

## Summer Reading for Masters-level Students Entering VTS August 2026

The following pages contain information about summer reading to help you prepare for your transition to seminary life. Please read carefully; the list is sorted by class. Some readings are required, some are recommended, so read carefully. Required readings have specific due dates for completion, again, so read carefully.

Section I contains readings required and recommended to be completed prior to August term courses: PRXT 500, WRRE 505, and CHWT 675. Please note which of these courses is required for the specific program in which you are enrolled.

Section II contains readings to be completed prior to the Living and Learning at VTS sessions (August 12<sup>th</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup>) and Intercultural Competency orientation sessions (September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>).

Section III contains an additional recommended reading, as well as texts that are recommended to purchase before you arrive on campus.

### SECTION I: August Term Course Readings

**PRXT 500: Foundations for Ministry (required for M.Div., Pathway to Ministry, and MA in Christian Formation students; highly recommended for students in other MA tracks)**

Using the theme of “disruption,” students will be invited to reflect intentionally on their experiences of disruption, dislocation, and disorientation. Together, we will examine how theological education at VTS fosters students' critical engagement with the understanding and addressing of patterns of disruption across the North American context and globally. How do Scripture and Christian tradition speak to experiences of disruption and call leaders to action? Where do we sense God’s call to us in these times of disruption and change?

Using practical theological methods, students will examine their assumptions about mission, ministry, and leadership as they enter a new cultural context and begin building community. The course aims to deepen students’ understanding of the theology and practice of ministry and to prepare them for further study in Practical Theology. It is a prerequisite for the required distributive elective courses in the PRXT field.

#### Required Texts:

Verna J. Dozier, *The Dream of God: A Call to Return*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1991/2006. ISBN: 1561010464

Tim Soerens. *Everywhere You Look: Discovering the Church Right Where You Are*. Lisle, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4156-1

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1949/1996. ISBN: 9780807010297

## Reading Reflection Questions for PRXT 500:

For each required text, students should respond to the following reflection questions on Brightspace, our learning management system. You will have access to Brightspace beginning the week of June 15<sup>th</sup>. The assignment is due by Friday, August 15, at 5:00 p.m.

1. What did you learn that challenged or surprised you?
2. What ideas or issues presented in the book are especially critical for ministry in today's context?
3. What ideas, issues, or questions did this book raise that you hope to explore further in class?

Be reassured that your reflections will be "graded" with completion points. We want your honest opinions and look forward to learning more about you through them. No expertise is assumed. |

### Pre-class Reflection Questions- 30 (completion) points |

- 30 points - submissions by deadline, 3 reflections demonstrate effort to read and engage texts |
- 20 points - submissions late but thoughtfully completed, or submissions by deadline and reflections do not substantially engage texts |
- 10 points - late and/or shallow work |
- 0 points - no submissions. |

If you have questions or concerns about this assignment, please contact Dr. Rode Molla, [rmolla@vts.edu](mailto:rmolla@vts.edu) and Dr. Altagracia Perez-Bullard, [aperez-bullard@vts.edu](mailto:aperez-bullard@vts.edu).

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## CHWT 675: Mapping Anglican Studies (required for Anglican Studies students)

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the fields of concern, areas of competency, and critical questions that make up the Diploma in Anglican Studies at Virginia Theological Seminary. Students are also introduced to the central elements of the VTS learning context. At the end of this course, students will be able to: outline the basic history and theological characteristics of the global Anglican tradition, name and characterize the Episcopal Church's crucial ecumenical partnerships and posture toward interreligious engagement, craft an initial working rule of life for their program at VTS, and articulate the core theology of the 1979 Prayer Book.

