

Ambrose University,
Calgary, Alberta

SC645: Introduction to Prison Chaplaincy

3 credit course

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Office: by appointment.

Course Description:

This course provides chaplains, ministers, spiritual care practitioners, and others with a thorough knowledge of criminal offences and sentences, prison dynamics, and security issues. The course enhances chaplains' competence skills in the areas of pastoral interviews, public presence, faith formation, worship and rituals, programming opportunities, ecumenical values, inter-faith accommodation, sacred space, team ministry, volunteer support, restorative justice, and reintegration initiatives.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to . . .

1. Discuss the impact of a prison environment on chaplaincy priorities.
2. Identify particular skills as spiritual care providers.
3. Prepare a five-year spiritual care/pastoral plan.
4. Articulate the importance of ecumenism and inter-faith accommodation.
5. Integrate colleagues and volunteers into team ministry.
6. Explain the value of restorative justice and reintegration.

Course Outline

Session 1: The Effects of Criminal Offences and Prison Dynamics on Chaplaincy

This session outlines the types of criminal offences that people commit, the sentences they receive, the consequences of their actions, the needs that they have after they have been convicted, and appropriate responses by chaplains and correctional staff.

Read the *Introduction to Glimpses to Grace* and write a two-page reflection on what you consider the most important role of chaplaincy. To be handed in before Session 2.

Session 2: The Varied Nature of Institutional Prison Chaplaincy

This session considers the continuum of chaplaincy care that includes public presence, private interviewing and counselling, faith formation, presiding over rituals, educational initiatives, coordinating religious activities, religious accommodation, and coordinating volunteers.

Read *Chapter One* of *Glimpses to Grace*, select two vignettes, and write a two-page reflection on how you would have handled the incidents discussed. To be handed in before Session 3.

Session 3: The Purpose of a Pastoral Interview

This session outlines the importance of an initial interview in establishing a pastoral relationship with an inmate. Building rapport, asking pertinent questions, getting background information, showing compassion, and establishing trust goes a long way in providing effective spiritual care.

Read *Chapters Two* and *Four* of *Glimpses to Grace*, select two vignettes, and write a two-page reflection on how you would have handled the situations discussed. To be handed in before Session 4. Supplementary reading can be done about “The Purpose of a Pastoral Interview” in Donald Stoesz, *Is It Possible to Change?* www.donaldstoesz.com.

Session 4: The Role of Faith Formation, Worship, and Rituals

This session outlines how religious rituals and religious accommodation are an essential part of how spirituality and faith are expressed. The lecture details the

different ways in which faith formation and spiritual growth are fostered through initiation rites, worship services, communal rituals, and organized religious ceremonies. The use of sacred space, both private and public, is discussed.

Read *Chapters Ten and Eleven* in *Glimpses of Grace*, select two vignettes, and discuss how you would nurture faith formation and facilitate public rituals. To be handed in before Session 5.

Session 5: The Value of Public Presence

This session outlines the importance of a chaplain being a public presence within an institution. The fact that inmates are often confined to their units, work areas, or in segregation means that a chaplain addresses these restrictions by visiting all areas of an institution. Chaplains' interaction with correctional staff, administrators, and work supervisors, along with inmates and their families goes a long way in providing a calming presence.

Reread those aspects of *A Ministry of Presence* that you found most meaningful and write a two-page reflection about them. To be handed in before Session 6.

Session 6: Programming Opportunities

This session provides suggestions for educational initiatives. Bible studies, music ministry, book studies, grief recovery programs, relationship courses, Alternatives to Violence and Celebrate Recovery workshops, along with spiritual retreats, Alpha, Experiencing God, Koran studies, and Buddhist meditation are complimentary to the worship services and core programming offered in the institution. The spiritual gifts and faith tradition of the chaplain, along with the particular needs of each institution, dictate the chaplaincy programs that are developed.

Read *Chapter Five* of *Glimpses of Grace* and write a two-page paper about a program that you would develop. To be handed in before Session 7.

Session 7: The Role of Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Accommodation

This session considers the impact of ecumenism and inter-faith accommodation on chaplaincy. Chaplains meet inmates from all walks of life and from many faith traditions. These encounters represent opportunities for chaplains to learn about these differences and provide spiritual care to each inmate, regardless of their situation and circumstances. Honouring differences while working together as chaplains helps to model ecumenism and inter-faith respect.

Read *Chapters Seven and Eight of Glimpses of Grace*, select two vignettes, and write a two-page reflection on the value of ecumenism and inter-faith accommodation. Use specific examples. To be handed in before Session 8.

Session 8: Security Issues

Security concerns are of special importance to prison chaplaincy because of the environment in which spiritual care services are provided. Subcultural activities and criminal behaviour continue to occur within a prison, in spite of the best efforts by correctional staff to curb these clandestine initiatives. Chaplains become compromised if they do not take account of the fact that some inmates come to the chapel for the wrong reasons. Chaplains need to keep a sixth sense about them in terms of what is going on, debrief as often as possible with other staff about the types of activities and interviews taking place, and be transparent with security intelligence officers about the nature of their work.

