

ND312: Vocation: Discernment, Decision-making and the Call of God

Elijah Project, Fall 2014
Gordon College

Dr. Greg Cramer
Frost 304, ext. 4012
Office Hours:
Weds 8:30 – 10:00
2:00 – 4:00

Description:

ND312, when taken together with ND310, fulfills the Thematic Core requirement of *The Human Person and Civic Responsibility*; they also meet the requirements of Written Communication and Oral Communication.

This four credit, integrative seminar builds upon *Foundation of Work and Vocation* by moving from the exploration of work and vocation in categorical terms to a consideration of the sociological and psychological contexts within which we as individuals respond to the responsibilities and opportunities of work in the contemporary world. Where *Foundations of Work and Vocation* considered biblical and theological teaching on work, this seminar will focus on individual giftedness and work as a function of church and life in the context of God's new Kingdom. Likewise, where the former seminar explored invariant frameworks of human morality, this seminar will trace the contours of the current socio-historical situation within which work is chosen and psychological considerations appropriate to the student as an individual.

Questions driving this seminar are: What are your strengths, gifts and concerns? What current socio-historical realities may impact our choice of work? How do those realities interact with an individual sense of calling? How do your strengths and interests mesh with opportunities and needs in today's world? How do we understand and discern God's will? How does one make decisions with confidence? How might we understand calling in terms of spiritual giftedness, psychological strengths and individual concerns?

Objectives:

- 1) To facilitate exploration and reflection on student's individual strengths, gifts and concerns and how they inform the discernment of God's call on their life and their choice of life work. The previous summer's internship will provide material for some of this reflection.
- 2) To provide the student with theoretical concepts and reflective practice in making personal decisions concerning the cultivation of concerns and competencies, and the choice of work.
- 3) To acquaint students with several historic trends shaping the contemporary context and how these trends might inform one's choice of work.

- 4) To explore different Christian understandings of the role of the Church in society and alternative understandings of the Kingdom of God.

Course Requirements:

A) Attendance /Participation: The seminar structure of this course requires that all members come to class prepared to participate in critical conversation with the texts and each other and to engage in constructive thinking about the topics at hand. A participation grade will be awarded on the basis of attendance as well as informed and thoughtful contribution to class discussion. Class members may occasionally be responsible for leading discussion. At least one additional evening of class will be held to hear "Challenges Opportunities" presentations.

B) Internship Report: A paper on the summer internship experience which should include interaction with ideas and categories of thought from the Spring semester as well as reflection on personal insights gained through the summer experience. **Due September 10th.** See Internship Report Assignment handout.

C) Vocational Field Research: 10 hours of vocational exploration leading to greater insight into an area of interest. Unlike the community service assignment in the Spring which aimed at increasing your exposure to people and places in general, these hours should be focused on a particular area of interest and specific questions you want to explore. It may be helpful to think of this as an appendage to your summer internship. **Must be completed by Dec 10th.**

D) Exploring Challenges & Opportunities: In small teams, you will investigate an issue of human life that currently presents a challenge or opportunity and connects with an area of interest. You will submit a written report in drafts and provide an oral presentation on your findings. See assignment handout for details.

E) Final Integrative Paper: One fifth of overall grade will be based on a fifteen page integrative paper exploring the relation of topics from the reading, class discussion or your summer internship experience to your current vocational leanings. This essay should include a synthetic and creative investigation of the interface between your strengths, interests and concerns and a specified problem or opportunity. **Due December 10th.**

F) Dexter House Activities: All students are expected to attend weekly house meetings, fellowships and occasional special events.

Course Structure:

Class time will be divided between lecture and class discussion. Students will occasionally be asked to lead discussion on texts and contribute outside material to class discussions. Each student will make one major oral presentation as a group on a topic investigated in the Exploring Challenges and Opportunities

assignment. In addition to lecture and discussion, we may make use of film and field trips.

Course Outline

- I. Where We've Been and What we've Learned:
Review of Spring Term and Summer Internships
- II. What's Going On?:
Exploring Current Challenges and Opportunities
- III. Who Am I? Personal Strengths and Style Profile
- IV. Settling your Heart & Making up your Mind:
Disciplines and Discernment
- V. Putting it all Together:
Retracing Your Steps and Planning your Next Move

Required Texts:

Each student is expected to procure a personal copy of the following three titles.

