The course outline is used by the professors at Erskine Seminary. I have borrow the basic outline and most of the content is heavily edited for the purpose of this course. http://seminary.erskine.edu/

**Senior Pastors Course**

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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Pastors examine the practice of ministry need to serve as a Senior Pastor through the Church in the world, in light of the theological foundations of ministry. Special emphasis is given to the careful study of how one manages oneself, working with others, understanding the context of ministry in large congregations, implementing ministry, conducting research in ministry, and evaluating effectiveness in ministry. The course is designed for pastors with some experience in the pastoral ministry and are discerning where the Spirit of God is leading them. The course encourages Pastors to think critically and discuss civilly with colleagues.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

A course like this which centers in attempting to discern what God is doing in a ministry setting and which seeks to sharpen skills in bringing about responsible stewardship is a clear expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Mission Statement. Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world. - See more at: http://www.elca.org/About/Mission#sthash.PJslhYK7.dpuf

**More specifically, by the end of this course, the student should be able to:**

1. Use of critical thinking skills in analyzing their ministry setting;
2. Be aware of the strength, challenges and uniqueness of the large congregation, and the specific leadership and organizational needs based upon size of congregation;
3. Be familiar with human resource tools and how they are used for supervision, motivating and coordinating staff teams in large congregations;
4. Utilize evidence-based discernment for organizational intelligence for ministry;
5. Describe basic types of research that are appropriate for Christian ministry;
6. Define what is meant by the ecology, culture, resources and authority of a congregation/ministry setting;
7. Summarize specific ways by which one discovers the culture and identity of a congregation/ministry setting;
8. Manage oneself and others in the areas of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Strengths.
9. Will learn to stop relying only on anecdotes, impressions and gut feelings to instead find ways to collect and use hard data to understand what church members are actually experiencing.

III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Each student is required to purchase the following books for the course:


Other works relating to research in ministry will be suggested in the course.

**IV. RECOMMENDED READING**


Other works relating to research in ministry will be suggested in the course.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. **Students must attend every class meeting.** If a student must be absent for all or part of a session, he/she is responsible for all work done and due for that session. Normally, a student who misses all or part of a session will be required to do additional work. This must be negotiated with the professor. **A student who misses more than a total of one session will not pass the course.**

B. Students must be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation consists of completion of all reading and/or writing assignments for that day. The format of this course will largely be lecture/discussion with some small-group work. It is imperative that each student be adequately prepared in order to participate in an intelligent manner in classroom discussions.

C. Students may occasionally be given short, informal research-type assignments on which to report back to the group. There may also be some in-class writing assignments.

D. All work must be submitted on time. **Work that is turned in late may be penalized at least one letter grade.** The instructor reserves the right to reject any work that is excessively late.

E. All papers must be typed/processed (twelve point font, double spaced, one inch margins) and fully documented,
following the standards in Turabian, 7th edition or later
(specific bibliographic information on Turabian given above).

VI. CLASS MEETING DATES

You are encouraged to bring your lunch. This course will meet
from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the following days:

Session 1: October 8
Session 2: October 15
Session 3: October 22
Session 4: October 29
Session 5: November 5
Session 6: November 12
Session 7: November 19
Session 8: December 3

VII. EVALUATION

The Synod will provide a certificate of completion for those
students who receive an 80% or better. The student’s final grade
will be calculated as follows:

Paper # 1 = 20%
Paper # 2 = 20%
Class Discussion = 40%
Book Report = 20%

VIII. Sessions 1, 2 and 3: Thur., Oct. 8,

Topic: Understanding the Large Congregation

Course requirements and goals. Students will come to class
prepared to discuss the assigned reading and understand how this
information effects senior pastors’ leadership style and how they work
with and manage staff. The course will cover such issues as: clergy
leadership roles, staff team design and function, governance and board
function, acculturation and the role of laity, forming and executing
strategy, supervising, motivating, and coordinating staff teams.

A Basic Review of Course objectives

A. Why size matters
B. Leadership Systems in large congregations
C. Leading Staff
D. Performance

**Defining the Large Congregation**

A. Improving the staff's understanding of how a large congregation works.
   1. How size changes things
   2. Large congregation categories
   3. Clergy leadership roles
   4. Staff Design and function
   5. Engaging the laity
B. Establish a performance Management System
   1. Write a job description in relationship to the Mission Statement of The Church and the needs of the congregation
   2. Helping staff negotiate their needs
   3. Performance evaluation
C. Staff Supervision
   1. Staff design
   2. Staff meetings
   3. Files to keep or discard
   4. Staff behavior
D. Staff issues
   1. Note work done helping staff to deal with past issues
   2. Prepare the staff for a new senior pastor

**ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 1, 2, AND 3:**

1. Read Beaumont, Susan. *Inside the Large Congregation*, come to class prepared to discuss the questions at the end of each chapter.

