

PMIN 205: Ecclesiology
Spring 2026, Santa Clara University
Tuesdays, 6pm–9pm

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 5pm–6pm and Wednesdays, 1pm–2pm, both by appointment (in person or on Zoom)

Course Description

This course provides theological foundations in ecclesiology (the study of the church) for graduate students in pastoral ministry. Grounded in the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council and postconciliar and contemporary developments, this course explores the nature and mission of the church as the pilgrim people of God in communion, theologies of ministry, and teaching and governance in the church. These topics are considered in theological, historical, global, and feminist perspectives.

Required texts

Additional texts may be added to this list before the start of the quarter

We will read large portions of the texts below, so per fair use copyright law, you should purchase or borrow these books in their entirety.

- The documents of the Second Vatican Council. Recommended English translation is Austin Flannery's inclusive translation (1996). The documents can be accessed online at www.vatican.va as well.
 - Students are welcome to read the conciliar texts, as well as any other papal/magisterial texts for our course, in the language of their choosing. However, in class, we will be referencing the English translations from Flannery and/or the Vatican website.
- Brian Flanagan, *Stumbling in Holiness: Sin and Sanctity in the Church* (Liturgical Press, 2018)
- Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach* (Crossroad, 2003)
- Richard R. Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?* (Liturgical Press, 2018, revised and expanded edition)
- Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent*, revised 2nd edition (Orbis Press, August 2023)

Other assigned texts will be available on Camino.

Learning Outcomes

This course primarily addresses two learning outcomes of the Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministry's MA Degree:

Goal 1: Students will gain a broad theological foundation that will undergird inquiry into a select area of concentration.

Objective A: Students will demonstrate an understanding of Fundamental Theology, Christology, Ecclesiology, Ethics, Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament according to the competencies articulated by each of these areas.

We will work toward this goal through critical reading of key texts, class discussion, brief lectures, short papers, and option 1 for the final paper/project.

Goal 3: Students will become competent leaders dedicated to serving the Church and to creating community in parish and other pastoral settings.

Objective A: Students will employ historically informed knowledge of the tradition to assess theological positions and pastoral issues.

We will work toward this goal through class presentations, class discussion, and options 2 and 3 for the final paper/project.

Course Components

Active participation & engagement. All students are expected to come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them (a good practice in this regard is to prepare one question or comment on the day's material, it's relation to other course content, and/or implications for your ministry).

Discussion Leaders: *Details forthcoming*

Lectures: In our class meetings, I will do some lecturing in order to provide you with historical/theological content relevant to our subject matter, draw out the key contributions and implications of our course texts beyond what the student discussion leader identifies, and facilitate your critical thinking about key concepts and questions in contemporary ecclesiology and their application for your ministry. These lectures will be conversational in style (I will not be reading off of a printed text!), will utilize a powerpoint and/or lecture outline handout whenever possible, and will be interspersed with class discussion (small group and large group).

Short papers. You will write two short papers (~5pgs each) after week 4 and after week 8 in response to specific prompts. These are not research papers, but neither are they simply reflection papers or extended journals. They will ask you to substantively engage course material on the topics covered in the first four weeks, and then the second four weeks, respectively, and apply them to your pastoral/ministerial contexts. Full details will be provided on Camino.

Final Paper/Project. You will choose one of the options below based on their own interest, ministry, and/or learning goals. By the Monday of week 8, you will let me know which option you've chosen and provide a brief outline of your research topic/thesis/project.

Option 1: Research Paper: A 10–12 page research paper on a topic in ecclesiology of your choice. It must offer an original insight, argument, or interpretation of texts, and make use of 4–6 scholarly sources beyond what we have read in class (the “supplemental texts” document on Camino can be a starting point). Full details will be available on Camino.

Option 2: Ecclesiological Analysis. A 10–12 page analysis of the operative ecclesiology in your parish or ministry community. You will critically examine parish/ministry resources (e.g. websites, bulletins, mission statement, liturgies, organizational structure & personnel, finances, etc.) in light of what we have studied in this course and write an essay addressing questions such as: what models of church are implicit or explicit in your parish/ministry? How is authority exercised by various persons in this parish/ministry? To what extent does your parish/ministry reflect the ecclesiologies of Vatican II or Pope Francis? How can your parish/ministry learn from the *sensus fidei* or incorporate synodal processes?, etc. Full details will be available on Camino.

Option 3: Pastoral Project. You will create a pastoral project relevant to your current or future/hopeful ministry in which you apply course readings, lectures, discussions, etc. to your ministry. This might be, for example, a pastoral presentation on the synod on synodality; a high school curriculum unit on the church; recommendations for how your parish can respond to the synod's proposals, or improve its missionary activity, or acknowledge its sinfulness, etc. Creativity is encouraged. You will submit 1) the elements needed for the pastoral project, and 2) a paper of 5–7 pages that summarizes the project and your hoped-for outcomes of it, and explains how it applies the ecclesiological insights you gained from our course. Full details will be available on Camino.

Classroom Environment & Participation

- **Attendance policy:** Class discussion will be essential to your and others' learning in this course. Regular attendance is particularly important given that we only meet once a week, and only for 10 weeks. I will excuse absences for unavoidable, legitimate reasons (ex. jury duty, bereavement, university-mandated travel, urgent medical treatment for yourself or dependents) but you should alert me beforehand whenever possible. I may ask for documentation. Unexcused absences will result in a 5pt deduction from your final grade.
- Our collective success and your learning in this course will come from open intellectual engagement not only with the assigned material but also with your classmates. I encourage you to bring your own expertise (professional, ministerial, or other academic) into the classroom and to be open to learning from the experiences of others.