- *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond*; Donald O. Clifton & Edward Anderson, Gallup Press.
NB: used copies are OK: an access code will be provided for you.
- *Living the Sabbath: Discovering Rhythms of Rest and Delight in Everyday Life*. Norman Wirzba, Brazos Press.
- *The World is not Ours to Save*, Tyler Wigg-Stevenson, IVP 2013

Note: These books are also available from Hearts and Minds Books:
<http://www.heartsandmindsbooks.com/>

Grading:

The final grade will be based upon five elements: 1) participation that evinces comprehension of material and ability to connect it with ones understanding of ones self and other educational experiences, 2) internship report 3) Issue Investigation Paper and presentation, 4) Vocational Field Research hours and 5) a final Integrative Essay.

Attendance / Participation	200 pts	20%
Internship Report	200 pts	20%
Challenges & Opportunities		
Paper	200 pts	20%
Presentation	150 pts	15%
Voc. Field Res. hrs	50 pts	5%
Integrative Essay	200 pts	20%
	1000 pts	100%

bus will be used to move students from one classroom to another.

Students with Disabilities

Gordon College is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities (see Academic Catalog Appendix C, for documentation guidelines). A student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should follow this procedure:

1. Meet with a staff person from the Academic Support Center (Jenks 412 X4746) to:
 - a. make sure documentation of your disability is on file in the ASC,
 - b. discuss the accommodations for which you are eligible,
 - c. discuss the procedures for obtaining the accommodations, and
 - d. obtain a **Faculty Notification Form**.
2. Deliver a Faculty Notification Form to each course professor *within the first full week of the semester*; at that time make an appointment to discuss your needs with each professor.

Failure to register in time with your professor and the ASC may compromise our ability to provide the accommodations. Questions or disputes about accommodations should be immediately referred to the Academic Support Center. (See also Grievance Procedures in Student Handbook.)

Academic Dishonesty Statement.

Academic dishonesty is regarded as a major violation of both the academic and spiritual principles of this community and may result in a failing grade or suspension. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, (see Plagiarism in Student Handbook), cheating (whether in or out of the classroom), and abuse or misuse of library materials when such abuse or misuse can be related to course requirements.

Library Resources Statement.

Students are responsible to obtain any library resources assigned for this course. Questions about library resources should be directed to librarians in the Jenks Library. Librarians are available to assist you from the library reference desk, by e-mail at library@gordon.edu, or by phone (978) 867-4878.

The final grade will be based on five elements: 1) participation in class discussions; 2) completion of assignments; 3) presentation about 3 issues; 4) Acquisitions Librarian poster; and 5) a final presentation paper.

20%	200 pts	Attendance & Participation
20%	200 pts	Leadership Roles
20%	200 pts	Collaborative Opportunities
15%	150 pts	Poster
2%	20 pts	Presentation
2%	20 pts	Acquisitions Librarian
100%	1000 pts	Final Presentation Paper

Schedule of Readings & Topic

Where We've Been	Aug 28, 2, 4	Recapturing lessons from last term & summer; <i>Mountains Beyond Mountains, Life Together, The Call</i> intro C & O
Who Am I? I	Sept 9, 11	Perceptions of Self and World, DiSC
What's Going On? I	Sept 16 pres. 18, 23	Challenges & Opportunities
Who Am I? II	Sept 25, 30, 7	<i>StrengthsQuest</i> Ch. 1-3; 4-9; 10-13
What's Going On? II	Oct 9, 14, 21	Challenges & Opportunities cont.
Settling your Heart / Mind I	Oct 23, 28	<i>Living The Sabbath</i> , 1- 4
 What's Going On? III	Oct 30, 4	C & O Presentations
	Nov 6, 11	C & O Presentations
 	Nov 13 AM & PM	C & O Public Pitch
Settling your Heart / Mind II	Nov 18, 20	<i>The World Is Not Ours To Save</i>
	Nov 25	Listen to God, <i>Sabbath</i> 5-6.
	Dec 2, 4	Disciplines for Growing in Faith
Putting it Together	Dec 9, 11	Final Papers and Next Steps
FINAL EXAM	Dec 17, 12-2pm	All You Know About Everything that Matters

Internship Report Assignment

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Due: Sept. 9

This is to be a reflection paper (not a report or research paper) on your summer internship activities, **11-15 pages** in length with a **preface** and **three major movements**:

- ❖ **Preface** (1-2 pages): the preface should include the following information: 1) the name and contact information of the organization(s) and or individuals you worked with; 2) the objectives you listed on your *Internship Proposal* and an indication of how well those objectives were met 3) the measurable goals from your Internship Proposal with and indication of which were accomplished; and 4) the number of hours you completed (if you worked full-time for more than 6 weeks, just indicate the number of weeks you worked)
- ❖ **First Movement** (~2 pages): Start with a brief description of **what you did**. A general statement of whom you were with, what your responsibilities were and the range of activities you were involved with will suffice.
- ❖ **Second Movement** (\geq 4 pages): Reflect on **your field of work** (what you saw, did, heard, witnessed and experienced) in light of some of the themes we explored in the Spring.

