



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

DR 911CO Interpersonal Skills for Ministry

Fall 2011

9 A.M. - 5 P.M., Saturdays, 09/17, 10/15, 11/12, & 12/10 – Columbia Campus

NOTE: ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE THE FIRST DAY & Each Day of Class

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McCain Library (toll free) 1-877-876-4348

Course Description

This component aims to cultivate the interpersonal skills appropriate to ministry, specifically: the capacity to listen well, strong self-understanding, person-oriented insights basic to the professional ministry, and how such insights relate to the needs of other persons and institutions. Candidates are required to be actively involved in an ongoing ministry setting; those candidates not presently in a bona fide ministry setting will need to secure such prior to enrolling in the course. Required. Three hours. Pass/Fail.

Note: The Interpersonal Skills for Ministry requirement also may be met through one of the following three options:

1. Candidates whose ministry setting clearly makes this component irrelevant (e.g., full-time, trained counselors) may submit a written request to the D.Min. Director to waive the course and take a functions elective course in its place.
2. Candidates who have already satisfactorily completed three certified units of CPE (as evidenced by bona fide supervisory reports) may apply to the Director of the D.Min. program for a waiver of the Interpersonal Skills for Ministry course, with the hours (3) made up by taking a functions elective course. Students who have completed more than three units of CPE may petition the D.Min. Committee to receive three (3) semester hours of credit as a functions elective for each additional certified unit of CPE for a maximum of six (6) credit hours.
3. Military chaplains who have completed the Chaplain Officer Basic and Advanced courses have further options. Based on their professional experience, the Interpersonal Skills for Ministry requirement may be waived.

Course Objectives

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary (ETS) is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church—in faithfulness to the Bible, the Reformed tradition, and the standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, while showing respect for denominational diversity. The Seminary’s goals include the expectations that D.Min. graduates will be prepared to serve the Church with Christian character and integrity in their personal and professional lives; will integrate Biblical and theological norms, ministerial functions, and contextual dimensions of ministry into a meaningful, workable, effective whole; and, will increase in competence in the various functions of ministry, such as preaching the Gospel, leading worship, teaching, pastoral care and counseling, evangelizing, discipling, and carrying out the mission of the Church. The minister’s interpersonal skills are evaluated and honed in this course in an effort to contribute to meeting these goals. At the conclusion of the course it is hoped that each student will have made progress in:

- 1) exploring and developing a viable theological perspective of listening that will serve as a guide in the assessment and practice of one's pastoral and leadership skills;
- 2) identifying, understanding, and appropriately using interpersonal skills deemed necessary and effective in ministry, especially the development of better listening skills;
- 3) monitoring and supervising one’s use of such skills and developing a plan for building one’s skills;
- 4) giving feedback to and receiving feedback from one’s peers and supervisor;
- 5) developing better self-understanding (including one’s family-of-origin) and seeing how such understanding contributes to effective ministry; and,
- 6) gaining new insight into one’s own spiritual-developmental journey, especially as it relates to one’s self-care and caregiving in service to God.

Required Texts (*The Holy Bible is assumed as a required text in all classes*):

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS Student Body Association (SBA) will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students’ and professors’ purchases made through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Please note that the views expressed in the textbooks do not necessarily represent the views of the professor nor those of Erskine Seminary. It is expected that even in places of disagreement with the textbook, one will reflect upon and think critically regarding one’s own views, rather than simply dismissing views that may run counter to one’s own.

Bolton, Robert. *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1979. 301 pp. 978-0671622480

Erdahl, Lowell O. *10 Habits for Effective Ministry: A Guide for Life-Giving Pastors*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996. 160 pp. 978-0806629902

Marcuson, Margaret J. *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry*. New York: Seabury Books, 2009. 160 pp. 978-1596270954

Nichols, Michael P. *The Lost Art of Listening*. New York: Guilford, 2009. 314 pp. 978-1593859862

Other Materials Required

Leas, Speed B. *Discover Your Conflict Management Style*. Rev. ed. Bethesda: Alban Institute. (An order will be placed by professor at the close of course registration; approximate cost = \$8.00)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (within past five years; available from professor, \$5.00)

