

SYLLABUS  
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
DMIN 715: Prophetic Leadership for Social Transformation  
Winter 2026  
January 12-16

*This syllabus is drawn from and in large part mirrors the course developed by President Javier Viera. It is utilized in whole and in part during his absence and with permission.*

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Meeting hours for consultation: By appointment

### **Course Description**

The focus of the Doctor of Ministry Degree is to “analyze, implement and improve a focused practice of ministry” in the ministry of social transformation. This course seeks to bring together the distinct callings and skills of the Spiritual Direction and Prophetic Leadership tracks as part of a common ministry and mission that mobilizes faith communities and people to respond to the contexts within which they find themselves.

This course is located in a deeply divided and fear-filled time that has formed deep divisions. Some have found the church and spirituality as places to hide from the realities of abundant cruelties, hatreds and dislocation. There is a patina of comfort in the division of church & world or personal piety & prophetic witness/action. Yet, the experience of fear and dislocation has gripped a wider swath of the community in a common weave. The dichotomies belong to a colonial time that has been irretrievably shaken. To frame my own approach and hope for this time and our common ministry going forward, I draw upon Maya Angelou’s observation in her poem *Human Family*

“I note the obvious differences  
between each sort and type,  
but we are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.”

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/maya-angelou-s-human-family/>

This course will unfold in the season after Epiphany, a time to respond to the Christmas gospel. I was reminded in the Advent season that this is a time of transformation, of *metanoia*. It is a time when the incarnation is proclaimed as a deep, existential re-

orientation in the wake of major assumptions about the world are debunked or challenged. And, the Epiphany is the discovery of the new manifestation made possible by the incarnation and being “lived into” with insight and enlightenment through a courageous spiritual renovation in community.

To embrace the task for this course as set out by President Viera,

“We will explore together—how to, as a leader, offer an alternative perception of reality for the ministry contexts in which we serve and how to discern with the people we serve how best to live together and to show concern for our shared futures and identities. While at times that work may require “spectacular acts of social crusading or of abrasive measures of indignation,” prophetic leadership mostly takes place in day-to-day interactions, in the cultivation of a vision and of a shared way of life as a community, and in a commitment to embody together the justice of God in our lives, in our churches, in our relationships, and in our communities. Leadership of this sort is rarely headline grabbing, but almost always transformative.”

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify and describe different leadership models for Christian ministry and the theological underpinnings and assumptions that inform those models.
2. Analyze and describe biblical examples of prophetic leadership.
3. Analyze models of social transformation and identify the biblical and a theological framework that informs each model.
4. Propose for implementation a method or approach to prophetic leadership for social transformation in the student’s specific ministry context.

### **Required Readings**

*Books to be purchased. Prices may vary due to discounts, etc.*

Barber, William J., Liz Theoharis and Rick Lowery. *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing*. (Beacon Press: Boston) 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0807025604 (\$18.00 Amazon)

Beaumont, Susan. *How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going*. (Rowan and Littlefield: New York) 2019. ISBN-13: 1538127681 (\$29.00 Amazon)

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis) 2018. ISBN 13: 978-1506449302 (\$13.37 Amazon)

*Articles & Selections provided as PDFs on course CANVAS site. These will be available when the course "Publishes" on CANVAS no later than January 3, 2026.*

Ellacuria, Ignacio. "The People of God and Liberation" in *Essays on History, Liberation and Salvation*.

Gafney, Wilda C. *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. (Westminster/John Knox Press: Louisville) 2017.

Illich, Ivan. "To Hell with Good Intentions." Address to the InterAmerican Student Project in Cuernavaca, Mexico. 20 April 1968.

Ospina, Sonia and Erica Foldy. "Toward a Framework of Social Change Leadership." Research Center for Leadership in Action, September 2005.

Supplemental Readings (not required).

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer-Reader's Edition (Fortress Press: Minneapolis) 2015. ISBN-13 978-1506402765. (\$13.44 Amazon)

Brueggemann, Walter. *Finally Comes the Poet: daring speech for proclamation*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis) 1989. ISBN-13 978-0800623944. (\$20.34 Amazon)

Carter, J. Cameron. *The Anarchy of Black Religion: a mystic song*. (Duke University Press: Durham, NC) 2023. ISBN 13 978-1478025030. (\$25.01 Amazon)

Hooks, Bell. *Spiritual Vision*. (Fortress Press: Minneapolis) 2023. ISBN 13 978-1506488363. (\$13.44 Amazon)

## Course Expectations

### Class Attendance

This is an online course conducted via Teams. The course runs each day from January 12-16. Please be on-line and ready to go at 9am CST each morning. There will be a break from noon-2pm each day. We will resume promptly at 2 and complete our work together at 4pm. Please load Teams onto your computer and be sure your camera and mic are

working. Please familiarize yourself with the platform. A link will be sent out 15 minutes prior to the beginning of class each day.

### Preparation and Participation

Completion of required readings prior to the scheduled date is necessary and will enhance the student's developing understanding and participation in the course. Participation includes preparation, selective verbal contributions to class discussions, attentive and engaged listening, and facilitating the participation of other learners in the course.

