**Mountain Theological Seminary**

**Congregational Leadership Studies**

**CM751 Syllabus 3 credit hours**

**Fall, 2025 Gregg Marutzky – PhD, DMin,**

**MDiv, LPCC, NCC, LMFT**

**MTS, Denver Church of Christ Contact to set an appointment:**

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**Arvada, CO 80004 (661) 916-4804**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a comprehensive course on various aspects of leading a congregation including conflict resolution, church polity (elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers), gender studies, church growth principles for different church sizes, church administration, church board, Kids Kingdom, conducting weddings and funerals, hospital and sick visitation, using technology, integrating spiritual gifts, preaching, congregational scheduling and strategic planning. This course is Practical Theology or applying theology to praxis, orthodoxy to ministry. Theology is always, by definition, practical and contextual. The students will explore Biblical, theological, historical, and proven approaches to increasing the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the church. It includes an integrative analysis of theology, organizational behavior, group process, personality theory, pastoral care, and problem-solving skills designed to enhance the leadership effectiveness of participants. An overview of Organizational Leadership & Congregational Studies includes gaining an understanding of researched congregational methods to apply to practical ministry. Congregational Studies have become a significant area of research in the last few decades. The students' own lives and experiences are a foundation for developing competence in a congregational ministry therefore spiritual formation will be a connecting thread throughout the course. The course intends to facilitate a thorough conversation on the practice of evangelism. We will listen to the stories of our churches. We will attend to biblical understandings of evangelism. We will listen to the conversation of the church through the centuries. We will confess the meanings of our own heritage. We will explore evangelism within various biblical theologies. We will allow our culture a place at the table to help us ask questions of meaning and relevance.

The course will combine an extensive analysis of the following and seek to translate them into practical skills for each individual student:

1. dynamics of power and leadership in a volunteer organization,

2. a thorough theology of the Church as the community of Jesus as revealed in Scripture,

3. a theologically valid perspective on the nature of leadership in the Church,

4. pertinent insights into the nature of group and organizational behavior,

5. exposure to the current methods employed in congregational studies,

6. current research on the correlation between personality type and religious leadership,

7. a variety of self-understanding instruments and exercises, for spiritual formation,

8. useful input from the field of pastoral care, with mind, body, spirit dynamics

9. practical focus on solving specific problems related to leadership in the context of the congregation, and

10. particular emphasis will be given to the systemic dynamics present within each congregation or organization.

**COURSE RATIONALE**

This course is part of the class work to help you be prepared for the functional forms of ministry. Ministry includes the application of your understandings of Scripture and context. “God’s Work” is provided in the classes as the theological base to inform our congregational ministry. The spiritual leadership of Jesus is the model for leading in the Christian community. Without practical theological training the mission of Christ remains unlived and unproductive. This online course surveys current views on congregational dynamics, congregational leadership, congregational systems, congregational change, congregational stories, and congregational spiritual formation. This course begins August 24 and ends December 13, 2025 and is taught by Dr. Gregg Marutzky with several guest lecturers.

**MTS MISSION**

The mission of Mountain Theological Seminary is to equip followers of Jesus around the world to be spiritual leaders and servants in Christ's church by providing them with a transformative biblical distance education.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

In light of the MTS’s mission and objectives highlighted above, the student who successfully completes this course will meet the following objectives specific to this course.

1. To investigate areas of pastoral function and provide a Biblically-based critical understanding for leading in a congregational setting.
2. To encourage the student's increased understanding of him/herself as a channel for ministry to others.
3. To provide an opportunity through research, writing, and practice for the student to demonstrate integration of theological and evidence-based concepts to develop congregational programing that will produce the ministry of Jesus in context
4. To examine leadership skills and ministry techniques used in congregational studies including church growth, spiritual formation, theological worldviews, cultural diversity, organizational structures, and change management to lead spiritually in the 21st century.

