CRE 5501 Forming the People of God
Ashland Theological Seminary
Fall Semester 2015
Columbus Campus
Kick-off Brunch/Lunch Gathering: September 12
Weekends: September 18-19; October 9-10; Nov 6-7
Fridays 6:00-9:00pm; Saturday 8:00-4:00pm
Michael B. Thompson, Professor
Office Phone: 419-289-5707
Cell Phone: 614-546-8796
Email: mthomps5@ashland.edu

ATTENTION: The first Gathering of this course is on Saturday, September 12 from 9:00am-12:30pm @ the home of the professor in Grove City, Ohio. Brunch/Lunch will be served. See the “Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning” #1 for complete details.

***ASSIGNMENT ALERT: READING AND WRITTEN WORK IS DUE ON SEPTEMBER 18-19, 2015***

I. Course Description
This course explores the biblical and theological principles and processes for making disciples in the local church. Attention will be given to how the Christian leader can be a forming and transforming agent for discipleship in the community of faith. Skills related to teaching and leading a small group Bible study will be addressed. Educational and developmental theory will be consulted in pursuit of course aims.

A. Further Description
This course is concerned with addressing and investigating two main questions. The first is “How are disciples made in the context of the local church?” The second is “What can pastors and Christian leaders do to be a force for making disciples in the context of the local church?” All class activities will revolve around the concerns that emerge from these two questions.

B. Course Construction and Classroom Culture
This course will involve lecture by the professor in which he identifies and exposes ideas related to disciple-making in the context of the local church. Robust conversation and respectful questioning is welcome in the context of lecture. The class will also, be at times, conducted as a seminar, relying on students’ critical reading and interaction with the texts, and thoughtful reflection regarding church ministry. The course will also at times function as a laboratory for ministry in which student and teacher will practice ministry skills relative to the ministry of making disciples.

C. Class Presence, Ministry, and Technology
A foundational component in ministry in any setting is to be truly present with those to whom one is ministering. A ministry in the name of Jesus is one in which the minister is fully present i.e. attending to others with all senses. We remember that Jesus’ ministry was characterized by
being meaningfully “with” others (Matthew 1:23 “…and they will call Him Immanuel”—which means—“God with us”; John 1:14 “and He became flesh and dwelt among us”). Since Jesus is our model and guide in ministry, and since the ministry of those taking class in seminary is to be a student, then one is expected to be fully present to her/his teacher and student colleagues during class sessions.

Technological devices, such as laptop computers, ipads, and smart-phones can be useful in accomplishing important learning tasks and have potential for improving the interactions between human beings, yet they also have the potential to harm human interaction and obstruct learning. For instance, in the classroom the above mentioned devices can function as a distraction from an important presentation or conversation taking place especially when previously mentioned devices are connected to the internet. Students can become so fascinated with the content on their computer that they fail to be fully present to the teacher and their fellow students. Each student is therefore urged to practice full presence with others in class, regarding it as a ministerial-spiritual act, as well as an act of etiquette and civility. Plainly put, it is rude to engage in prolonged fixation on the internet or other content on one’s technological device during class. Furthermore, any student observed spending prolonged time detached from the class life through the kind of technological distraction described above can expect to receive a substantial reduction in her/his course participation grade. This reduction can come without notice.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate critical and faithful interpretation and responsible use of Scripture in appropriate ministry and professional settings
2. Not assessed in this course
3. Not assessed in this course
4. Demonstrate critical theological reflection that is biblically faithful, historically grounded, contextually relevant, and integrated with life and ministry
5. Not assessed in this course
6. Exhibit effective ministry skill sets related to intended areas of service

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks

Required:  


**Highly Recommended:**

**Note:** The above book is required if doing the “practice project”. See assignments section #5, option 2.

**B. Attendance**
According to the student handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected unless the professor has been notified in advance. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing the equivalent of six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

**C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning**

1. **Class Gathering Fellowship Opportunity and Assignment.** On Saturday, September 12 from 9:00am-12:30pm the class will assemble for its initial meeting at the home of the professor in Grove City, Ohio (a southwest suburb of Columbus). The purpose of this gathering will be to: 1) give a course introduction, 2) allow the class members to get acquainted or re-acquainted for the purpose of community formation, 3) eat together as an intentional spiritual act, and experience a learning event associated with disciple-making in the community of faith.

   Brunch/Lunch will be provided by the professor and his wife.

