Iliff’s Military Ministry Course Provider Program will offer progressive theological education for military chaplains, religious leaders, and mental health practitioners specializing in ministries with military service members, veterans, and their families. Pastoral theology faculty at Iliff have developed a two-year sequence of six online courses (one per quarter) available to students at other ATS accredited schools through the course provider program.

This program responds to needs identified in spring 2014, when faculty representatives from Brite Divinity School, Iliff School of Theology, Boston University School of Theology, and Eden Seminary met with active and retired military chaplains and service members concerned about the lack of theological diversity in military chaplaincy. The Strategic Document that came out of this ‘Pathways to Military Chaplaincy’ Conference issued an invitation to “theologically centrist and left-of-center Christian seminaries, theological schools, and divinity schools” to become more invested in educating military chaplains.

Iliff’s Military Ministry program will bring progressive theological perspectives to the topics of war and peace, engage challenges and opportunities of ministry in multicultural and pluralistic contexts, and addresses a range of theological and psychological issues related to the impact of war and military service on persons, families and communities of faith.

ONLINE TWO-YEAR PROGRAM OF SIX COURSES ON MILITARY MINISTRY (one course per quarter)

**Impact of War on Pastoral Care and Theology:** This course examines the unique challenges and opportunities of providing pastoral care with veterans and military families, focusing on issues including warrior identity, deployment and combat experience, impact on families, post-deployment reintegration, and the role of congregations. This course also explores how pastoral caregivers’ personal and family experiences of war has an impact on pastoral care. This is a constructive, contextual theology course at the intersection of religious traditions, military culture, clinical disciplines and personal experience. Offered online in Fall Quarter, 2015; Likely repeat Fall, 2017

**Post-Traumatic Stress: Pastoral, Psychological, & Theological Perspectives**
This course uses a practical theological approach to traumatic narratives, drawing upon psychological perspectives on acute stress responses and post-traumatic stress (PTS), post-traumatic growth (PTG) and religious coping; and theological perspectives (theodicies) on traumatic suffering, and, in particular, the moral dilemmas generated by trauma and its aftermath. Students begin with their own trauma narratives in order to become aware of the embedded religious and existential beliefs and values they use to make sense of and cope with overwhelming stressors. They share their reflections and learn how to use a theologically-oriented transactional understanding of religious coping. The peer learning and support helps them practice an intercultural approach to spiritual care that fully acknowledges the mystery and alterity of their religious worlds. This self and religiously reflexive learning forms them as pastoral and spiritual caregivers who deeply engage religious and cultural traditions within a spiritually, socially complex world. Offered online in Winter Quarter, 2016; Likely repeat Winter, 2018

**Crisis Care and Pastoral Theology**
This course uses a practical theological approach that begins with life experiences of crisis care that include suicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, addiction, disability, and mental illness with particular populations (military service personnel, veterans, and their families; young adults; those marginalized because of aspects of their identity like sexual minority groups, racial groups, those going through the court system, those who are homeless). Students present case studies focusing on one of these specialized populations, with special attention to the ways intersecting social systems of privilege and oppression shape spiritual meanings of crises. Offered online in Spring Quarter, 2016; Likely repeat Spring, 2018
**Spiritual Care in Pluralistic Contexts**

This course helps students identify their personal values, attitudes, and beliefs and examine their own social identities to better understand how these dimensions of self can guide and challenge them in pastoral care and counseling settings. Students cultivate cultural sensitivity by considering care seekers’ social identities and values, and the ways lived theologies are shaped by internalized social oppression. These theories and skills are used within an intercultural contextual approach to spiritual care that draws upon postmodern approaches to religious knowledge. Offered online, Fall Quarter, 2016; Likely repeat Fall, 2018

**Moral Stress, Resilience & Spiritual Integration**

Spiritual struggles and moral stress arise from conflicts (1) within oneself, particularly one’s values, (2) between oneself and God for those in theocentric religious traditions, and (3) between oneself and one’s significant religious and spiritual communities. Spiritual struggles “are defined as religious/spiritual expressions that reflect a religious/spiritual system in tension and turmoil” (Ano & Pargament, 2012, p. 419). Spiritual struggles “embody fundamental questions about the ultimate benevolence, fairness, and meaningfulness of the world…” (Pargament, Murray-Swank, Magyar, & Ano, 2005, p. 254). Moral stress is a consequence of spiritual struggles involving one’s spiritual orienting system or lived theology—emotionally charged constellations of values, beliefs and ways of coping. When spiritual struggles become chronic they decrease spiritual, physical, and relational well-being. This course will explore spiritual struggles both in caregivers and care seekers from theological, psychological, and cultural perspectives. The goal of such exploration is liberative spiritual integration of spiritual struggles. This course is designed for pastoral and spiritual caregivers and for those interested in spiritually-orienting counseling, health care, and military chaplaincy. Offered online in Winter Quarter, 2017; Likely repeated Winter, 2019

**Ethical Perspectives on War and Peace**

This course explores how the disciplines of theological/religious studies work together to generate significant knowledge about war and peace that matters to the world. Faculty members collaboratively discuss critical questions and issues pertaining to war and peace on which they focus in their research. Students learn how to use a comprehensive approach to crucial issues of war and peace, gain skills in doing research on religious and theological studies pertaining to war and peace, and practice how to listen and respond by being respectful of each other’s experiences, beliefs, and values related to religion, war, and peace. Offered online in Spring, 2019; Likely repeated Spring, 2019

**CURRENT FACULTY**

- **Carrie Doehring** is Professor of Pastoral Care at Iliff School of Theology, ordained in the PCUSA, a licensed psychology and a diplomate in AAPC. She is author of (2015) The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach (Revised and Expanded). She has published extensively on pastoral care, trauma, and moral stress.

- **Zachary Moon** is a commissioned military chaplain and ordained in the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, and a PhD student in the Joint PhD program at Iliff and Denver University (defending his dissertation, June, 2015). He is the author of Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families (Chalice Press, 2015) and consults with churches nationwide on the reentry and reintegration of military service members and their families, combat trauma and moral stress, and the unique resources of congregations.

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