The STEWARD Course (STH TF 710) Fall 2014: 
Stewardship Thinking, Managing Debt, and Economic Wellbeing

Course Instructors:

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Personal and Institutional Stewardship at a Glance

The STEWARD program seeks to respond to the economic challenges facing seminary and other graduate students. The purpose of the STEWARD course is to prepare seminary students and local leaders for wise financial management in their personal and professional life, within a theological framework of stewardship. The aim is to guide students for applied financial problem-solving and to support vocational planning for post-seminary years. Each class session is designed to enhance participant’s ability to address financial issues and make wise decisions, to manage economic well-being.

Students should leave this interactive course with a framework for understanding and enacting stewardship in both personal and institutional realms.

STEWARD Course Requirements

The STEWARD course is a required one-credit School of Theology course for all entering M.Div., M.T.S., and M.S.M. students at Boston University. The course consists of seven sessions, and will meet every other Wednesday morning of the semester from 9:00 -10:30am and a full day retreat focused on vocational discernment on November 1st.

Scheduled Course Dates:

Session 1  9/3/14
Session 2  9/17/14
Session 3  10/1/14
Session 4  10/15/14
Session 5  10/29/14
Day-long Retreat: 11/1/14
Session 6  11/12/14
(Thanksgiving Break)
Session 7  12/3/14
The first three sessions will be devoted to personal stewardship, financial literacy, and life-cycle decision-making. The next three sessions will be devoted to understanding three requirements of institutional stewardship, including: fund raising, which measures and manages an institution’s financial health; accountability and transparency; and reporting results.

The final session will consist of a School of Theology faculty panel to discuss holistic stewardship, including stewardship of mind, body, spirit and soul.

Students will be required to attend and prepare in advance for each session by assigned personal reflection and homework. In addition, students are expected to submit a two page pre-course and post-course questionnaire.

An additional requirement of this course is participating in the Introduction to Vocational Discernment Retreat. Holistic stewardship of mind, body and spirit includes faithfulness with one’s time, energy, and talents. To assist in deepening this faithfulness, a key component of the STEWARD course will be a one-day Saturday retreat focused on building and increasing one’s capacity for vocational discernment.

This retreat is starting point of a multi-year process to resource students with experiences and tools to assist in discerning their vocational path throughout their STH experience. The focus for this first year retreat is on deepening self-awareness. The retreat will involve work with the Enneagram and reflection upon one’s vocational journey. The retreat will be led by Rev. Susan Morrison, Dr. Cristian De La Rosa, and Dr. Wanda Stahl. One-on-one follow up meetings with Dr. De La Rosa and Dr. Stahl will be held in the spring semester.

Students are required to attend the day-long retreat in order to fulfill the STEWARD course requirements. The Retreat will be held on November 1, 2014 at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Further details will be provided during the regular class meetings.

Course Outline

Personal Stewardship: During the first three-course segment participants will learn to use specific theological and financial tools for assessing, planning and managing personal economic wellbeing. These tools will be used to understand and experience what it takes to balance personal goals and financial realities by utilizing the applied economic science of “life-cycle planning.” Economists (including six Nobel Laureates) have spent almost a century developing the life-cycle model of saving and consumption. The life-cycle model provides a real-life framework for making decisions along your life’s path, and to recognize and
value the financial aspects of seemingly non-financial decisions. These tools include straightforward, applied case studies, and the web-based **ESPlanner software** (available to STEWARD participants at no charge from [https://basic.esplanner.com](https://basic.esplanner.com)) In the context of the course, ESPlanner will enable the user to know how much to earn, save, and spend each year to achieve a stable living standard in graduate school, and through retirement.

These three sessions will be taught by Boston University Professor (CAS) Aaron Stevens and Rev. Dr. Bert White,

**Pre-Assignment** to be completed before the first class:
1. Pre-class questionnaire
3. Carefully read the short Life-Cycle Model introduction provided on your Blackboard account
4. Explore ESPlanner software free at [https://basic.esplanner.com](https://basic.esplanner.com)

**Session One:** The language of financial literacy and decision making:
1. “Earn all you can” -- Stewardship as faith-based, management decision making and BLS’s clergy income estimates for your state
2. Introduction to the science of Life-Cycle Economics and ES(Economic Security) Planner software
3. Assignment for Session Two: “Student Loans” – decision making case study and Genesis 41:1-36

**Session Two:** Debt management:
1. “Save all you can” – Stewardship as faith-based covenant, not a contract, for abundant and lean years (Genesis 41:1-36)
2. Applied Life-Cycle Economics – Student Loan Repayment Realities
3. Assignment for Session Three: “Where to live after graduate school? “ – decision making case study

**Session Three:** What are my STEWARD options?
1. “Give all you can” – Stewardship as management decision making
2. Applied Life-Cycle Economics – Where to live and insurance answers
3. Review: Personal Stewardship lessons
4. Assignment for Session Four: Select and explore two institutional “Categories/Causes” which capture your passion as your possible employer from “How Do We Classify Charities?” or at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)
Institutional Stewardship: During the course’s second segment participants will learn to use specific stewardship tools for fundraising, including institutional vision, budgeting, implementation, and programming, in a theological framework. These tools can be used to understand what it takes to maintain and sustain an institution, as well as ways to evaluate post-seminary career options. These tools include the web-based “Charity Navigator,” America’s largest charity evaluator at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org). These three sessions will be taught by Rev. Dr. Bert White.

Session Four: Managing institutional financial health
1. Is my Institution earning all it can?
2. Fundraising as annual Institutional stewardship
   a. Vision statements and the funding campaign
   b. Annual and capital campaigns
   c. Donor and budget analyses
   d. Fund categories and designated giving
3. Measuring Institutional financial health
4. Managerial accountancy for non-accountants

Session Five: Managing accountability and transparency
1. Is my institution saving all it can?
2. Measuring accountability and transparency

Session Six: Managing results and reporting
1. Is my institution giving all it can?
2. Measuring results and reporting
3. Review: lessons for institutional stewardship
4. Post-class questionnaire and evaluation

Session Seven will consist of an interactive School of Theology faculty panel discussing holistic stewardship, including faithful stewardship of mind, body, spirit and soul.