### Teams Protocols

Since you are participating in the course by Teams, there are several expectations for maintaining the Garrett Team room as a productive learning experience for everyone. Team participants should plan for the following:

- Join the Team class from a computer that has a video camera. As you will need to open documents, participate in chat, and join breakout groups, it is not possible for you to fully participate in class from a phone or tablet.
- Join the Team class from a quiet room without distractions, both to yourself and to your classmates.
- All students are expected to have their cameras turned on so that the class is a face-to-face experience for everyone. Please speak with the professor in advance if this is going to be a challenge for you.
- When in the Team room, please mute your microphone when you are not speaking. Use the chat and raise your hand features of Teams to join the conversation when others are speaking.
- Consider using headphones that have a microphone built in as this will maximize your listening and speaking participation.

### Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

#### Writing

- Academic integrity and plagiarism: (See 20-21 Handbook, 12, 76-82). Instructors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially

plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.

- Writing and citations: The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/studentservices> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

### Attendance and Class Participation

- Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed. All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 20-21 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (20-21 Handbook, 20) **(In the case of an absolute emergency a day may be granted for absence, but is not encouraged or normalized)**
- Some faculty may limit the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session. **(During the DMin intensive please notify the professor and your classmates if your cell phone will be turned on and the nature of the urgency)**

### Academic Accommodations

- Garrett's Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities policy and process is set out in the Academic Handbook (20-21 Handbook, 12) and the Academic Accommodations section on <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services>.
- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact Student Access (email: [student.access@garrett.edu](mailto:student.access@garrett.edu) / phone: 847-467-5530) to move forward with the established accommodation process. If you already have

established accommodations with Student Access, please contact the instructor prior to the first class session so the instructor can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential under FERPA regulations.

- Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (20-21 Handbook, 20) **(There are no extensions granted for this session of the DMIN 715)**

### Assignments

#### 1. Daily *Havruta* **this is a unique discipline for this course as an ongoing model for prophetic leadership for social transformation**

*Havruta* is the Jewish practice of paired study and focused conversation around classical Jewish texts. In the context of this course, however, we will adapt the practice of *Havruta* to the texts we will be exploring during the morning biblical reflection. An article introducing the concept of *Havruta* is found on the course CANVAS site, and we will discuss it during the first class session. The assignment of *Havruta* partners will be discussed on the first day of class. Following our opening morning greeting and class business, partners will go into separate Teams rooms to discuss the assigned biblical text and commentary. Logistics and more detailed instructions will be discussed at the first class session.

#### 2. Assigned Readings Discussion Forum

Throughout the course, students will engage with their peers in a CANVAS-style forum. Every student is expected to write a post on each of the assigned readings, creating their own discussion thread. The post should be approximately 500 words (1 page single spaced) and should be a critical response to the assigned book or article, except for the Gaffney book. The deadline for posts on the Barber and Brueggemann book is January 8, 2026 by noon CST (pre-course). The deadlines for posts on the Beaumont, Ellacuría, Illich, and Ospina readings is at 8am CST on the morning they will be discussed in class (see schedule below). Because your classmates need you to complete this assignment by the deadline, no late entries will be allowed.

After you have created your initial post and discussion thread, you are expected to respond to at least one of your classmate's posts. These responses must have substance and represent thoughtful engagement with your peers and the ideas they present. "Good job," "Well said," and "I agree," or similar comments do not constitute a substantial response on their own. They should minimally be 250 words and you should have responded to at least one of your classmates' posts by January 11 midnight CST at the latest.

Instructions on how/where to post these assignments in CANVAS will be available when the course is "published" on or before January 3.

### 3. Final Paper

The final paper is intended to help students integrate their learning and articulate a clear mastery of the course learning outcomes. Students should write an essay that uses **one of the models of prophetic leadership** explored in the course as the framework with which to address a challenge of social change they are contending with in their own ministry context. The essay should provide a detailed analysis of the social context and change project that is being undertaken or considered. It should also clearly and substantively draw upon biblical, theological, and leadership sources as methods and resources in addressing this challenge and articulate how these sources can help bring about the vision of prophetic leadership described by Brueggeman, where ministry "can be discerned wherever people try to live together and show concern for their shared future and identity." 10 pages, due February 1 by 10pm CST.

### Grading

Final marks for this course will be computed on the following basis:

#### Daily *Havruta*:

*Havruta* is only eligible for credit when it demonstrates an informed engagement with the readings and the ideas/questions of your *Havruta* partner. Grading is credit/no credit.

### Class Discussion Forum:

Discussion posts are only eligible for credit when completed by the deadline AND demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the assigned text and with a classmate's essay. If you submit an initial post but do not respond to your peers or vice-versa you will receive half-credit. Grading is letter grade, but failure to make a substantial response will lower your grade by half. i.e. an A- to A post will be reduced to a C+ to B- when a substantial response is not made.

### Basic expectations of written materials:

- (a) basic grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc.
- (b) flow of organization and demonstrated familiarity with course readings
- (c) depth of thinking, clarity of information, and demonstration of analytical skills
- (d) strength of written assignments by incorporating quotes from the readings (please use an established citation system for footnoting)

### Grades of Written Work

A- to A: Well organized, developed, and expressed. Work reflects insightful, penetrating analysis and attends to significant details and questions.