**TEXTS**

**Required Textbooks:**

Osmer, Richard. *Practical Theology*, Eerdmans, (2008). ISBN 978-0802817655. 256 pages = 14- Reading Hours

Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney (eds.). *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998. 258 pages = 14- Reading Hours

Love, Mark. *It Seemed Good to Us and the Holy Spirit*. Eugene, OR: Wifp & Stock, (2023). 212 pages = Reading Hours – 12 hours.

Branson, Mark Lau and Juan F. Martinez. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011. 275 pages = Reading Hours – 15

Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). 219 pages = Reading Hours – 12 hours

Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. (2006). 168 pages = Reading Hours – 9 hours

Total Reading Hours = 76 hours = 5 hours/week

Total Pages = 1388 pages = 93 pages/week

**Optional Reading:**

Schwarz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches.*  Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996. 128 pages = Reading Hours- 8 hours

Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*. Harvard Business Review Press. (2017). 288 pages = Reading Hours –15 hours

Anderson, Herbert; Foley, Edward. *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers 1998. 212 pages = Reading Hours –11 hours

Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (Oxford, 2001) 336 pages = Reading Hours – 18 hours

Brownson, James. *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic* (Trinity Press International, 1998) 86 pp. ISBN 1-56338-239-3. 96 pages = Reading Hours- 5 hours

**WEEKLY/SEMESTER HOURLY REQUIREMENTS**

Total Required Reading = 58 hours, 58 hours/15 weeks = 3.9 hours a week

Total Writing & Viewing & Postings = 4.4 hours writing/research

Total Homework = 8.3 hours/week X 15 weeks = 125 hours

Total Coursework = 125 hours homework + 15 hours class time = 140 hours/semester

As this is an online class, a summary of the times involved for the class are listed as follows:

Reading 58 hours

Papers 52 hours

Lectures 15 hours

Postings 15 hours

Total 140 hours

**USDE REQUIREMENTS**

The United States Department of Education (USDE) requires a minimum of 135 hours of work for any 3-hour course, regardless of how long the course lasts. It does not have to be the same work as a traditional 15-week course, but it must be the same amount of work. To meet this USDE requirement, all MTS instructors must list in their syllabi the amount of time that each assignment should take. The total hours for all work in a 3-semester-hour class must equal at least 135 hours, including any in-class time. Use the following formula for reading and writing workloads: an average adult student takes 1 hour to read and absorb 20 pages of graduate-level text and 1.5 hours to research and write and rewrite 1 page of graduate-level text. Our reading and writing guidelines require about 1,000 pages of reading per course and up to 50 pages of writing per course (including any online posts). Using the formula above, for example, reading 1,000 pages should take about 50 hours and writing 50 pages should take about 75 hours. That is a total of 125 hours, not including any in-class time for any onsite or offsite courses.

The following formula is used for determining total student work hours:

# of hours in class (including online, in person, and video )+ (X pages /20) hours of reading + (Y pages of writing and research x 1.5) hours of writing >= 135 hours. Note that the total number of hours in a course may be more than 135, but it cannot be less.