Questions that may guide your thinking and writing: (NB: *you are not expected to address them all!*)

- What evidence did you see of the overarching worldview at work in this field? (Materialism, Individualism, Consumerism, Where does it place its hope? What does it view as a threat? What does it celebrate? What can it not tolerate?)
- What particular goods are provided or what good-of-order is served by this area?
- Where is there evidence of creational norms at work in this field?
- Where is there evidence of the Fall at work in this field?
- How do differentials in intellectual development, sin and redemption express themselves in this arena?
- Where is there evidence or room for the work of redemption in this field?
- For those who follow Christ, how might this field be viewed as ministry –That is to say, what claim does God have in this area and how would one serve God's ends in it? How does this field serve the Kingdom of God?
- Has this field suffered from the lack of attention by the people of God? Where might it fall within the mission of the Church?
- If your arena was in a church or Christian ministry, are there places where it suffers from a truncated view of God's reign?
- What might this field look like if it operated more fully by Kingdom values?
- Were those you worked with primarily driven by ends, rules or by fitting responses?

Intergroup Reflection Assignment

- ❖ **Third Movement** (≥ 4 page): reflect on what you learned about **yourself** vis-à-vis your internship experience.

Questions to stir your thinking:

- What did you learn about yourself?
- What aspects of the work did you enjoy the most? What did you like the least?
- Were you more interested in the process (activities) or content (particular problems and populations)?
- What surprised you? What motivated you?
- Do you have any new concerns, cares, questions or interests?
- What would you change to make the experience better suited to your gifts and interests?
- Can you imagine continuing to work in this area?
- Where there rewarding elements of your work that could be easily transferred to other settings?
- Is this a field or activity that you would like to continue to explore?
- What challenge or opportunity excites you about this field?

Responding to Challenges & Opportunities

(figuring out what's going on and how to respond)

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Finding a fitting response to the world around us requires that we train our attention, marshal our resources, target our prayers, loose our creativity and channel our energy towards matters that matter. Knowing who we are, how we work and what we can offer is a one way to start, but we will know the joy of meaningful work and significant contribution only as we apply ourselves to the concrete challenges and opportunities of our world. And to do that, *we must know what is going on.*

Assignment:

In teams of 2-4, you will investigate a current challenge or opportunity facing the world (or a small corner of the world) and propose a solution to the challenge or a way to utilize the opportunity. You will work collaboratively to come up with a creative and 'fitting' response, write up your response and present it both to the class and in a public forum on campus. *could*

Picking a Challenge or Opportunity: *- x ought be / could be better whose prob?* *and - x ought not be* *3 min*
We will begin choosing topics by each student investigating and then 'pitching' the class on a current challenge or opportunity that interests them. The class will vote on the top 4 and will form teams around those 4 topics. In class activities will help you focus in on one topic to pitch the class on.

Investigating Your Challenge and/or Opportunity

Your topic should be something that interests you, and will need to have a particular focus. For example, rather than choosing a topic such as "Food" you should focus on a particular challenge or opportunity relevant to food like: the local food movement, the use of pesticides in production, ethanol and grain shortages, trans-fats and public food providers, GMOs and sustainable production, distribution matters, the Farm Bill, etc. In your research you will find that these challenges and opportunities – and their related sub-issues – have a lot of overlap. For example, beef consumption has an impact on deforestation, global economies, health care, climate change, international relations, education, governance, economic development, and indigenous populations. Such overlap is to be expected; you will be responsible only to identify points of overlap, but will not need to move far off your original topic (see point 5 below).

It may well be that the topic that your team ends up working on does not have immediate appeal to you. In this case, you will be challenged to discover ways that you can contribute to the work of the team by employing your own strengths, interests and internal motivations. For example, if your team is working on urban education reform and you have no intrinsic interest in urban education, you may find that you can connect to the topic through your interest

in justice, race-relations, economics or the psychology of learning. You may bring your strength of "Learning" to the table and lead the team in researching creative solutions already in use, or you may use your strength of "Communication" to come up with creative ways to let others know about the crisis of unequal education and why it matters. *There will be multiple ways to connect to your team's topic even if it was not your first choice of issue to explore!*

Your research will be used, and your learning presented in **three forms**: 1) a written report (see below); 2) oral presentations – both in class and in a public forum -each member of the team will be responsible for a portion of the presentation 3) and an 400-800 word article that is fitting for publication in the Tartan.