2. Read Rendle, Gilbert R., and Susan Beaumont. *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations*, come to class prepared to discuss the questions at the end of each chapter.

3. “Congregational Observational Guides” will be handed out in Session 1 and papers will be handed in during Session 5.

**IX. Session 4: Thursday, October 29**

**Topic:** *Ministry and Evidence-Based Discernment*

Course requirements and goals. The effective church in the 21st century will be one that invests in the kinds of information that are
enabling other organizations to be effective in the world today. Students will learn to stop relying only on anecdotes, impressions and gut feelings to instead use hard data to understand what church members are actually experiencing. This allows leadership to increase their Organizational Intelligence and make more informed and thus better decisions.

**Evidence-Based Discernment**

A. Foundations  
1. What is Evidence-Based Discernment?  
3. Trusting the Instruments  
4. Admitting Surprise  
5. Unlived life  
B. The Structure of Organizational Intelligence  
1. What your congregation is aiming for  
2. To the most likely to succeed solutions  
3. Clarity about destination  
4. Spiritual Dissonance  
5. X-Ray of your church  
C. Organizational Intelligence and Succession Planning  
1. Customizing church leadership  
2. Plan for succession  
D. Faith and Practice  
1. Information, meaning and creativity  
2. Objectives  
3. Information seeking and stages  
4. Who is responsible

**ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 4:**

1. Read Crabtree, J Russell. *Owl Sight: Evidence-Based Discernment and the Promise of Organizational Intelligence for Ministry*, come to class prepared to discuss the questions at the end of each chapter.

**X. Session 5: Thursday, November 5**

**Topic:** *Understanding the Contexts of Ministry*

Course requirements and goals. As you look at the ecology, culture, resources and authority in your ministry setting some questions need asking: (a) is there anxiety within the congregation and (b) are there any ministry issues that need addressing.
Identifying the Contexts of Ministry

A. Understanding Context
B. Briefly introduce the church and its location
C. The ecology
D. The culture
E. The resources
F. The authority
G. How do these play an important part?
   1. Economic Resources
   2. Stories that are told
   3. What history is remembered
   4. Leadership past and present
   5. Who makes decisions
   6. Their model of ministry
   7. World view
   8. Political view
H. Understanding the context of ministry

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 5:

2. Recommended reading Dulles, Avery. Models of the Church.
3. **PAPER #1** Utilize “Congregational Observational Guides” that will be handed out in Session 1 to write up a context of ministry paper. Your present ministry location should be the focus of your paper. The purpose of this assignment is to enable you to get at the ecology, culture, resources and authority of your ministry setting. Paper should be no longer than 10 pages.
4. “Congregational Observational Guides” were handed out in Session 1 and papers will be handed in during Session 5.

XI. Session 6: Thursday, November 12

**Topic**: Emotional Intelligence

Course requirements and goals. Emotional Intelligence 2.0 is a step-by-step program for increasing your EQ via four, core EQ skills that enable you to achieve your fullest potential: 1) Self-Awareness; 2) Self-Management; 3) Social Awareness; 4) Relationship Management.
Emotional Intelligence

A. Understanding the Four Skills  
B. Increasing Emotional Intelligence  
C. Self-Awareness  
D. Self-Management  
E. Social-Awareness  
F. Discussion Questions

Assignment for Session 6:

1. Read Bradberry, Travis, and Jean Greaves. *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. Use the passcode found near the back of the book to take the ‘Emotional Intelligence Appraisal’. Bring your results to the class and be prepared to share and discuss your results and the book.

XII. Session 7: Thursday, November 19

Topic: *Strengths Based Leadership*

Course requirements and goals. Students will discover their leadership abilities and the degree to which they lead best when they work as a team member. The four Leadership Domains and the four primary needs of followers provide leaders with a rich paradigm for considering new approaches in managing organizational priorities.

Strengths Based Leadership

A. Investing in Your Strengths  
B. Maximizing Your Team  
C. Understanding Why People Follow  
D. Additional Resources

Assignment for Session 7:

1. Read Tom Rath and Barry Conchie. *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*. Use the passcode found near the back of the book to take the ‘Emotional Intelligence Appraisal’. Bring your results to the class and be prepared to share and discuss your results and the book.
XIII. Session 8: Thursday, December 3

Topic: Book Reports

Course requirements and goals. Here is an opportunity for students to look for a book that relates to the work of Senior Pastors in a large congregation particularly in the areas of stewardship, mission and evangelism. Competency and success in the areas of stewardship and evangelism are key components of any senior pastor.

**Stewardship, Mission and Evangelism**

A. Stewardship  
B. Mission  
C. Evangelism  
D. Additional Resources

**ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 8:**

1. **PAPER #2** Read a book under the subject area of stewardship or evangelism and present a book report to the group. Be prepared to discuss your reason for the book and why it lends itself to becoming an effective senior pastor. The book report should be no longer than 7 pages.

2. Opportunity to spend time discussing the course as a whole.