1 hour in the classroom = 1 hour of course work

20 pages of reading = 1 hour of course work

1 page (300 words) of research and writing = 1.5 hours of course work

1 hour of field research = 1 hour of course work

1 page of online posting (200+ words) = 1 hour of course work.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Modules** | **Module Workload** | **Weeks** | **Dates** | **Viewing Assignments** | **Reading Assignments** | **Written Assignments** | **Points** |
| Module One –  Introduction to Congregational Studies | How to Understand Congregations through Congregational Studies | One | Aug 24-Aug 30 | Congregational Studies- Gregg Marutzky | *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, pg.1-86 | Weekly Online Post Question- Who are you? Introduce yourself? | 10 points |
| Two | Aug 31-Sept 6 | Church Leaders Embody the Cross- Gregg Marutzky | *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, pg.87-172 | Weekly Online Post Question- What does it mean to embody the Cross? | 10 points |
| Three | Sept 7-13 | Church Leaders Build Up the Congregation- Gregg Marutzky | *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, pg.172-258 | Write “4-R” report on *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, pg.1-258  Weekly Online Post Question- What does it mean to build up the church and not tear it down? | 150 points  10 points |
| Four | Sept 14-20 | Healthy Churches- Gregg Marutzky | Osmer, *Practical Theology, pp. 1-124* | Weekly Online Post Question- Explain the essential qualities of a healthy church? | 10 points |
| Module Two –  Congregational Leadership | How to Lead a Congregation through Inclusive Leadership | Five | Sept 21-27 | Inclusive Leadership- Gregg Marutzky | Osmer, *Practical Theology,*  *pp. 225-256* | Write “4-R” report on  Osmer, *Practical Theology*  Weekly Online Post Question- Explain the essential qualities of a healthy church? | 150 points  10 points |
| Six | Sept 28- Oct 4 | Church Leaders Participate in the Mission of God- Gregg Marutzky | *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities,*  *p. 1-92* | Weekly Online Post Question- What does it mean to participate in the mission of God? | 10 points |
| Seven | Oct 5-11 | Church Leaders Are Motivated by the Grace of God- Gregg Marutzky | *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities,*  *p. 93-183* | Weekly Online Post Question- What does it mean to be motivated by the grace of God? | 10 points |
| Eight | Oct 12- 18 | Cross-Cultural Ministry- Rafael Lua & Dyron Doughtery | *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities,*  *p. 184-275* | Write “4-R” report on *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*  Weekly Online Post Question- What is difference between cultural, counter-cultural, cross-cultural, and co-cultural? | 150 points  10 points |
| Module Three –  Congregational Hospitality, Congregational Change, and Conflict Resolution  Module Three | Understanding Hospitality, Congregational Change, and Conflict Resolution | Nine | Oct 19-25 | Congregational Hospitality, Conflict, and Change- Gregg Marutzky | *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*  p. 1-105 | Weekly Online Post Question- What is a broad definition of Christian hospitality? | 10 points |
| Ten | Oct 26-Nov 1 | Trinitarian Theology & Missional Leadership- Frank Friedl | *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition,*  *p. 106-219* | Weekly Online Post Question- Define Missional Leadership? | 10 points |
| Eleven | Nov 2-8 | Resolving Congregational Change & Conflict- Frank Friedl | Love, *It Seemed Good to Us and the Holy Spirit*, p.-1-106 | Weekly Online Post Question- Define Adaptive Leadership and how this type of congregational leadership promotes healthy change?  Write “4-R” report on*.*  *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* | 10 points  150 points |
| Twelve | Nov 9-15 | Congregational Diversity- Ben Barnett | Love, *It Seemed Good to Us and the Holy Spirit*, p. 106-212 | Weekly Online Post Question- How do we navigate diversity, unity, orthodoxy, and matters of opinion in the church?  Write 4R Report, Love, *It Seemed Good to Us and the Holy Spirit* | 10 points  150 points |
| Module Four – Understanding Systems Theory and Congregational Health | Understanding Systems | Thirteen | Nov 16-22 | Congregational Systems- Gregg Marutzky |  | Weekly Online Post Question- What blessings are you counting that makes you thankful at this time in your life? | 10 points |
| Fourteen | Nov 23-29  Thanksgiving  Week | Understanding the Story of the Congregation- Ron Hammer | *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems,*  *p. 1-83* | Weekly Online Post Question- Define congregational systems and how does the church function as an emotional system? | 10 points |
| Fifteen | Nov 30- Dec 6 | Women in Leadership- Jeanie Shaw | *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems,*  *p. 84-168* | Write “4-R” report on *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems.*  Weekly Online Post Question- What is the importance of the women’s voice in the church? | 150 points  10 points |
| Sixteen | Dec 7-13 | Reflect on Course through Personal Journaling | No Reading Assignment | Final Comprehensive paper Congregational Studies  No Online Post assignment | 250 Points  Total 1150 Points |

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Email assignments to Gregg** [**at**](mailto:at_timothysumerlin@gmail.com) **gmarutzky@gmail.com by 9pm on due date.**

1. Write five (5) “4-R” reports – one for each required text of at least four (4) double-spaced pages. (A rubric is provided.)
2. Write fifteen (15) 200+ word weekly posts online.
3. Write a final comprehensive paper on the aspects of Congregational Studies. Combine academic knowledge and your personal reflections.