   **Note:** Weekend courses which are 3 semester credit hours must meet 4 weekends, have an online component, or have additional experiential/assignment component(s). Since this course meets for only 3 weekends this scheduled group gathering assignment is part of that additional component.

   It is highly desired that every student in the course participate in this initial gathering encounter, and therefore this experience is required. However, if for some reason a student is unable to attend this gathering then they may substitute this assignment with the writing of a 12 page research paper on a subject related to discipleship in the church, or other substantial assignment agreed upon by the professor.

   Two weeks prior to the Saturday gathering each student registered for this course will receive an email from the professor which includes the details of our gathering such as directions to the professor’s house, etc.
2. Wilhoit Reading and Interactive Paper. Each student will read the book *Spiritual Formation as if Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* taking notes as they read. Each student will then write a paper comprised of three parts. **Part One** will be a **brief summary** of the content of the book. Each student will be sure to identify the author’s thesis (about 1 typewritten page). **Part Two** will be identifying, describing, and analyzing what the student believes are the best ideas in the book that are relative to spiritual formation in the life of the church. As part of this section each student should highlight what practice(s) he/she would like to introduce/implement in the life of his/her local church. Also as part of this section each student should note which of the author’s spiritual formation perspectives he/she finds most compelling for discipleship ministry in the church (Part two should be approximately 5 typewritten pages). **Part Three** is the most personal, subjective part of the paper. Each student should share what notions of the book she/he found most personally, spiritually enriching e.g. convicting, inspiring, etc. (about 1-2 pages). Bring your paper to class on the assigned date and be ready to discuss the content of the book and your perspectives regarding it. **This paper should be 6 to 8 pages in length.**

3. Yount Reading and Study Sheet Assignment. Each student will read the book entitled *Called to Teach* by William Yount. You should be ready to discuss it in class on the day that it is due. Each student will answer a study sheet of questions from the book provided by the professor. Additionally, each student will submit a statement saying that they read the book.

4. “The 5 most important things I learned” paper and reading. Each student will read the book, *Transforming Church* by Kevin Ford, taking notes as they read. Each student will identify what the 5 most important ideas to her/him are from the book and meaningfully discuss those ideas imagining their use in the context of the local church. Each student’s writing should result in the construction of a 4-5 page paper. The student should bring the paper to class on the day that it is due, and be ready to participate in a class conversation about the book’s pivotal ideas.

5. Practical ministry project involving the church and disciple-making. Choose one of the following two learning opportunities.

**Option 1: Teaching a Lesson in Class.** Each student may choose to design and teach a Bible “lessonette” in class utilizing principles of teaching that are presented through class lecture and course readings. The following elements will need to be present in each presentation.

a. A 12 to 15 minute presentation
b. Bible truth with application
c. Statement of purpose
d. Learning objectives/outcomes for the session
e. A determination of what age category you are attempting to teach (e.g. elementary children, high school students, middle adults)

These teaching presentations are scheduled for the **last weekend of the course**. More information will be given in class about these teaching sessions, so that the student will know exactly how to prepare for the assignment.
Each student will need to submit a document including the following 3 things at the time of his/her teaching presentation: 1) A synopsis of the lesson, 2) A brief statement of the purpose of the lesson, and 3) the learning objectives/outcomes for the lesson.

**Option 2: “Practices” Project.** Foundational to the construction and sustenance of any disciple-making Christian community is the conscious exercise of relational practices that reflect the ethos of Jesus by the persons who make up such a community. Christian leaders must identify, promote, initiate, and enact Christian practices that will build community and make disciples, if such disciple-making communities are to be constructed. Therefore, in consultation with the professor, each student may choose to identify a Christian practice that she/he would like to enact in her/his church, para-church context, or home and initiate it, promote it, and enact it over a 6 to 8 week period in her/his community of faith. This practice will naturally involve others in the Christian community and will seek to make disciples and build community. Each student upon completing the practice project will write a 5-6 page report describing what was done. The paper will have 5 sections as follows: 1) Rationale and Purpose of the Practice, 2) Report of the Practice Enactment,3) Biblical Foundation for the Practice, 4) Theological Reflections Regarding the Practice, and 5) Ministerial Observations and Reflections Regarding the Practice. During the last weekend of the course each student will hand in his paper and give a brief report (10-15 minutes) of living out the practice.