Course Requirements & Expectations

Attendance – Your preparation for, presence at, and participation in all class sessions is assumed for a passing grade. Each student, therefore, is expected to arrive on time, including following class breaks, and to attend all class meetings for their duration. In the event that an absence is necessary—for whatever reason, including pastoral duties, work, or family responsibilities—the student is responsible for all assignments and all work done in class. Students who miss more than three hours of class are required to do extra work and are expected to take the initiative to secure the assignments from the professor. Failure to complete extra work by the final day of class will result in the reduction of one's final course grade by one full letter grade. Students are responsible for all assignments (including those due on the FIRST day of class!), all work done in class, and make-up work, which is required if an absence occurs. Absences in excess of three (3) hours, may limit one's final grade to no higher than a "B-." Absences in excess of seven (7) hours will result in receiving no credit for the course. Any student who misses seven or more cumulative hours of class should contact the registrar in writing, after consulting with the professor, and withdraw from the course no later than the final day of class rather than fail it. Multiple instances of tardiness likely will result in a lower course grade.

Class preparation - Each student must be prepared adequately for each class meeting as demonstrated by the completion of all assigned readings and writings. ALL assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order to earn a passing grade in this course. Each student is expected to participate equally in class discussions. Some assignments will be shared in class. Thus, at one's own expense, each student is required to make adequate copies for one's classmates **prior to class**. The presenter is responsible for protecting the

confidentiality of all parties involved by the use of pseudonyms and other appropriate means of disguise, as well as collecting and destroying such materials after their use in class.

Assignments - All assignments are due on the designated date; this includes reading assignments. All late work is subject to a two point penalty per day. An absence does not negate this requirement unless prior arrangements have been made. All make-up work is due by the last day of class. Written work should conform to Erskine Seminary's *D.Min. Manual*, Chapter Six, "Style and Form in Writing." Do not submit work in folders; simply supply a cover/title sheet and staple pages (numbered!) together. Give careful attention to spelling, grammar, syntax, style, and form; these items are considered in grading. Proofread all papers before submission! Permission **may** be granted for one below average paper (< C) to be re-done one time to improve one's grade (limited to a maximum of a "B-"). This option does not exist for any papers turned in the final day of class.

Make careful use of the following assignment guides. The language of personal pronouns (i.e., I, me, my, etc.) is to be used in your written work in this course since you will be discussing your life and ministry. Papers should be double-spaced using a font size and style similar to that found in this syllabus which is Times New Roman, 12-point. **BEWARE: Do not string a number of quotes together or simply summarize the chapters. If you do so, you will receive a failing grade on the assignment with no opportunity to re-do the assignment!!**

1) Verbatims. One of the hallmarks of skilled pastoral ministry is the ability to reflect upon ministry events from both theological and behavioral perspectives, making appropriate use of collegial and supervisory feedback, in the quest to enhance one's ministry and people skills. **Each person will submit and present to one's peers in the second and third class meeting**, one verbatim report of a significant event from his/her current interpersonal ministry experiences. Verbatim reports should conform to the guidelines found at the end of this syllabus. The number of required copies of each verbatim report will be determined in the first class meeting when small group assignments are made. Missed small group meetings **MUST** be made up outside of class.

2) A Theology of Listening Proposal. After carefully reading the Nichols' text, write a 4-6 page double-spaced paper in which you: a) state in one page how the Nichols' text challenges or shapes your theology of listening, and b) prepare a 3-5 page theology of listening proposal that would serve as the foundation of a book on the art of listening that you would write. Scriptures cited must be developed as a part of your thesis, and not simply quoted. **DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS!!**

Please note:

- a) This assignment does NOT require an endorsement of the Nichols book; I myself don't agree with everything that is there.
- b) The purpose of the book, as is stated in the "Introduction," is "an invitation to

think about the ways we talk and listen to each other” (4). The Nichols text at least helps us in understanding the dynamics and skills of listening, and helps in asserting the vital importance of listening.

c) The book does not provide a theology of listening, which, given our purposes and interests in ministry and in the course, is a weakness. Hence, this particular assignment focuses upon your developing a theology of listening.

d) My primary purpose in asking you to supply a theology of listening is to get you to think about and to articulate your own theology of listening (the overwhelming majority of students report that they “have never thought about their theology of listening before”). My intention is to ground our examination of listening, and the skills that attend to effective listening, in a Biblical theology of listening. I do assume that the text helps in "priming the pump" in terms of thinking about the importance and centrality of listening in our lives.

3) Reflective Responses to the Erdahl and Marcuson Texts.

For the Erdahl text - Before beginning to read Erdahl, ask God to guide your self-examination in light of the categories presented in the text. After giving a one paragraph minimum/one page maximum critique of Erdahl’s text, write a 4-5 page double-spaced paper in which you evaluate your own effectiveness in ministry in each of the ten specific areas considered by Erdahl, together with a plan for how you might address any areas of weakness and areas in which you hope to grow.

