COS 524  Theological Reflection on the Practice of Ministry
January 2016 Weekend Course of Study for Ordained Ministry
Duke Divinity School

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Course Description: This course is the capstone to the student’s basic course of study. Its focus is the integration of the biblical, theological, and practical aspects of ministry. At the end of this course students should be able to: 1. Articulate a Trinitarian theology for the practice of ministry. 2. State clearly the nature and mission of the Church and its relation to pastoral ministry. 3. Demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically. 4. Develop a plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection, and growth.

Required Reading:

2. *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*, by Heidi B. Neumark (275 pgs.)
4. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* by Henri J.M. Nouwen (107 pgs.)

Reading Schedule:

Will Willimon’s book “Pastor” will serve as our primary course text. Ideally students will have completed reading it prior to the first class session, but if this is not possible, we will be discussing pages 1-170 on the first weekend, pages 171-274 on the second weekend, and the remainder of the book on the third weekend. Students should have completed Heidi Neumark’s book, “Breathing Space,” as well as the pre-work paper below on the book, prior the first class session. A brief response paper on Eugene Peterson’s book “The Pastor” will be due on the second weekend session, and we will discuss the book then as well. Henri Nouwen’s book “In the Name of Jesus” should be read by, and will be discussed on, the third class weekend. In addition to these readings, in order to ground our reflection in Scripture we will be reading through II Corinthians together during the time of our course and writing a few journal entries about how it informs our practice of ministry.

Course Grading Formula:

- Final Integrative Paper Assignment: 30%
- First Paper Assignment on “Breathing Space”: 25%
- Second Paper Assignment on “The Pastor”: 20%
- Journal Reflections from II Corinthians: 15%
- Participation/Engagement with the Course: 10%

Pre-Work Class Assignment: (To be printed out and turned in upon arriving in our first class session):

*Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx* is a memoir by Rev. Heidi Neumark that describes her nearly 20 years of ministry at Transfiguration Lutheran Church in New York. Amid almost unbearable poverty, violence, and tragedy, Rev. Neumark and the congregation at Transfiguration live the mission of Christ in the world and embody together the hope of the Gospel. For your first assignment, read *Breathing Space* and write a 4-5 page, typed, double-spaced paper that includes answers to the following questions: (1) What personal characteristics and ministry practices/skills enable Heidi Neumark to be such a faithful and fruitful pastoral leader in her church and community? (2) What role do theological reflection and a life of study play in Heidi Neumark’s ministry? How important do you think these things to her life as a pastor? (3) What can you as a pastor take away from this book that will make you a better at fulfilling your calling in pastoral ministry? **Be sure to answer each one of these questions, and be sure to refer to specific examples from the book to illustrate your answers.**