B+ to A-: Well organized, developed, and expressed. Work reflects insightful analysis and attends to significant details/questions. It is less than excellent in presentation and/or overlooks a crucial detail/question.

B to B+: Adequately organized, developed, and expressed. Work reflects patient analysis and attends to many significant details and questions. It is less than excellent in presentation, overlooks a crucial detail or question, and/or could be further developed within the confines of the assignment/exam questions.

B- to B: Adequately organized, developed, and expressed. Work reflects sufficient analysis and attends to some significant details and questions. It could be improved in presentation, overlooks several crucial details or questions, could be further developed within the confines of the assignment/exam questions, and/or is unclear in some places.

C+ to B-: Somewhat organized and developed. Work offers some analysis and attends to a few significant details and questions. It lacks organization and clarity in several places, overlooks several crucial details or questions, and/or is underdeveloped.

C to C+: Minimally organized and expressed. Work exhibits evidence of reading the assigned material but only a few features worth commending, attending to only the most obvious details and questions, settling mostly for banal observations.

C- to C: Barely acceptable. Minimum requirements are met but work is poor in a variety of areas (e.g., organization, clarity, attention to important details and questions).

D-F: Unacceptable. The work shows no engagement with the assigned material, is incomplete,

or consists mostly of remarks that are not pertinent to the assignment.

#### Final Grade Percentages:

Class Participation	10%
<i>Havruta</i>	15%
Discussion Board Posts	25%
Final Project	50%

### Class Schedule

Times are CST. Note: the professor lives in EST.

Monday, January 12

9.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Daily Check-in

9.05 a.m. Introductions

9.35 a.m. Preliminary Considerations and Introduction to the Course

10.00 a.m. Break

10.15 a.m. *Havruta*/Prophetic Leadership Biblical Reflection: Hagar

(Genesis 21.1-21/Gafney 38-45)

10.45 a.m. Group Discussion on assigned biblical text

11.15 a.m. Lecture/Setting the Stage

Noon Break

2.00 p.m. Engagement with assigned reading for the day (Brueggemann, chps. 1-4)

2.45 p.m. Break

3.00 p.m. Small Group Work

4.00 p.m. Class ends

Tuesday, January 13

9.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Daily Check-in

9.05 a.m. *Havruta*/Prophetic Leadership Biblical Reflection: Shiphrah and Puah

(Exodus 1.8-21/Gafney 89-91)

9.35 a.m. Group Discussion on assigned biblical text

10.00 a.m. Break

10.15 a.m. Lecture/Engagement with assigned reading for the day

(Brueggeman chps. 5--postscript)

11.00 a.m. Small Group Work/Critical Questions

Noon Break

2.00 p.m. Leadership Models: Ellacuría Reading

2.45 p.m. Break

3.00 p.m. Exploring Strategies for Social Change

4.00 p.m. Class ends

Wednesday, January 14

9.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Daily Check-in

9.05 a.m. *Havruta*/Prophetic Leadership Biblical Reflection: Miriam

(Exodus 2.1-10; 15.1-21/Gafney 95--99)

9.35 a.m. Group Discussion on assigned biblical text

10.00 a.m. Break

10.15 a.m. Lecture/Engagement with assigned reading for the day

(Barber, et. al. Part 1: Chaps. 1-3)

11.00 a.m. Small Group Work/Critical Questions

Noon Break

2.00 p.m. Leadership: Illich Reading

2.45 p.m. Break

3.00 p.m. Exploring Strategies for Social  
Change

4.00 p.m. Class ends

Thursday, January 15

9.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Daily Check-in

9.05 a.m. *Havruta*/Prophetic Leadership Biblical Reflection: Abigail

(1 Samuel 25/Gafney 203--207)

9.35 a.m. Group Discussion on assigned biblical text

10.00 a.m. Break

10.15 a.m. Lecture/Engagement with assigned reading for the day

(Barber, et. al. Part 2: Chaps. 6, 7, 9, 12, 14)

11.00 a.m. Small Group Work/Critical Questions

Noon Break

2.00 p.m. Leadership Models: Ospina and Foldy reading

2.45 p.m. Break

3.00 p.m. Exploring Strategies for Social Change

4.00 p.m. Class ends

Friday, January 16

9.00 a.m. Opening Prayer and Daily Check-in

9.05 a.m. *Havruta*/Prophetic Leadership Biblical Reflection: Jezebel

(2 Kings 9.30--37/Gafney 240--247)

9.35 a.m. Group Discussion on assigned biblical text

10.00 a.m. Break

10.15 a.m. Lecture/Engagement with assigned reading for the day

(Beaumont, chaps. 1--2, 6--7)

11.00 a.m. Small Group Work/Critical Questions

Noon      Break

2.00 p.m. Leadership Models: Fannie Lou Hamer video

2.45 p.m.    Break

3.00 p.m. Exploring Strategies for Social Change

4.00 p.m.    Class ends

Final paper is due February 1, 10pm CST