For the Marcuson text - Before beginning to read Marcuson, ask God to show you important insights about your family-of-origin and its impact on how you understand, approach, and function within ministry. Write a 6-10 page, double-spaced essay in which you very succinctly describe the most important insights that God brought to your attention about yourself and your ministry from the book. Also give some attention to how you will use the insights in your life and ministry, and how these insights may help you in understanding and ministering to others.

4) Communication Skills Learning Contract, Journal, & Report. Following guidelines given in class each student will develop a learning contract and will maintain a weekly journal (x 6 weeks) to track one’s progress in the use of communication skills and to increase one’s reflective skills and self-supervision. Also, a 1-2 page single-spaced report is required in which one reflects upon the overall experience and the changes in one’s interpersonal skills that occurred during the course of this assignment.

5) Peer Evaluations. Each person will prepare a brief written evaluation of each of your small group member’s interpersonal skills (both how you experienced them personally and what you learned about them from their verbatim presentations). These feedback reports will be given to the person being evaluated and a copy to the professor. A suggested formula: list several things you found attractive as well as unattractive regarding their interpersonal skills. **NOTE: Persons not present for the final peer group meeting MUST arrange for a suitable alternative context**

in which real-time interaction with one's peers may occur (e.g., conference call).

Course Grading

Regular attendance and participation in class are assumed for a passing grade in this pass/fail course. **All assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order to receive a passing grade.** The final grade will be calculated on the standard seminary D.Min. scale as follows:

Verbatims	15% each
Communication Journal & Essay	25%
Reflective Responses to Erdahl & Marcuson	10% each
Theology of Listening Proposal	20%
Peer Evaluations	5%

Seminary Policies – see

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf

Office Hours: While I do keep regular office hours on campus, my schedule may change due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise. Therefore, if you need to see me, I strongly urge you to schedule an appointment.

Class Schedule (ASSIGNMENTS are due on the date cited)

September 17

Introductions: class members, syllabus, term: “Implications”
 Purpose and Biblical Foundations of Developing Interpersonal Skills
 People Skills Needed in Ministry
 Johari Window: Giving & Receiving Feedback
 Discussion of Nichols
 Introduction to Listening Skills
 Small Group Assignments – Present Theology of Listening Proposal
 Pastor - “Check Your Call”
 Administer MBTI

ASSIGNMENTS DUE for the first class meeting: Completion of reading of Nichols and turn in completed “Theology of Listening Proposal.”

PRIOR TO THE NEXT CLASS MEETING: If you have taken the MBTI previously & did not take it today, send a copy of the results to Dr. Bell.

October 15

Discuss Bolton (Parts I & II)
 Family Systems and Family-of Origin Issues

MBTI - Implications for Interpersonal Skills
 Developing a Communication Skills Learning Contract
 Small Group Assignments: Verbatim Presentations

ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY:

- 1) Read and Study Bolton, Parts I & II.
- 2) Prepare and bring sufficient copies of a verbatim reflecting current interpersonal ministry experience. Be prepared to present in your small group.
- 3) Turn in Communication Skills Learning Contract developed in class today (identify the one block and the three listening skills—one from each listening skill cluster as per Bolton—upon which you will focus in changing/enhancing your interpersonal/listening skills).

Please note: One must begin the six week Communication Skills Journal project immediately in order to complete it by the deadline.

November 12

Conflict Resolution Skills - Bolton, Parts III & IV
 Conflict Management: Power, Control, & Authority
 Family Systems
 Small Group: Verbatim Presentations
Discover Your Conflict Management Style

ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY:

- 1) Read and Study Bolton, Parts III & IV.
- 2) Turn in completed Marcuson paper.
- 3) Prepare and bring sufficient copies of a verbatim reflecting current ministry experience. Be prepared to present in your small group.
- 4) Turn in a copy of the results page of your *Discover Your Conflict Management Style* survey.

