analyze the relationship between ministry-related skills/experience and secular employment opportunities.

- 5) Demonstrate some of the skills necessary for successful bivocational ministry. These skills include self-care, time management, financial management, communication, conflict management, and others.

Content:

This course will guide students in thinking about bivocational ministry, primarily in pastoral, but also in other ministry contexts. It will help students to feel that bivocational ministry is *not* second-class or last resort ministry. It will also provide opportunities for students to learn and practice skills necessary for successful bivocational ministry, such as self-care, time management, communication, conflict resolution, leadership, and matching skills learned in ministry with needs in the secular and religious marketplace. Other topics may be included at the instructor's discretion. Guest presenters, such as active bivocational ministers representing various kinds of ministry, may be helpful.

Texts:

The following types of texts should be included in the class. Titles are given as examples of recommended texts.

- 1) A text or articles that would help students understand what bivocational ministry is and some of the ways it is practiced, such as:
The Tentmaking Pastor or *The Art and Practice of Bivocational Ministry* by Dennis Bickers
- 2) Recognizing that each pastoral or other ministry context has multiple cultural components, a text or articles to help students navigate cultural crossings would be very helpful, such as:
A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures by Patty Lane
The Art of Crossing Cultures by Craig Storti
Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice by Franklin Segler and Randall Bradley
- 3) A text or articles that would help the students prepare for some of stresses of bivocational ministry such as:
Saying No to Say Yes by David C. Olsen and Nancy G Devor
Clergy Self-Care by Roy M Oswald
- 4) Texts and/or articles that would help the students gain some of the necessary skills for bivocational ministry such as:
 - *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury or *Changing the Conversation* by Dana Caspersen (conflict resolution, communication)
 - *Developing Leadership Teams in the Bivocational Church* by Terry Dorsett (leadership)
 - *What Color Is Your Parachute* by Richard Bolles (job-hunting)
 - A good resource on time management that helps students identify and practice time management in a way that works for them.

- A good resource on personal financial management. Also, resources on church-related financial issues such as *Ministry and Money: a Practical Guide for Pastors* by Janet and Philip Jamieson

Requirements:

To accomplish the course goals, students should

- 1) Attend class regularly. Unexcused absences of more than 15% of class time will be grounds for no credit.
- 2) Read assigned texts and actively engage in class discussions around their content and themes.
- 3) Demonstrate an understanding of what bivocational ministry is and why it is important to the contemporary church. This could be accomplished by an analysis of one of the resources on bivocational ministry.
- 4) Demonstrate awareness of how ministering bivocationally might be an effective way of fulfilling whatever is their calling. This could be accomplished through an analysis of their personal sense of calling and the employment opportunities available in the field, along with suggesting creative ways of financing their ministry.
- 5) Demonstrate awareness of the particular stresses of bivocational ministry and formulate ways of addressing them. This could be accomplished by such things as a) a time management audit and/or plan, b) a self-care plan, c) response to a church conflict scenario, d) a personal financial plan, e), a plan for training lay leadership in areas that “fall through the cracks” between pastoral and lay leadership responsibilities, and f) other areas identified by instructor, guest speaker, or students.
- 6) Identify how the student’s area of ministry interest and life experiences can translate into a potential bivocational ministry, which can be accomplished through a paper or presentation on a plan for bivocational ministry.
- 7) Identify skills and experience gained in ministry that could also be useful in a secular setting. This could be accomplished by a skill inventory or by having a career consultant or human resources person address the class and creating a means of assessing students’ employment potential.

Evaluation of Course

Students evaluate the course initially through their preparation, participation, and general level of achievement, as assessed by the instructor. Students will also complete a required formal evaluation, using a form provided by the seminary. Instructors should evaluate and revise course materials and teaching methods, using the student evaluations and, when possible, peer evaluation of teaching. The seminary will regularly review course syllabi to assure that they follow master syllabus guidelines. It will also review periodically the master syllabi.