For centuries, effective church leaders in most Christian traditions have found inspiration in the classic texts on pastoral ministry from the patristic period. This course will cover the basic principles of church leadership as they were taught and practiced by the great pastor-theologians of the early church. It is designed for both lay and ordained church leaders, as well as those who are exploring or in the midst of training for Christian ministry. We will study the basic identity, power dynamics, and necessary supports of church leaders, the distinct spirituality required for faithful pastoral leadership, the heart of pastoral practice known as “the cure of souls,” the spiritual reading of Scripture and the role of theology in practical ministry, and finally the ministry of the word through preaching, teaching, and personal counsel. Our reading will consist of a short book by the instructor, along with a selection of readings from the patristic theologians themselves. While there are no evaluations in summer courses, please come prepared to discuss at least part of the reading. I will lead the class as a guided discussion.

The readings for this course are organized topically, following my book *Leading God’s People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today*, together with selected patristic sources. Come prepared to discuss the relevant chapter from *Leading God’s People*, which contains many quotes and excerpts from the early theologians, along with however much you have read in the assigned patristic text for each day. The books will be available for purchase at the YDS Student Book Supply, or you can order them on your own.

**Schedule of Readings**

- **Monday, June 6th**
  - *Leading God’s People*, preface and chap. 1
  - Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 2 On the Priesthood*
- **Tuesday, June 7th**
  - *Leading God’s People*, chap. 2
  - Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule* books 1–2
- **Wednesday, June 8th**
  - *Leading God’s People*, chap. 3
  - Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule* books 3–4
- **Thursday, June 9th**
  - *Leading God’s People*, chap. 4
  - Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* book 1
- **Friday, June 10th**
  - *Leading God’s People*, chap. 5
  - Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* book 4
Books for the Course


