Financial stewardship is essential to the life and mission of both congregation and wider church. This course will include a study of biblical texts related to giving and stewardship of resources, the meaning of money, one’s own attitudes regarding money and stewardship, theological foundations for financial stewardship, the importance of pastoral leadership in the congregation’s stewardship, analysis of stewardship programs, presentations from parish pastors, and discussion of practical application to contemporary parish life.

Instructor:
Glenn Taibl
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The goal of this course is to support each student’s development as an effective stewardship leader for Christian communities as you equip these communities to become cultures of generosity.

The course has three parts:

- **Identification** of your relationship to possessions and how this relationship is defined by your management of life with Christ at the center.
- **Integration** of biblical, theological and life experience resources through listening and learning to enrich your understanding of the place of stewardship in personal and faith community life.
- **Development** of a clear plan for helping a congregation build effective stewardship practices, as you nurture a culture of generosity in the community of faith.

To accomplish these goals, you who are enrolled in the course will:

- Grow in your knowledge of biblical material concerning financial stewardship
- Understand your own history with money and how this shapes your present attitudes
- Strengthen your discipleship by learning from wise Christians who value stewardship as vital to their lives of faith.
- Develop your ability to use financial tools such as planning, budgets and financial reports
- Understand the flow of your year-round leadership in stewardship, organized around your: 1) listening, 2) asking, 3) thanking, and 4) telling.
- Embrace your role as a leader in congregational stewardship ministry
- Propose a strategy for year-round stewardship for a congregation you know well

**Required Texts**


Recommended Texts*


Lynne Twist, *The Soul of Money*

* - Readings from these sources will be made available on E-reserve and will not require purchase

Assignments:

Each week students will be expected to write a 500 word reflection paper on the reading assignment and post this reflection on “My Luther Net”. This reflection must be posted each week by noon Thursday.

Each student will be assigned to a discussion group of 5 students. Between Thursday noon and Sunday each student will write a 100 word response to each of his/her group member’s personal reflection paper.

Video presentations by the instructor or guest lecturer will occasionally request the student respond to specific questions. Each student will respond in the open discussion area of MyLutherNet.

The final project will be a 3,000+ word presentation of a financial stewardship plan for a congregation well known to the student. Weekly writings will contribute to this final project. This final project will include an analysis of the congregation’s setting and stewardship history and a proposal for financial stewardship ministry for the next three years. Components of the final project will be:

- Congregation’s setting and stewardship history (zip code data, trend report, interview with pastor and/or lay leader(s) about the congregation’s stewardship history).
- Describe the congregation’s vision, leadership and financial stability
- Plan for the congregation’s stewardship ministry for the next three years, including:
  - Biblical themes that speak to this context (how would these be introduced and taught)
  - Your attitudes and values as a leader in the congregation’s stewardship ministry
  - How to introduce stewardship themes/material to different audiences in the congregation?
  - Who would you partner with to implement this plan? How would you form these partnerships?
  - What resources would you draw upon?
  - A brief timeline for implementation of the plan

Grading:
To pass the course, students must complete all assignments on time. Late assignments will be accepted only if the student receives permission and makes alternative arrangements with the professor before the due date.

Grades will be determined by the following percentage:

- Personal Weekly Reflections (5) 30%
- Small Group Participation 20%
- Final project 50%

Course Outline:

Prior to Session I- reflections due March 26
1. Complete a money autobiography which will be sent to each participant turn in to the Instructor by March 26 – post for your discussion group of 5 class participants
2. Read:
   - Word and World Supplement 6 (WW) pp 1-19
   - The Soul of Money, pp. 43-94 – on E-reserve MyLutherNet
   - Ask, Thank, Tell, pp 33-66 – on E-reserve MyLutherNet

Holy Week (March 30-April 5)
Session II material is posted for Holy Week but student reflection papers are not due until the following week, April 9. We will have to double up on Sessions II and III to allow completion of the course and Final Projects for Senior grades prior to graduation.

Session I – March 23-29
- Why is financial stewardship so important? Why does this matter?
- How is it with you and money? Money Autobiography
- Expectations of class members
  - Syllabus
  - Weekly Assignments related to reading
  - Small Group Discussion
  - Final Paper – Develop a financial stewardship plan for a congregation you know
- The Biblical basis for financial stewardship

Reading Assignment to be completed by April 9
- Money and Ministry (MM) pp. 3-50
- Not Your Parents Offering Plate (NYP), Forward, Introduction, and pp. 1-78

Session II – March 30- April 5
- Introduction of Final Project
- The Context - How is money often talked about and dealt with in congregations and our society (and how this hampers the mission of the church?)
- Elements of positive congregational stewardship ministry –
  - Three Basics for Financial Stewardship in the Congregation
  - Three Reasons People Give, Three Pockets from which people give [Parents’ Offering Plate]
  - Four motivators for generosity (Callahan)
  - The Role of the pastor/church staff in financial stewardship ministry
Reading Assignment to be completed by April 9
- MM pp. 53-115
- WW, pp. 77-86

Session III- April 6-12
- Understanding congregational budgets and financial matters
- Talking about money when you aren’t asking for it: The key to money and spiritual growth
- Talking about money when you are asking for it
- Overview of annual appeals
- Final Project – Step 2

Reading Assignment to be completed by April 16
- MM, pp. 116-175
- WW, pp. 99-121

Session IV – April 13-19
- Role of the Pastor in Financial Stewardship – Guest Presenter: Pr Gary Langness
- Elements of positive congregational stewardship ministry [Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate, Chapter 6]
- Introduction to capital appeals and Endowment Funds
- Final project Step 3

Reading Assignment to be completed by April 23
- NYP, pp. 79-120
- MM, pp. 176-200

Session V – April 20-26
- Generational Giving Characteristics
- Year-Round Stewardship
- Final Project- Step 4 & 5

Work on Final Project

Session VI- April 27-May 3
- Organizing categories for leading financial leadership
- Expanding the Discussion
- Resources

Assignment:
- Final Project due May 4 for Graduating Seniors
• Final Project due May 8 for students not graduating Spring 2015

Policies and Procedures

ADA Compliance Statement

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student with a disability who is registered with the Student Resource Center and requests needed accommodation.

If you are a student with a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or accommodation in this class or any other class, please contact the Director of the Student Resource Center or contact your instructor directly.

Academic Honesty

Members of the Luther Seminary community are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and honestly in academic matters. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses against this expectation and are subject to disciplinary action.

If instances of cheating or plagiarism are detected, one of the disciplinary actions shall follow: either the instructor records a failure for the assignment or examination, or the instructor records a failure for the course. In either case, the instructor shall bring the matter to the Office of the Academic Dean and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the question whether further disciplinary action should be considered will be determined in consultation with the instructor, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students. See the current Student Handbook for more details on this matter.

Course Workload:

You can expect the flow of the class to be something like this:

• 30 minute online reflection – watch Glenn Taibl’s comments highlighting the weekly focus
• 60-90 minutes responding to group members’ reflections and conversation
• 6-7 hours reading, watching additional online resources including guest presenters, writing personal reflections.