

ASC 338.11  
Professional Pathways in Religious Vocations:  
Exploring Religious Service.  
2 credit hours

Instructor

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Goals

ASC 338.11 is designed to introduce students to world of religious service in all faith traditions. The course will help students to learn about:

- The range of religious vocation in each religious tradition.
- The basic skills needed for such service
- The challenges and social issues involved in religious vocation practiced in the United States.

By an in-depth study of religious vocation, students shall begin to build an understanding of religious vocation and to explore possible employment opportunities.

Course Description

Religious Vocation is one of the most difficult career fields. When a person elects to enter into this career path, they are entering into an area of people's deepest held beliefs and convictions. Not only that, but most likely, the person entering into this career field will be put into situations in which they feel ill equipped to handle in their own lives, much less in the lives of other people. A person in religious vocation can expect to deal with birth, death, tragedy, interpersonal conflict and community issues that affect everyone. This course will help begin the process of thinking through what it means to enter into religious vocation.

Charles Spurgeon, a Christian preacher, once said to his students who were considering ministry in the Christian church, "If you can imagine yourself doing anything else, you should do that." His words could certainly apply to anyone seeking to enter religious vocation. It is a difficult, but rewarding life to serve people at their highest and low points. But, it takes commitment, seriousness and a passion for this type of work. This class is designed to help people explore if this career field is for them.

Goals:

- 1) You will read and respond (in writing and in class discussions) to selections about the world of religious vocation.
- 2) You will listen and respond (in writing and in class discussions) to guest speakers who work in religious vocation in Central Ohio.
- 3) You will present a written and oral discussion on a religious leader of your choice.

Meeting Times

(to be determined)

Most weeks, one hour will include at least one guest speaker from a local religious organization. A second hour will allow you opportunities to make connections among reading, speakers and experiential work through discussion and other class activities. If it is possible to coordinate everyone's schedules, on some weeks, we may make off-campus visits to observe the work of our guest speakers' organizations.

## Weekly Outline

**Week 1 Introduction to Course and discussion of course requirements**  
Discussion of religious vocation in the United States: a brief history and current state of the religious profession.

Assignment: One page reflection on why you are considering a religious vocation using insight from the readings.

Reading: Prothero Section One  
Friedman, Chapters 1-2

**Week 2: Understanding Worldviews: How to think about yours and others religious traditions.**

Discussion of how to process your own worldview and understand what your particular religious tradition believes and practices.

Assignment: Three page reflection page paper on your own tradition and then spend fifteen minutes with someone from a different religious tradition. Reflect on this conversation.

Reading: Prothero, Section Two  
Friedman, Chapter Three

**Week 3 Personal development: How not to self destruct in religious vocation**

Discussion of how to care for yourself and others without burning out.

Assignment: Write one page of how you might practice personal development in religious tradition.

Reading:  
Prothero, Section Three  
Friedman, Chapter Four

**Week 4 Counseling: Walking with people through the best and worst.**

Discussion of the basics of counseling through your religious tradition focusing on what can be handled in your realm and what needs to be referred to a professional counselor

Assignment: Write a one-page reflection paper on a counseling situation in which you have been involved.

Reading: Friedman Chapter 5

Week 5 Communication: How to speak to and about your religious traditions

Discussion of the basics of public speaking and teaching in a religious setting focusing on what needs to be communicated and how to connect with people.

Assignment: Write a one-page outline as if you were going to teach a tenet of your faith tradition to a class of people who believe the same thing.

Reading: Watch a video of your favorite communicator. Note what they do well, how they communicate and the speech techniques they use to get their point across.

Week 6 Community Involvement: How your religious tradition can improve your community.

Discussion of how the religious profession can improve your community through active involvement.

Speaker: A person who is involved in faith based and community.

Assignment: Write a one-page reflection how you have seen your religious tradition work to improve your community.

Reading: Friedman Chapter 6-8

Week 7 Dealing with Crisis: Walking with people through the worst.

Discussion of what to do and say during a serious crisis point in your community or in the life of someone in your faith community.

Assignment: Write a one-page reflection on what you would do if someone calls you in the middle of the night with a crisis.

Reading: No assignment

Week 8 Understanding the Financial compensation of a religious leader

Discussion of the various ways religious leaders are compensated.

Speaker: Panel discussion with the members of UIA

Assignment: No assignment

Week 9 Religious leader case study presentations.

Week 10 Religious leader case study presentations.

## Assignments

### Reading

The required readings for this course are:

Sacred Writings of your chosen religious tradition.

Religious Literacy: What every American needs to know about religion and doesn't.  
Stephen Prothero

Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the age of Quick Fix  
Edwin Friedman

Video of the communicator of your choice.

### Writing

Reflection papers

By Friday, 5 pm of each of weeks one-eight, you will turn in a written reflection journal. A good journal entry will follow the assignment specified, but will also incorporate what the student has learned in class and in their readings. I would ask that you email me an electronic copy at [jweyer179@gmail.com](mailto:jweyer179@gmail.com)

Class Presentation on Religious Leader

By week three, you'll choose one religious leader from your particular religious tradition. You will have spoken with this person and received permission from the leader you have chosen. You will then spend a day with your chosen leader, observe how he or she does their work, and note how it is done through the various topics discussed in class. You'll spend the next five weeks learning about that organization through multiple methods of research (traditional and/or internet research, observation, interview) During weeks 9 or 10, you will present your case study to the class. At the end of week ten, you will turn in a 5-8 page written report on your chosen religious leader. The goals of each case study is to get a full orb picture of what it means to be a leader in your chosen religious beliefs.

### Grading

ASC 338.11 is graded S/U. The final course grade will be based on the following point system:

Journals	40 points (5 points for each of 8 weeks)
Case Study	50 points (40 points for written case study, 10 points of class presentation)
Attendance/Participation	50 points (5 points/week)
Participation in class includes active listening to guest speakers and classmates, as well as participation in discussions of class, either verbally or in written/online form.	

A minimum of 75% of the total points (105) is required for an "S."

Criteria for grading written case study:

Writing addresses topic, describing the “what’s” and the “why’s.”

Writing uses clearly identified details from outside sources (written sources as well as oral interviews) to put topic in a larger context.

Outside sources are appropriately cited (using MLA or APA format).

Writing shows evidence of student’s own response to the topic.

Writing is organized so that readers can follow its argument.

### **Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

### **Disability Services**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.