December 10

Discussion of Erdahl
 Discussion of "The Art of Saying 'No'" (Handout)
 Clergy Interpersonal Ethics
 Small Group: Peer Feedback
 Course Evaluations

ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY:

- 1) Prepare and bring two copies of each Peer Evaluation
- 2) Turn in completed Erdahl paper
- 3) Turn in completed Communication Journal and Report

DR 911 Guidelines for Verbatim Reports

A verbatim report is a method by which the student attempts to record the essential elements of the ministry event and relationship as remembered. *It is understood that the student will not be able to record the conversation with perfect recall. The way the event is remembered, however, is often more important for ministry learning than having the accurate transcript.* Also, the verbatim's effectiveness and usefulness as a learning tool is not predicated upon the complexity of the particular ministry event. Significant learnings can be gleaned from even the most "simple and casual" of conversations between pastor and parishioner.

A verbatim generally will be approximately five pages in length. All prayers should be written out in full.

Verbatims are to be written in such a manner as to protect and ensure the confidentiality of the persons involved in the ministry event, and should display the following heading: "Confidential Ministry Report."

Example:

Confidential Ministry Report

A Verbatim Record – Ministry to "Bob" (use pseudonym or initials)

John Baptist, Pastor, First Church, Atlanta, March 10, 2002

The following five (5) elements then are given in the order presented below:

I. Introduction – brief, factual information known to the student about the person(s) receiving ministry; pertinent situational data; appropriate process or relationship development data; preliminary ministry goals (when the event has been planned); the student's own "state of being" (frame of mind and heart); and, a brief situational and process comment as the ministry event begins. NOTE: the focus is upon the minister's interpersonal skill development and NOT upon resolution of the parishioner's problem.

II. Interpersonal Exchange – a transcript from the student's memory of what was communicated by minister and parishioner. An adequate verbatim usually includes 15-20 exchanges. Each person's communication is designated by an identifying letter, sequential numbering of subsequent responses, and double-spacing between the single-spaced statements of each person. Example:

M1 Good Morning, Bob. I was in the area and thought I'd drop by for a few minutes and see how that new job is coming along?

B1 (looking tearful, voice quivering) Not so good, Preacher.

M2 Oh? What's wrong? [My stomach begins to tighten]

B2 (begins to sob) I failed my physical that they required

M3 Now, now, Bob, it's not so bad. You need to just look on the bright side!

CONTINUE IN THE SAME FASHION, NUMBERING RESPONSES FOR EASE OF REFERENCE WHEN REVIEWING THE VERBATIM

Comments concerning words spoken, feelings felt or perceived, actions described, and situational happenings should be given in brackets or parentheses.

III. Reflections – the student’s own identification of: personal feelings; the process of the ministry event; interpersonal theory and skill utilization evident; and an estimate of the parishioner’s specific interpersonal need(s) for ministry. Reflections are different from evaluations!

IV. Evaluation – the student’s own written assessment of ministry performance (strengths and weaknesses) related to process, skills, theory, theological dimensions, etc. related to one’s use of interpersonal skills, especially one’s listening skills. Primary attention is to be devoted to the student’s perception of his/her own evident strengths and growing edges in ministry; what you would do differently next time, etc. References to specific interactions should be given (B1, M4, etc).

V. Future Ministry Goal(s) – the student’s plan for how he/she will alter his/her use of interpersonal skills in ministry to the person(s) involved in this verbatim in future contacts. Includes things about which the student will be internally aware as well as observable actions.

Reflections, evaluations, & future ministry goals should be listed succinctly and numerically. Note carefully the distinction between reflections on the event and one’s evaluation of one’s ministry in the event. For example:

Reflections

1. I’m glad I went to see him today.
2. I was very preoccupied with his grief over his father and was shocked about the news of his own impending death.
3. Bob is nearly as old as my father. I really feel anxious and awkward trying to be his minister. Anxious because of my fear of my father’s death some day and awkward because I feel like a kid telling his parent what to do.
4. I seemed to focus more on trying to "fix" things than really hearing his grief. Makes me wonder if I am afraid of my own grief.

Evaluations

1. I was very anxious, but I showed good pastoral initiative in going to see Bob about his new job.
2. I took the lead at M5 & M6; then followed Bob at M11 and M14. This seemed balanced.

3. My expression of gratitude at M18 was an attempt to practice giving a pastoral blessing; it seemed to have been effective.
4. I missed an opportunity at P10 to respond to his concerns for his family.
5. My attempt to introduce prayer seemed clumsy and ill-timed. I struggle with how to integrate prayer effectively. My prayers seem stilted and artificial.

Future Ministry Goals (what one plans to do/say/be in future contacts):

1. I will ask him if he would like for me to pray rather than assuming that it is OK.
2. I will make a conscious effort to maintain eye contact especially when I feel uneasy.
3. I will address theological themes rather than avoiding them.
4. I will explore why offering meaningful prayers is so difficult for me.