Read *Chapter Three of Glimpses of Grace*, select two vignettes, and write about issues of security that pertain to these stories. To be handed in before Session 9.

Session 9: The Role of Colleagues and Volunteers

Team work with chaplains and integration of volunteers into the visions and goals of chaplaincy goes a long way in making this career a fulfilling ministry. The hiring process is important in that it gives the employer an opportunity to dovetail the specific gifts of a chaplain with their colleagues. Regular staff meetings and planning sessions go a long way in providing direction and establishing priorities. Volunteers are invited to be part of this ministry so that they can help fulfill the mandate of chaplaincy.

Read *Chapter 6 of Glimpses of Grace*, select two vignettes, and write about your approach to team ministry. To be handed in before Session 10.

Session 10: Restorative Justice and Reintegration

The eventual release of most inmates into society makes restorative justice and community reintegration an overriding goal of chaplaincy. Offenders' motivation to take core programming to understand the reasons for their offences, change their past behaviours so that they can become law-abiding citizens, integrate faith and spirituality into their lives, and find family and community supports to assist them means that chaplains serve as companions on this journey. For some inmates, this process takes twenty-five years or more, for others, three or four years.

A chaplain walks alongside offenders to help them continue to grow and mature in their social, emotional, spiritual, and religious lives.

Read *Chapter Nine* of *Glimpses of Grace*, select two vignettes, and write a two-page reflection on your understanding and approach to Restorative Justice. To be handed in at the end of the week Residency course.

Requirements:

1. *Preparation for the Course:* A prereading and review of *A Ministry of Presence*, 5 pages in length, to be handed in on the first day of class. Worth 15%
2. *Class Assignments During Week Residency:* Ten, two-page papers, assigned after each lecture, to be handed in before the next lecture. Worth 5% each for a total of 50%.
3. *Assignments due at the end of the course (approximately one month after residency):* Integration paper that outlines a five-year spiritual care/ pastoral plan, 10 pages in length. Worth 20%. This plan is based on the job description of a prison chaplain, located under “Professionalization of Chapalincy,” www.donaldstoesz.com. Book review of one other book listed in the bibliography, 5 pages in length. Worth 15%.

Submission of Assignments:

1. Review of *A Ministry of Presence*, 5 pages, to be handed in on first day of class.
2. Ten two-page papers, each reflection to be handed in before the next lecture.
3. Integration paper, 10 pages, to be handed in at the end of the course.
4. Review of a second book, 5 pages, to be handed in at the end of the course.

Attendance:

There will be a 5% penalty for each lecture that is missed.

Evaluation:

Assignments during the week Residency: 50%

Assignments before and after week Residency: 50%

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A+		90-100%
	Excellent	85-90%
A-		80-85%
B+		75-80%
A	Good	70-75%
B-		65-70%
C+		60-65%
B	Satisfactory	55-60%
C	Minimal Pass	50-55%
F	Failure	

Course Textbooks

Stoesz, Donald. *Glimpses of Grace: Reflections of a Prison Chaplain*. Victoria: Friesen's Press, 2010. Available on Kindle, \$9.99, pb, \$20.95

Sullivan, Winnifred. *A Ministry of Presence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. Available on Kindle, \$47.18, hc, \$53.23

Select Bibliography

Baum, Gregory. *Religion and Alienation*.

Beckner, Thomas. *Correctional Chaplains: Keepers of the Cloak*.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*.

Carnes, Patrick. *Contrary to Love*.

----- . *Out of the Shadows*.

Christie, Nils, *Crime Control as Industry*.

Covert, Henry, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*.

Duguid, Stephen. *Can Prisons Work?*

Erzen, Tanya. *God In Captivity*.

Giles, Cheryl and Willa Miller, ed. *The Arts of Contemplative Care*.

Gilliat-Ray, Sophie, et.al. *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*.

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Righteous Mind*.

Hendrix, Harville. *Getting the Love You Want*.

Hugo, Victor. *Les Miserables*.

James, J. T. L. *A Living Tradition: Penitentiary Chaplaincy*.

Levad, Amy. *Redeeming a Prison Society*.

Mate, Gabor, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts*.

Nielsen Larry. *God Behind Bars: The Amazing Story of Prison Fellowship*.

O'Connor, Thomas and Nathaniel Pallone. *Religion, the Community, and Rehabilitation*.

Peck, Scott. *People of the Lie*.

Pierce, Dennis. *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the Wall*.

Schilder, David. *Inside the Fence: A Handbook for Those in Prison Ministry*.

Skotnicki, Andrew. *Criminal Justice and the Catholic Church*.

Spitale, Lennie. *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*.

Stoesz, Donald. *Is It Possible to Change? A Theology of Prison Ministry*.

Sullivan, Winnifred. *Prison Religion*.

Symes, Richard. *As though you were in Prison with Them: A Resource for Prison Ministry*.

Totten, Mark. *Guys, Gangs, and Girlfriend Abuse*.

Zehr, Howard. *Changing Lenses*.

Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders

will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins. **Academic Policies**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “**Course Extension**” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records. **Other**

Any added features in the syllabus are optional. You may or may not wish to include elements such as a bibliography, reading list, schedule of lectures/topics, or reporting form.