Attempting to do this kind of practical ministry work in an academic course will require flexibility, imagination, and negotiation. As professor, I promise to engender a class culture that isn’t brittle and rigid as we attempt these practical assignments. At the first gathering of class we will spend time discussing this project including imagining possible practice projects. We will be leaning on Practicing Our Faith by Dorothy Bass to stimulate our thinking about possible practice projects. Therefore, I urge you to “thumb” through her book prior to the start of the course to get some ideas about possible practice projects. Here are some possible areas out of which practices may emerge:

- **Hospitality** (ex. Writing cards to new people in church in a small group or taking a pie to welcome guests)
- **Testimony** (ex. Initiating a service of giving testimonies of faith at church)
- **Honoring the Body** (ex. Fasting and prayer group, exercise group, prayer and walking group)
- **Singing** (ex. singing as part of the Bible study)
- **Scripture** (ex. lectio divina group; family devotions with your spouse and children)
- **Serving** (ex. identifying elderly who need work done in their yard and do it for them with your group)

The above are just a few examples of the possibilities regarding practices that could be implemented.

I urge you to see this assignment not only as an academic assignment, but also as an opportunity to build Christ’s community in the community that you are a part, and to practice ministry by assisting in making disciples of Jesus. I urge you to pray that the Holy Spirit would place on your mind, and in your heart, just the right practice that will be a blessing to you and your community should you choose this assignment option.
Note: All persons choosing option 2 are required to consult Dorothy Bass’ book, *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People.*

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Gathering on 9/12 or research paper</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilhoit reading and paper</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yount reading and question responses</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Church reading and paper</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical ministry project</td>
<td>1,4,6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekend#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Get Acquainted/ Re-acquainted; Brunch Together @ professor’s home in Grove City, Ohio; Practicing Our Faith Event and conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Course Foundations; Biblical Foundations of discipleship and disciple-making</td>
<td>Reading of James Wilhoit’s book due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Jesus’ Methodology of making disciples considered; Spiritual Formation Practices in the Church</td>
<td>Interactive Paper on James Wilhoit’s book due; Class conversation on Wilhoit book; Spiritual Gifts profile; Bring: Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts A Personal Inventory Method to class (do not complete the inventory prior to class!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Discipleship/Disciple-making and Soteriological Considerations; Pastoral Action for Making Disciples</td>
<td>Reading of William Yount’s book due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Pastoral Action for making Disciples—Focus on Teaching in the Church; Learning Styles; Group Bible Study; Lectio divina</td>
<td>Study Questions on William Yount’s book due; Discussion of Yount’s book; Enactment of Group Bible Study Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Pastoral Action for making Disciples: Catalyzing, Modeling, Organizing</td>
<td>Reading of Kevin Ford’s book due; teaching of Lessonettes and Practice ministry Projects reports due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Pastoral Action for making Disciples: Catalyzing, Modeling, Organizing (cont.); Student Content interests</td>
<td>Transforming Church Paper Due; Discussion of the content of Transforming Church; Teaching of lessonettes and Practice ministry projects reports due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The above schedule is tentative and may be adjusted in service of the aims of the course.

V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning
The Society of Professors of Christian Education (SPCE) is an academic guild devoted to the development of persons to lead in fields related to Christian education and discipleship ministries in the local church, institutions of higher education, and parachurch organizations. The SPCE sponsors an annual conference (usually held in October) where important matters related to Christian discipleship are discussed. This conference is open to all interested in the practice and promotion of Christian ministry. It would be an ideal event to attend annually to receive professional and spiritual support. Information about the SPCE can be found at www.spceonline.org. SPCE also publishes a journal twice a year entitled Christian Education Journal. It contains both scholarly articles and practical-professional pieces on a wide range of subjects related to Christian Education and Discipleship. Subscribing to this journal could be an important resource in professional development and spiritual enrichment.

VI. Seminary Guidelines
A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy
Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the Student Handbook.

B. Academic Support Services
If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Support Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic support including writing, critical thinking, documentation, reading skills, study skills, test taking skills, and time management. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Academic Support Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu.

C. Students with Disabilities
Ashland University makes every effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who have a specific physical, psychiatric or learning disability and require accommodations are encouraged to inform their instructors of their needs early in the semester so that learning needs can be appropriately met. It is the student’s responsibility to document the disability with Disability services in The Center for Academic Support on the 7th floor of the Ashland University Library, 419-289-5904.
D. ATS Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>65-67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. Selected Bibliography or References