—End of Verbatim Guidelines—

Study Guide for Bolton Parts III & IV

Read all of Robert Bolton, *People Skills*, pages 115-279, paying particular attention to the following portions found therein:

1. Submissive-Assertive-Aggressive Behaviors
2. Formula for & examples of the “Three-Part Assertion Message”
3. The Six-Step Assertion Process
4. The Benefits of Conflict
5. Dealing with the Emotions in Conflict
6. The Conflict Resolution Method (3 steps)
7. Six Steps of the Problem-Solving Method
8. Three Essentials of Effective Communication
9. The Apathy-Empathy-Sympathy Continuum

--End of Bolton Guidelines--

DR 911 - Interpersonal Skills for Ministry - Guidelines for Communication Project

Communication Skills Learning Contract for _____

After carefully reading and studying Bolton, *People Skills*, pages xiii-113, 275-279, decide which **one** of the twelve barriers (category does not matter) described on page 17 and listed below upon which you are going to work to diminish or extinguish.

Prayerfully choose one barrier that truly is a problem or a challenge for you (if you have trouble identifying one, ask your spouse or a trusted friend what you need to work on).

Barriers:

Criticizing	Moralizing
Name-calling	Excessive/ Inappropriate Questioning
Diagnosing	Advising
Praising Manipulatively	Diverting
Ordering	Logical Argument
Threatening	Reassuring

Next, prayerfully choose three listening skills, one skill from each skill cluster, from the list of twelve specific skills given on page 33 and listed below.

Listening Skills:

<u>Attending Skills Cluster:</u>	<u>Following Skills Cluster:</u>	<u>Reflecting Skills Cluster:</u>
Posture of Involvement	Door Openers	Paraphrasing
Appropriate Body Motion	Minimal Encouragers	Reflecting Feelings
Eye Contact	Infrequent Questions	Reflecting Meanings
Non-distracting Environment	Attentive Silence	Summative Reflection

Once you have identified one block and three specific skills that you will work on over the course of six (6) consecutive weeks, you have completed all that is necessary to be able to turn in your "Communication Skills Learning Contract."

Communication Journal

During the six (6) consecutive weeks of your project to improve your listening skills, you will focus prayerfully and intensely upon the barrier and skills identified in your learning

contract (above). The journal requires that at least once a week, you record your progress, or lack thereof, with each of the four items (one barrier, three skills). Write a minimum of one paragraph for each item each week for six weeks (hence, the minimum is: one paragraph per item per week = 4 paragraphs x 6 weeks = 24 paragraphs or separate entries). A sample journal page for one week may look like the following:

WEEK ONE - [dates]
<u>Barrier [name]</u> : Describe in a paragraph how you got along this week in extinguishing or reducing your use of this particular barrier. In what kinds of situations do you find yourself most likely to attempt to use this barrier? What issues of self-awareness are you discovering? What effect do you notice when you use/don't use this barrier? For example . . .
<u>Attending Skill #1 [name]</u> : Describe in a paragraph how you got along this week in using or implementing this particular skill. What issues of self-awareness are you discovering? What effect do you notice when you use/don't use this skill? For example . . .
<u>Following Skill #2 [name]</u> : Ditto above for skill #2.
<u>Reflecting Skill #3 [name]</u> : Ditto above for skill #3.

Your entries should answer the question, “How did I get along this week with this particular barrier or skill, in a variety of settings?” Be sure to reflect upon the entire spectrum of your experiences; i.e., include evaluation of your work in family, career, ministry, and general public contexts. Also be certain that you reflect specifically enough about your experiences so that your learning experiences and insights gleaned in the course of implementing the skills/reducing the barrier are evident. **DO NOT REPORT SIMPLY ON ONE RELATIONSHIP OR A SINGLE ENCOUNTER IN THE WEEKLY JOURNAL ENTRIES.** Journals may be hand-written provided they are legible to the professor.

Communication Report

After reading over your completed six-week journal, write a one-page, single-spaced report in which you reflect upon the experience of working on these skills/barrier. State: (1) the barrier and skills on which you contracted to focus; (2) what you learned about listening during the course of this exercise; (3) how your listening skills impact your family, personal, professional, and ministry relationships; and, (4) the value of this exercise for your personal and professional growth and development. Turn in a copy of your journal & final report together.

--End of Communication Project Guidelines--

END OF SYLLABUS