DRAFT 2/12/26 – FINAL SYLLABUS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY 3/28/26

- Ecclesiology, like all theology, is unfinished business. The classroom is an opportunity for you to try out new ideas. You are not bound to any comments or questions you offer in class, and I have no interest in policing orthodoxy. Feel free to experiment with and abandon ideas in discussion and in your writing.
- My expectation is that all students offer one another the freedom and space to ask questions and consider new perspectives. Conversation should remain respectful at all times, meaning we allow others the time and opportunity to contribute their views and seek to understand one another as best we can, with a hermeneutic of generosity. Critique of *ideas* is acceptable—you might encounter ideas with which you disagree in this course—but critique of *persons* is not.

AS A REFERENCE ONLY – WINTER 2024 SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 (Jan 8): Introduction: History of ecclesiology and models of the church

- Michael Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century” (23pp)
- Joseph A. Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology” (23pp)
- *Recommended to skim* after class: Susan A. Wood, “Continuity and Development in Roman Catholic Ecclesiology” (25pp)
 - *NB: there is a fair amount of overlap between this and Himes’ and Komonchak’s articles; my purpose in providing Wood is for her ‘models’ framework for understanding conciliar and postconciliar ecclesiology (see Komonchak 76–77)*

Week 2 (Jan 15): The church’s origins in the Triune God and in history

- Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* chapters 1, 2, and 7 (28pp)
- Brian Flanagan, “The Word and Spirit Co-instituting the Church” (14pp)
- Richard Gaillardetz, “A People Called to Community” (34pp)
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “‘You Are Not to Be Called Father’: Early Christian History in a Feminist Perspective” (28pp)

Week 3 (Jan 22): The people of God in communion

- Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* chapters 3, 4, and 5 (36pp)
- Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (23pp)
- Gaillardetz, “A People Called to Discipleship” (34pp; pages 196–201 optional)
- Amanda Osheim, “The Christian Faithful” (20pp)

Week 4 (Jan 29): “Missionary by its very nature”

DRAFT 2/12/26 – FINAL SYLLABUS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY 3/28/26

- Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, preface, introduction, and chapter 4 (19)
- Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, introduction and chapter 1 (11pp)
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (89pp)

Week 5 (Feb 5): A holy and sinful church

- **Short paper 1 due by Monday, Feb 5.**
- Flanagan, *Stumbling in Holiness: Sin and Sanctity in the Church*, Introduction and chapters 2–6 (146pp)

Week 6 (Feb 12): Ministry in the church, part 1: Ordered communion

- Gaillardetz, “A People Called to Ministry” (39pp)
- Edward Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A Relational Approach*, introduction and chapter 1 (1–38), chapter 2 sections (39–59, 85–98), chapter 3 sections (122–150) (99pp)

Week 7 (Feb 19): Ministry in the church, part 2: Women in ministry

- Susan Ross, “Church and sacrament – community and worship” (13pp)
- Mary Ann Hinsdale, “A Feminist Reflection on Postconciliar Catholic Ecclesiology” (24pp)
- Phyllis Zagano, “Women and the Church: Unfinished Business of Vatican II” (17pp)
- Zagano, “The Question of Governance and Ministry for Women” (20pp)
 - *Both of these articles are also published as chapters in Zagano’s book Women in Ministry: Emerging Questions about the Diaconate (Paulist, 2012). If you already have that book, you can read these there.*
- Pope Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, nos. 85-105 (4pp)
- Elyse Raby, “The Diaconate: How Doers Get More Done” (5pp)

Week 8 (Feb 26): Teaching and governance in the church: Magisterium

- **Brief outline of final paper/project due Monday, Feb 26**
- *Lumen Gentium* chapter 3 (reread from week 3)
- Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, chapters 1, 6–9 (86pp)
- Schüssler Fiorenza, “Patriarchal Structures and the Discipleship of Equals” (22pp)
- Paul Lakeland, “Ministry & Governance: What might *Praedicate Evangelium* have started?” (4pp)

Week 9 (March 4) Teaching and governance in the church: *Sensus fidei*

- **Short paper 2 due by Monday, March 4.**
- Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, chapters 10–12 (56pp)
- Natalia Imperatori-Lee, “*Más que cuentos*: Literary Narrative as a Resource for Ecclesiology” (33pp)

DRAFT 2/12/26 – FINAL SYLLABUS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY 3/28/26

- Student’s choice: one of the following chapters from *Learning from All the Faithful: A Contemporary Theology of the Sensus Fidei*, based on your own interest or pastoral context
 - Peter C. Phan, “*Sensus Fidelium, Dissensus Infidelium, Consensus Omnium: An Interreligious Approach to Consensus in Doctrinal Theology*”
 - SimonMary A. Aihokhai, “A Mosaic of Identities of the *Sensus Fidelium: The Realities of African Ecclesial Communities in Diaspora*”
 - Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, “Discerning the *Sensus Fidelium* in Asia’s Narrative Theologies”
 - Hoon Choi, “Storytelling as an Expression of *Sensus Fidelium: A Korean-American Catholic Perspective*”
 - Maria Clara Luchetti Bingemer, “The *Sensus Fidei* in the Recent History of the Latin American Church”
 - Anne Arabome, “How Are Theologians Challenged and Informed by their Engagement with the Sense of the Faithful in the Local/Global Church” [Kenya]

Week 10 (March 11): Teaching and governance in the church: Synodality

- Pope Francis, “Address Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops” (5pp)
- Rafael Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church*, chapters 3, 4, 5, and 8 (35pp)
- Synod on Synodality Synthesis Report, October 2023 (40pp)

Final paper or project due by Monday, March 18, 6pm.