

Sexuality Issues for Christian Religious Professionals Course Outline

Religious Institute Online Course

Facilitator

Kentina Washington, washington@religiousinstitute.org

Course Description

This course especially for Christian religious professionals is designed to provide a foundation of knowledge about sexuality that is critical for religious professionals. The course begins with personal reflection on one's sexual values and history. Students then examine the concept of sexual health, how it applies to religious professionals and faith communities, including how to handle boundaries and attractions in ministry. Students will examine how Christian sexual ethics has evolved throughout the history of the Christian church. Finally, students will develop skills necessary for ministry, including preaching/teaching, pastoral care, public witness, and creating sexually safer congregations.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will

- Articulate their sexual values and history and note implications for their ministry
- Know basic facts about sexuality and sexual health
- Identify the characteristics of a sexually healthy faith community and religious professional
- Study scripture and Church history as they relate to Christian sexual ethics
- Identify their denomination's policies on sexuality issues
- Develop skills and resources for congregational ministry about sexuality issues

Reading list

- Haffner, Rev. Debra W., *A Time to Build: Creating Sexually Healthy Faith Communities*, 2nd ed., Religious Institute, 2012. (TTB) You can purchase a copy of *A Time To Build* here <https://squareup.com/market/religious-institute>
- Jung, Patricia Beattie and Darryl W. Stephens, Eds., *Professional Sexual Ethics: A Holistic Ministry Approach*, Fortress Press, 2013. (PSE)
- Ellison, Marvin M., *Making Love Just: Sexual Ethics for Perplexing Times*, Fortress Press, 2013. (MLJ)
- One sexuality education curriculum from your faith tradition to examine in Module 5. Check here for ideas. <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/annotated-bibliography-of-sexuality-education-curricula/>
- Other readings will be posted in the course modules.
- You will need to purchase copies of both *Making Love Just* and *Professional Sexual Ethics*.

Course Outline

Module 1: Sexuality and Religion (Opens Sunday, September 4)

Topics include

- Sexually healthy religious professionals
- Sexual health frameworks
- Definitions of sexuality
- Sexuality and religion
- Sexual and gender identity

Module 2: Sexual Health & Development (Opens Sunday, September 18)

Topics include

- Early messages about sexuality
- Child and adolescent development
- Life behaviors of a sexually healthy adult
- What religious professionals need to know about adult sexual behavior

Module 3: Attraction and Boundaries in Ministry (Opens Sunday, October 2)

Topics include

- Sexual harassment v. clergy sexual misconduct
- How to deal with attractions and boundaries in ministry
- Religious Institute recommended code of conduct

Module 4: Church History and Scripture (Opens Sunday, October 16)

Topics include

- What the bible really says about sex
- Sexual ethics in Church History
- Why sex matters to Christians
- Current events involving sexuality and Christianity

Module 5: Skills for Faith Leaders (Opens Sunday, October 30)

Topics include

- Preaching on sexuality issues
- Sample sermons and resources for preaching
- A model for pastoral care around sexuality issues
- Case studies in pastoral care

Module 6: Congregational Life (Opens Sunday, November 13)

Topics include

- Sexuality education in faith communities
- Curricula for sexuality education through the lifespan
- Safer congregations and abuse prevention
- Practical advice on policies and procedures for a sexually safer congregation

Module 7: Witness to the World (Opens Sunday, November 27)

Topics include

- Christianity and LGBTQ welcome
- Welcoming and affirming bisexual people
- Welcoming and affirming transgender people
- Clergy and congregational public witness

Final Reflection – due by midnight December 10, 2016