**Due Assignments Points**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| August 24-December 6 | Weekly Online Post Question (15 hours=15 weeks X 1 hour, 10 points X 15 weeks=150 points | 150 points |
| September 13 | Write “4-R” report on Ammerman et al. (6 hours) | 150 points |
| September 27 | Write “4-R” report on Osmer (6 hours) | 150 points |
| October 18 | Write “4-R” report on Branson (6 hours) | 150 points |
| November 8 | Write “4-R” report on Pohl (6 hours) | 150 points |
| November 15 | Write “4-R” report on Love (6 hours) | 150 points |
| December 6 | Write “4-R” report on Steinke (6 hours) | 150 points |
| December 13 | Final Paper On Congregational Studies (22 hours) | 250 points |
| Semester | Total Points All Assignments | 1300 Points |

**COURSE EXAMS/QUIZZES**

There are no exams or quizzes for this course.

**Grading Ranges** +/-

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | % | **Point Spread** | **GPA Points** |
| A Excellent | 94-100 | 1300-940 | 4.00 |
| A- | 90-93 | 900-939 | 3.67 |
| B+ | 87-89 | 870-899 | 3.33 |
| B Good | 83-86 | 830-869 | 3.00 |
| B- | 80-82 | 800-829 | 2.67 |
| C+ | 77-79 | 770-799 | 2.33 |
| C Average | 73-76 | 730-769 | 2.00 |
| C- | 70-72 | 700-729 | 1.67 |
| D+ | 67-69 | 670-699 | 1.33 |
| D Passing | 63-66 | 630-669 | 1.00 |
| D- | 60-62 | 600-629 | 0.67 |
| F Failing | 0-59 | 599 or less | 0.00 |

**COURSE CLASS SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Weeks** | Lecture | **Reading** | **Videos** | **Work** **Due** |
| Module 1 August 24- September 20, 2021 | Module One – Understanding Congregational Studies | Ammerman et al., pg.1-476 | Congregational Studies, Church Leaders Embody the Cross, Church Leaders Build Up the Congregation, | Write “4-R” Report on Ammerman et al., Due September 13  Weekly Online Post |
| Module 2, September 21- October 18 | Module Two – Congregational Leadership | Osmer, pg. 1-256  Branson,  pg. 1-275 | Healthy Churches, Inclusive Leadership, Church Leaders Participate in the Mission of God, Church Leaders Are Motivated by the Grace of God | Write “4-R” report on Osmer, Due September 27    Write “4-R” report on Branson, Due October 18  Weekly Online Post |
| Module 3 October 19- November 15 | Module Three – Congregational Change & Conflict | Polh et al., pg. 1-219  Love, pg. 1-212 | Congregational Hospitality, Conflict, and Change; Trinitarian Theology; Missional Leadership; Diversity | Write “4-R” report on Polh, Due November 8  Write “4-R” report on Love, Due November 15 |
| Module 4, November 16- December 13 | Module Four – Congregational Health & Systems Theory | Steinke,  p. 1-168 | Congregational Systems; Understanding the Story of the Congregation; Women in Leadership | Write “4-R” report on Steinke, Due On December 6  Weekly Online Post  Write Final Paper on Congregational Studies, Due December 13 |

**POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend every class session. In the event that a student misses

one class session, he/she must work with the instructor to determine what is needed to make up what was missed. If the student does not make up the work in a satisfactory manner, the student’s final grade will be lowered one letter grade at the end of the course. If the student misses two class sessions, the student’s final grade will be lowered one letter grade provided that he/she makes up work for both class sessions. If that make up work is not completed, then the final grade will be lowered by two letter grades. If the student misses three class sessions, he/she will be given an F for his/her final grade and not be allowed to finish the course.

