**August 17, 2021 - Fall course format**

From Dean David Jensen:

I am pleased to announce the instructional format for the fall semester. Please read this email carefully, as some of the arrangements for classes have changed significantly since the announcement about in-person classes was made at the beginning of summer. We are making these changes in light of the recent spike in COVID cases in Travis County and throughout the country.

1. All students and instructors must be masked and maintain at least 3 feet of social distancing in any in-person classroom setting. We have assigned classrooms that allow students and faculty to conduct in-person classes in line with current CDC guidelines.
2. Some instructors have made the decision to conduct their courses completely online for the semester, or at least until the COVID situation gets better. These courses include the following: I Corinthians (Green); SPM Colloquium (Hooker); II Samuel (Park); Elementary Biblical Hebrew (Park); Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Park); Readings in Liturgical Theology (Lord).
3. Some instructors have chosen to include significant on-line instruction in addition to in-person instruction in courses. These courses include: Womanist and Feminist Readings of the New Testament (Aymer and Green); Introduction to Preaching (Helsel and Olson).
4. All other courses will be conducted in-person, in accordance with CDC guidelines.
5. Please be in touch with your instructors, if you have questions about the first day of class and in what format it will be conducted.
6. The MAYM intensive on campus, scheduled for the second week of the semester, will only include half of the students we originally anticipated. The Austin-based cohort will have their courses on the Austin Seminary campus; the Nashville-based cohort will have their courses at the Joe C Davis Camp outside Nashville.  All MAYM students must provide proof of a negative COVID test performed at a medical facility, health department, pharmacy, etc. (not a home test) conducted 72 hours or less prior to the start of the intensive.
7. Students may request an exemption from in-person instruction for medical or personal/family reasons. These requests need to be made to the Office of the Academic Dean by 5 pm on Monday, August 23. Dean Jensen will consider each of these requests, which need to include the reason for the requested exemption. Students who cannot take part in in-person instruction will be able to access course sessions live via Zoom. Though this option will not completely mirror in-person instruction (participation in course discussions, for example, may be more limited), it will allow students the ability to hear all course interaction and content, as well as see the instructor via the live Zoom feed.

      I write knowing that we all have grown weary from a pandemic that has lasted far longer than any of us had anticipated. I write in prayer for the entire Seminary community as we begin the academic year. And I write in prayer for the many—both near and far—who have suffered so much.

      This year’s success depends on all of us. Even in the midst of these trying times, I am excited to begin the academic year with each of you.