

Dr. Douglas M. Thorpe

Wesley Theological Seminary: During May 2022, Dr. Thorpe taught Pastoral Assessment, Diagnosis, and Psychopathology for Wesley Theological Seminary. The course is integral to the “Soul Care” track of Wesley’s Doctor of Ministry program. Because the class was offered online, students were able to join from any location. A chaplain and therapist in the U.S. Army joined from a base in East Asia. When we began class at 9 a.m. each morning, it was already 10 p.m. for him. Other students included parish pastors, hospital chaplains, a therapist with the Veterans Administration, and a chaplain with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. For those in Western time zones, the day started before the sun rose. The students’ diverse backgrounds and work settings added richness to class discussions.

The class covered concepts and techniques for spiritual assessment as well as psychological assessment and the diagnostic categories of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association, the definitive text for psychological diagnosis in this country.

Following the intensive week of classes, students complete the course by writing a research paper on a topic related to the course. At the doctoral level, student papers add to a greater understanding of the issues they cover. Dr. Thorpe notes, “I always come away from reading the papers with a deeper knowledge of the topic and, often, with new resources to use in my own work.”