At times students have legitimate extenuating circumstances for their absences from

class. If this occurs and the student is doing well in class up to that point, the student can contact the professor of the class and the Director of RMSMT and ask for a 30 day extension beyond the end of class to complete the work in the class. This request however must be made at least 2 weeks before the final class session. If a 30 day extension is approved beyond the end of class and the student fails to finish all the requirements of the class by the end of those 30 days, the student will be assigned an F for his/her final grade for that class. Appeals can be made to the RMSMT Director.

**LATE WORK POLICY**

All work is due when listed in the course syllabus, unless otherwise stipulated by the instructor. Grading of any late work on any assignment during the semester will be done at the discretion of the Instructor. (Note that instructors are not under obligation to accept any assignment that is late but may do so and grade it if they wish according to their discretion). No work may be accepted later than one week after the course concludes, since final grades for all classes are due two weeks after the last class session. The only exception to this policy is for students who request and are granted an official course extension as noted in the above paragraph. All such extensions are granted only for extreme circumstances (extended illness, death in family, etc.), and the extension may not exceed 30 days from the last day of class. Only the appropriate RMSMT Dean may grant such requests, which must be made in writing at least 2 weeks before the last class session. Otherwise, the grade earned at the end of the class is the one granted.

**ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP INTEGRITY POLICY**

It is the policy of RMSMT that its students and faculty exhibit a high standard of honesty and integrity and a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Students are expected to be committed to a living standard depicted in the Bible both academically and relationally both inside and outside of school. Incidents of lack of integrity, including such things as plagiarism, cheating, treating others with lack of respect will be taken seriously and offenders held accountable up to and including probation, suspension and/or removal from their academic program and RMSMT. All infractions should be reported to the appropriate Dean of RMSMT.

**INSTRUCTOR/STUDENT COVENANT**

As instructor of this course, I covenant with each student that I will model Christ-like behavior, value and respect each student as a fellow disciple/learner, be prepared for each class session, make appropriate assignments, grade all assignments fairly, return all graded assignments promptly, and be available for consultation outside of class. In return, I expect each student to model Christ-like behavior, value and respect fellow students and me as the instructor, be prepared for each class session, and complete assignments in ways that demonstrate your integrity.

**ONLINE ETIQUETTE**

Most of the online or hybrid courses in the graduate programs require students to interact with each other and with the instructor on a regular basis (per syllabus instructions). Most of that interaction is done through online comments posted on Canvas. Due to the constraints and unique nature of online communication, students should be aware of the tone or insinuations of any comments they post. Comments can often be misinterpreted when non-verbal cues such as facial expression and voice intonation are not present. Excessive punctuation, such as repeated exclamation points, could be construed as overly emotional or angry. Students need to consider how remarks might be interpreted by someone who does not know them personally and can only take their words at face value. Students should compose their comments per instructions under the syllabus assignments, paying careful attention to proper grammar and spelling.

**LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

While RMSMT does not have an official library onsite, there are many theological libraries which are available in the area for students to use with permission. These include:

The Denver Seminary Library

6399 South Santa Fe Drive

Littleton, Colorado 80120

Colorado Christian University

8787 W. Alameda Ave.

Lakewood, CO 80226

Iliff School of Theology

2323 E. Iliff Ave.

Denver, CO 80021

There are also several State University libraries in the area which can be visited for research including the University of Colorado in Boulder, Regis University, University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Naropa University in Boulder. The best search engine for biblical article research is EBSCO ATLA Religion with Serials data base which can be found at all of the above libraries.

Please also visit any theological or university library in your area to see if they have access to ATLAs Religion data base. In Colorado, you may also check with local libraries for the availability of EBSCO Academic Search Premier data base. It searches many well respected academic religious journals also. RMSMT students can also access Academic Search Premier through our RMSMT website at www.rmsmt.org.

**MENTAL HEATH RESOURCES**

Life in graduate school can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, experience anxiety or depression, and struggle with relationships or family responsibilities. Please see the instructor as well as local church support if the need arises.

**STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

RMSMT provides “reasonable accommodation” for any student with special needs, provided the student self-discloses that information to the instructor sufficiently in advance and supplies official documentation (IEP or Section 504 plan) of his/her need (obvious special needs, such as blindness, do not require documentation).