### Required Texts:

Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.  
ISBN: 9780192806932

Robert S. Heaney & William L. Sachs, *The Promise of Anglicanism*. London: SCM Press, 2019.  
ISBN: 9780334058441

Kwok Pui-lan, *The Anglican Tradition from a Postcolonial Perspective*. New York, NY: Seabury Books, 2023.  
ISBN: 9781640656307

### Recommended Text:

Carla Roland Guzman, *Unmasking Latinx Ministry for Episcopalians*. (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2020.) ISBN: 9781640651500

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**WRRE 505: Foundations for Theological Writing (recommended for students coming to VTS from an international background, those who are multilingual, those for whom English is a subsequent language, and those who seek to strengthen their cultural and theological academic skills for the North American seminary context)**

The course provides students with opportunities to examine a variety of theological writing types and consider the skills involved in creating such writing. The readings and assignments encourage students to develop personal strategies to support the ongoing improvement of their own writing and study skills for this with class activities and written exercises. This hybrid course includes a combination of in-person class sessions, individual online work, and class discussions via Brightspace (the Seminary's learning management system), as well as individually arranged one-on-one meetings with the instructor.

The following readings are recommended before the beginning of August Term, but not required. Sections will be posted to Brightspace, so check out the course page as soon as you have access. We will work with these books in our class time together.

If you want to do some reading to get ready for the class, and the year ahead, we recommend that you start with:

Robert W. Pazmiño, *Doing Theological Research: An Introductory Guide for Survival in Theological Education*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009.)

*This is a very short book, but the text provides an excellent overview of the philosophy and challenges of writing in the North American seminary environment. It is worth it to read the entire book, but if you just want a taste of the text, focus on Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.*

If you are coming to VTS from an active teaching or ministry position, we recommend that you read this book to help ease the transition from the front of the classroom/pulpit back to the student chair:

Brandon J. O'Brien, *Writing for Life & Ministry: A Practical Guide to the Writing Process for Teachers and Preachers*. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2020.)

*This is also a very short book but written from a non-academic perspective. We will use some of the chapters from this book in class, but to begin, we recommend that you read Chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6 to get started.*

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**SECTION II: Orientation Sessions**  
**Learning and Living at VTS**  
*Required for ALL entering students.*

Barreto, E. D. (Ed.), "Introduction" and "Thinking Spiritually," in *Thinking Theologically* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 1-5, 119-134.

**Reflection Questions:** In his introduction (pp. 1-5), Barreto makes three assertions as to what theological thinking is, employing terms that are often used in opposition to each other. Please reflect on a moment or a project in which your thinking was both embodied and cerebral, emotional and intellectual, and/or relational and individualistic. That is, can you describe a time when you were thinking theologically? Use the essay by Carvalhaes to spur your reflection on embodied spirituality as an element in this thinking.

The Book of Jonah:

**Reflection Questions:** What are the key moments of Jonah's call? What does he learn? What do you as the reader learn about Jonah, his faith, and his community?

Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

**Reflection Questions:** What are the challenges in community that Paul is confronting? How does he translate the Gospel into norms for healthy community? What aspects of a communal Rule of Life emerge from this letter?

From the *Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 299-308.

**Reflection Questions:** What do the promises of the Baptismal Covenant suggest might be core elements of our rule of life as individuals? As a gathered community? What are the implications for Christian witness in the world?

### **SECTION III: Recommended additional reading for all students**

Pazmiño, Robert W. *Doing Theological Research: An Introductory Guide for Survival in Theological Education*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009.

#### **Recommended books for the library of all students**

We recommend that you purchase at least one study Bible, such as the following:

- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, Fourth Edition; edited by Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). 2480 pp. Hardcover: ISBN 9780195289558. Softbound college edition: ISBN 9780195289602.
- *The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version including Apocryphal Deuterocanonical Books*, Fully Revised and Updated; edited by Harold W. Attridge (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2006). 2203 pp. Hardcover: ISBN 9780060786854. Softbound: 9780061228407.
- *The SBL Study Bible: The New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition with the Apocrypha*, Fully Revised and Updated by the Society of Biblical Literature (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2023). 2240 pp. ISBN: 9780062969422.

In addition, we recommend that M.Div. students have:

- *The Book of Common Prayer*. New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1979.
- *The Hymnal 1982*. New York: Church Hymnal Corp, 1985.