

PORTRAITS OF PASTORAL MINISTRY IN MODERN NOVELS SUMMER 2020, CHR 395-WB

Dr. Ray Van Neste

3 Hours Credit

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

There are many compelling portraits of pastoral ministry in literature. While our Pastoral Ministry course examines the biblical, theological, and historical roots and shape of pastoral ministry, this class will look for ways this ministry is represented in selected novels. Good literature has a way of drawing us to the beauty of truth and repelling us from the ugliness of distortion in a distinct way.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Enjoy some good novels. Students will recognize the value of being enriched by good literature
- Students will develop a better understanding of faithful pastoral ministry from the examples found in these books
- Students will recognize how literature appeals to our affection for good or ill
- Students will increase their love for truth and their disgust with error

III. TEXTBOOKS

Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (Picador; Reprint edition; 2006)

Alan Paton, *Cry the Beloved Country* (Scribner, 2003)

Lars Walker, *Year of the Warrior* (Baen, 2000) [Kindle version is much cheaper]

John Buchan, *The Witch Wood* (originally published, 1927; Polygon, Authorised edition, 2018)

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Video Lectures

These lectures are listed in the course schedule below and will be posted on Canvas. It will be essential to keep up with postings on Canvas to keep up with the class.

Each lecture will ask for a written response to some aspect of what was discussed. These written responses are due by email by the time the next book response essay is due.

B. Reading and Response

The reading of four novels will be the basis of this class. I wanted to include a couple more, but have restricted us to four so that we can read carefully and closely, leading to substantive discussions in our meetings.

On certain dates as indicated in the class schedule, we will meet to discuss the assigned novel. **By noon of the previous day, your essay on the book is due to me by email.** This will give me time to read your thoughts before our meeting.

The review of each novel should be a minimum of five pages long. The review should discuss the following:

- What in this book made pastoral ministry beautiful and attractive? What

character traits, skills, or activities in pastoral ministry does this prompt you to pursue or cultivate?

- What in this book made pastorally ministry ugly, distorted or repulsive? What character traits or activities does this prompt you to avoid or fight against in your own souls?
- Does the story (or characters in it) challenge common ideas about pastoral ministry today? If so, how?
- How does this story illustrate challenges to pastoral ministry? What answers, if any, does it give for those challenges?
- Will this book shape or impact your pursuit of pastoral ministry in any way?

Late penalties:

After class on the day due:	3 points
One day late:	10 points
Two days late:	15 points
Three days late:	20 points
Four or more days late:	score of "0"

C. Zoom Meetings

The student should come prepared to engage in open discussion of the book.

D. Cumulative Essay

On the final day of class, a cumulative essay (minimum 4 pages) will be due. This is not a research paper but a reflection essay where the student is to draw together his thoughts from the four books, the lectures and conversations to consider how these have shaped, adjusted, refined or focused his understanding of pastoral ministry. The essay should also include reflections on the value of literature for ministry and thoughts about future readings along this line.

The same late penalties from the book responses will apply to this assignment.

E. Exams

Due to the nature of this class, there will be no exams.

F. Final Grade

Your final grade for the term will be determined as follows:

4 papers (book interactions)	60% (15% each)
Final Essay	15%
Responses to Video Lectures & Participation	25%

G. Grading Scale - letter grades will be given in accordance with Union's grading policy and as follows:

A = 95-100 B = 85-94 C = 75-84
D = 65-74 F = below 65

V. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

We will use a mixture of video lectures, active learning assignments, and discussion via Zoom meetings

VI. POLICY ON CHEATING

The School of Theology and Missions strongly advises the student to heed college policy regarding the matter of cheating (see the current College Catalogue or Student Handbook). The professor enforces this policy. Cheating on any assignment will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

VII. ACCOMODATION STATEMENT

Any student with a disability requesting academic accommodations is encouraged to speak with the course instructor immediately at the beginning of the semester. In addition, the student must provide the instructor a letter of accommodations from the Office of Disability Services (ODS). For more information about registering with ODS please visit www.uu.edu/ods or contact Gregory Bohner, Director for Disability Services, at gbohner@uu.edu or (731) 661-6520. ODS is located in PAC F-39. All information disclosed during this process will be handled in compliance with FERPA policies regarding privacy of information.

VIII. APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PROFESSOR

I am available to meet with you for any reason and want to help you in any way I can! If you need to meet with me, please make an appointment. You can reach me by phone (731-661-5532) or e-mail (rvanneste@uu.edu).

The professor retains the right to alter any requirement or aspect of this syllabus at any time during the semester.

Course Schedule:

June 11	Introductory video: Why expect to learn about ministry from novels? Their fiction, right? And shouldn't we just be reading the Bible? Video 2- What is a pastor for? Video 3- Introduction to <i>Gilead</i> 1st Zoom Meeting: Discuss <i>Gilead</i> Video 4- Follow up from <i>Gilead</i> Video 5- The Mandate of Individual Care in Pastoral Ministry Video 6- Introduction to <i>Cry the Beloved Country</i>
June 25	2nd Zoom Meeting: Discuss <i>Cry the Beloved Country</i>