Written Report: First Draft: Due at time of oral presentation

Final Draft: Due 10 days after receiving feedback

Your report should: capture what you have learned, collect resources for further investigation and help you think creatively about possibilities, solutions and new directions. Your report will draw upon no fewer than five (5) resources, at least two of which are to be books. Book titles may be chosen from the book list provided; other titles should be checked with the instructor. Your report should be organized along the following outline. Note: items 1-7 of your report can be submitted jointly and should be between 12 – 24 pages (depending upon the number of members on your team); items 8 & 9 should be completed individually and should be at least 4 pages.

1. Overview: sketch contours of the challenge or opportunity you've chosen.
2. Importance: why does this issue matter?
3. State of the question: what disagreements, debates, and or consensuses surround this issue? Who is contributing to this issue?
4. Good ideas: explore a few good ideas for addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities in this area.
5. Connections: how does this topic impact and interact with other areas?
6. Questions: what questions do you have and what questions need to be addressed to make progress on this issue? What kind of questions are they? [questions of understanding (intellect); questions of fact (rationality) or questions of value (responsibility)]
7. Resources: places to learn more and connect with others on this issue (books, magazines, newspapers, organizations, web sites, conferences).
8. Next steps: what practical things can you do to connect your strengths, interests and motivations with this issue?
9. What have you learned about yourself through this process?

Oral Presentation:

Your oral presentation should creatively present what you have learned; help your classmates and others gain a basic understanding of the issue; offer

suggestions for moving forward; and make use of a variety of media for presenting the material – posters, slide presentations, video clips. You may choose to include material in your presentation that does not make it into your written report. You will have 40 minutes total. Of this time, you should make sure to leave time to take questions from the class. Every team member is expected to contribute in verbal ways to the presentation. Your presentation will be graded according to the matrix below taking into account your classmates assessment.

400 Word Article: Due one week after final draft of paper.

Your article should seek to address this question: what should Gordon students know about this topic? You should address issues like: Why does it matter? How is it relevant to our lives? How might they respond? Where can they learn more? It is our hope that some of these pieces will be chosen for publication in the Tartan.

Broad Categories of Topics:

The Basics (staying alive)

- Food – production, distribution
- Water – quantity, quality, distribution
- Air - quality
- Health
 - Healthcare
 - Infectious Diseases

The Natural World (stewarding nature)

- Climate
- Biodiversity
- Population growth
- Deforestation
- Pollution
- Natural Resource use and management

The World of Meaning (telling stories and making sense of things)

- Art
- Religion
- Education
- Psychology
- Media – news, information

The Social World (relating to each other)

- Communities – where & how people live & relate
 - Urbanization
- Governance
- International relations
- Human rights – children, women, indigenous populations, poverty
- War, Violence, Terrorism, Civil unrest

The Working World (making stuff, moving stuff, using stuff, doing stuff)

- Transportation
- Global and local economies
- Science and Technology
- Energy – sustainable production and use

Oral Presentation Rubric

Evaluating Student Presentations					
	1	2	3	4	Total
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	
Subject Knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	
Relevance	Audience is left puzzled about the relevance and importance of topic	Audience must ask questions to understand the relevance and importance of topic	Presentation allows audience to discern with little effort the relevance and importance of topic	Presentation allows audience to easily understand the relevance and importance of topic	
Graphics	Student uses superfluous graphics or no graphics	Student occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation.	Student's graphics relate to text and presentation.	Student's graphics explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.	
Mechanics	Student's presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	
Eye Contact	Student reads all of report with no eye contact.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes.	Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.	
Elocution	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear. Repeated illocutions.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation. Frequent illocutions (9-20)	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation. 5-8 illocutions.	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation. Very few (0-4) illocutions.	
				Total Points:	

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Vocational Field Research

You are to complete ten (10) hours of vocational exploration leading to greater insight into an area of interest. Unlike the community service assignment in the Spring which aimed at increasing your exposure to people and places in general, these hours should be focused on a particular area of interest and specific questions you want to explore. It may be helpful to think of this as an extension of, or appendage to, your summer internship.

Some ways in which these hours may be completed:

- Interview people working in or studying the field in which you are interested.
- Visit institutions that are engaged in the area you are interested in: offices, labs, schools, churches, hospitals, clinics, banks, stores, etc.
- Attend a conference or workshop in your area of interest.
- Shadow someone working in the field – spend a day or half a day following someone around, watching them do what they do.
- Do further research about opportunities and challenges facing the field.
- Volunteer in a capacity that will give your greater exposure to your interests.
- If you are having difficulty identifying an area, invest some time with tools designed to lead to greater self-insight. (See Greg & Laura for ideas.)

Early in the term you will be asked to let Greg know how you plan to use these hours; a statement of how these hours were completed will be collected at the final. Your 10 hours should be completed by Dec 19th, 2014.

10th