



NEW ORLEANS

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CCSW8301 Life Issues and Ministry Practice

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Division of Church Ministry

Fall 2025

December 1–3

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

The course explores the intersection of complex life issues and effective ministry practice in contemporary contexts by engaging students in theological reflection, pastoral care strategies, and ethical discernment.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the seminar, students will be able to:

1. Analyze key life issues impacting individuals and communities within ministry contexts.
2. Integrate biblical and pastoral perspectives in addressing complex concerns.
3. Develop practical ministry strategies for care, counseling, and leadership in the face of real-life challenges.
4. Cultivate personal resilience and vocational clarity in responding to difficult ministry situations.

Textbooks

Kim, Matthew D. *Preaching to People in Pain: How Suffering Can Shape Your Sermons and Connect with Your Congregation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021.

Ripley, Jennifer S., James N. Sells, & Dian J. Chandler, eds. *Ministering to Families in Crisis: The Essential Guide for Nurturing Mental and Emotional Health*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2024.

Sbanotto, Elizabeth A. Nesbit, and Craig L. Blomberg. *Effective Generational Ministry: Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

Stetzer, Ed. *Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2018.

Course Teaching Methodology

This course will involve reading assignments, preparing assigned reports, participating in scholarly discussions, and writing and presenting assigned papers.

Pre-Seminar Assignments

1. Life Issues Inventory: Each student will complete the *Life Issues Inventory* posted on Canvas.

A completed copy of the inventory is due before 11:59pm (CT) on August 30 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 5%

2. Ministry Context: Based on the inventory results, each student will write a brief description (1,500 word) of his/her ministry context, identifying the top 3–5 normative life issues impacting his/her church or ministry. Additionally, each student should identify the top 3–5 non-normative life issues impacting his/her church or ministry. For each identified issue (a total of 6–10 issues), each student should relate in two paragraphs per issue how the issue is currently being managed or addressed. Single spacing is appropriate for this assignment.

This assignment is due before 11:59pm (CT) on September 13 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 5%

3. Critical Review: Each student will prepare a 4 page critical review of Stetzer's work. Reviews should be double-spaced, written the latest Turabian form. The review should include no more than a 1 page summary of the work's contents, a 2–3 page critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the text, and no more than 1 page discussion of the value of the work in a ministry context.

This assignment is due before 11:59pm (CT) on September 27 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 10%

4. Ten Talking Points: Each student will prepare ten talking points (annotated observations, insights, criticisms, applications, etc) for each of the remaining textbooks. These questions will be included in class discussion later in the semester. Include a title page with this assignment; single spacing is appropriate for this assignment.

This assignment is due before 11:59pm (CT) on October 18 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 5% each/ 15% total

5. Non-Normative Life Issue Chapter: Each student will select a non-normative life issue, included or not in textbooks, and research and write a 4,500–5,000 word paper in similar format to that seen in *Ministering to Families in Crisis*. Chapters should be double-spaced, written in the latest Turabian form and include the following sections. Topics must be pre-approved by Dr. Williams and will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

- Introduction: Briefly identify the issue and highlight how the issue has presented a need or problem to be resolved. Begin with a quote or challenging fact to grab the reader.
- Scope and Impact: Include essential characteristics, demographic data, current scope, and relevant resources. Charts/graphs may be used. Consider the use of interviews or case studies.
- Biblical/Theological Foundations: Search biblical and theological sources to discover a position and determine principles on how to address the issue under consideration. Consider both direct and implied text and statements.
- Approaches/Audiences: Detail key information from your research regarding how the issue relates to various generations or life stages. Consider the issue from a variety of viewpoints. (Example: patient, client, doctor, family members, care giver, etc.)

- Ministry Implications: Consider the ramifications for personal spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical health. How has the “church” traditionally addressed this issue or concern? Has that approach been effective? Should new approaches be offered?

This assignment is due before 11:59pm (CT) on November 1 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 20%

6. Normative Life Issue: Each student will select a normative life issue, included or not in textbooks, and research and write a 4,500–5,000 word paper in similar format to that seen in *Ministering to Families in Crisis*. Chapters should be double-spaced, written in the latest Turabian form and include the following sections. Topics must be pre-approved by Dr. Hughes and will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

- Introduction: Briefly identify the issue and highlight how the issue has presented a need or problem to be resolved. Begin with a quote or challenging fact to grab the reader.
- Scope and Impact: Include essential characteristics, demographic data, current scope, and relevant resources. Charts/graphs may be used. Consider the use of interviews or case studies.
- Biblical/Theological Foundations: Search biblical and theological sources to discover a position and determine principles on how to address the issue under consideration. Consider both direct and implied text and statements.
- Approaches/Audiences: Detail key information from your research regarding how the issue relates to various generations or life stages. Consider the issue from a variety of viewpoints. (Example: patient, client, doctor, family members, care giver, etc.)
- Ministry Implications: Consider the ramifications for personal spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical health. How has the “church” traditionally addressed this issue or concern? Has that approach been effective? Should new approaches be offered?

This assignment is due before 11:59pm (CT) on November 15 and should be submitted to the appropriate link on Canvas.

Grade Weight: 20%

During the Seminar

Dec 1

7. Critical Review and Ten Talking Points Discussion: Each student should be prepared to lead the discussion and participate accordingly.

Grade Weight: 5%

Dec 2

8. Normative Life Issue Presentations: Each student will present a normative life issue during the seminar. Presentations should be interactive and approximately 30–45 minutes in length.

Grade Weight: 10%

Dec 3

9. Non-Normative Life Issue Presentations: Each student will present a non-normative life issue during the seminar. Presentations should be interactive and approximately 30–45 minutes in length.

Grade Weight: 10%

Evaluation of Grade

All student learning outcomes will be evaluated through the grading of the course assignments.

Life Issues Inventory	5%	A: 93–100
Ministry Context	5%	B: 85–92
Critical Review	10%	C: 77–84
Ten Talking Points	15%	D: 70–76
Non-Normative Life Issues Chapter	20%	F: 69 and below
Normative Life Issues Chapter	20%	
Critical Review and Ten Talking Points Discussion	5%	
Normative Life Issues Presentation	10%	
Non-Normative Life Issues Presentation	10%	

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu-Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu- Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. [Video Conferencing Help Desk](#)- Email for technical questions/support requests with the Video Conferencing NOBTS classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu- Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu- Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180)- Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon–Thurs 7am–9pm & Fri 7am–7pm Central Time)
7. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/- General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Affairs. If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval, please contact Conner Hinton immediately at chinton@nobts.edu or 504-816-8246. Students must complete the Accommodation Request Form and provide documentation of their disability. The Assistant Dean of Students notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for special accommodations on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions according to the formats offered. Any student missing more than nine hours, unless amended by a non-traditional class format, may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Policy for Late Submissions

The professor reserves the right to accept or decline late or make-up work. In most cases, late work will

be reduced fifty percent (50%) of the earned points. **Students should appropriately schedule since exceptions are unlikely.**

Plagiarism

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Professor Disclaimer

The professor reserves the right to alter, amend, or change the requirements of the syllabus based on his discretion.