

CRE 5501 Forming the People of God

Ashland Theological Seminary

Fall Semester 2020

Mondays 6:00-9:00 pm

Online-Distance Learning Class

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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. The Character of Online Class Sessions.

Most of the online class sessions will involve 2 parts. First, approximately 90 minutes of professor-student screen time, in real time. This time will typically consist of devotional moments, professor lecture, and whole class discussion. Secondly, often following the lecture time, the professor will provide the student with a corresponding asynchronous assignment where there is deeper exploration of the subject at hand. This assignment may include the reading of an article or the watching of a video plus questions to answer. The subject matter may be considered in the next class through discussion or the students may be required to turn in written responses to questions. The second half of the class time might also be utilized to take an examination or engage in reflective writing. The professor hopes to create a variety of learning experiences in the online sessions that is not simply 3 hours of lecture. The class should think of itself as a laboratory in which we experiment together in creative learning methods.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional semester course format.

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:

Bass, Dorothy C., *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997. ISBN: 0-7879-0336-1

Ford, Kevin G. *Transforming Church: Bringing Out the Good to Get to Great*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008. ISBN: 1434767043

Yount, William. *Called to Teach*. Nashville: B and H Academic Books, 1999. ISBN: 0-8054-1199-7

Coleman, Robert, *The Master Plan of Evangelism, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2010. ISBN-13: 9780800788087

Highly Recommended:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1954. ISBN-13: 9780060608521

Crabb, Larry. *Becoming a True Spiritual Community*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999. ISBN: 0-8499-1884

Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain. *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts: A Personal Inventory Method*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. ISBN: 0-310-75061-x

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. “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 4-6 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.

2. Yount Reading and Online Exercise Questions. Each student will read the book entitled *Called to Teach* by William Yount. You should be ready to discuss it in class on the days that it is due. Each student will answer 6 questions from the book provided by the professor in online exercise experiences.

3. Teaching a Lessonette in Class. Each student will 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 8 to 10 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 will be scheduled toward the end 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.

4. Reading *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, Dorothy C. Bass, Editor and engage the book as directed in online exercises as directed by the professor.

Each student will read the entire book. Additionally, the learning from the book should influence the design, execution, and reporting of the *Practices Project*.

5. “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 is to identify a Christian practice that she/he would like to enact in his/her home church, para-church context, or home and initiate it, promote it, and enact it over at least a 6 week period in his/her 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-page report/paper 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. Each student will give a preliminary 5 minute oral report in class on their project early in the semester. Each student will submit her/his Practice report paper and give a final oral report in one of the last 3 class periods of the course. The oral report is meant to be an informal, yet substantive, sharing of the discipling practice undertaken by the student.

It is reasonable that a course on disciple-making and Christian community formation actually involve attempting to do formative relational practices and not just strategize and theologize about them. Therefore, in this course we seek to undertake the risky and messy work of trying to actually practice ministry in context. 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 the above-mentioned practical assignments. During the unfolding of the course we will spend time discussing the practical projects throughout the course. I expect to take a little time for each student individually to discuss imaginatively possible practice projects during the week.

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)

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 communities 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.

6. Online Exercises. Each student will complete the online exercises that correspond with the lesson of the day when the class meets online. These exercises will generally be designed to accent the course content of the day. The student will complete these exercises most often in the second half of the class. Each student will submit them to the professor as directed.

7. Robert Coleman’s *Masterplan of Evangelism* Reading and 1-2 Page Paper. Each student will read the *Masterplan of Evangelism* as directed in the syllabus and write a brief paper in one of the online exercise times as directed by the Professor.

****** 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. One should have their computer set so that their face appears on the computer screen during the entirety of class.

D. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

Assignment	Learning Outcomes	Percentage of Final Grade
“Called to Teach” Reading and Worksheet	4	10%
“5 Best Ideas” Reading and Paper	4	20%
Teaching Lessonette	1,4,6	25%
“Practices” Project and Report Paper	1,4,6	30%
“Practices” Project 10 minute Oral Report Update	1,4,6	5%
Masterplan Reading and Online Exercise	1	5%
Online Exercises	1,4,6	5%

IV. Tentative Course Schedule

Week/Class	Monday/Date	Lecture/Topic	Readings/Assignments/Online Exercises
1	8/31	Course Introduction; Review Syllabus;	Community Building Activities

		Get Acquainted Rituals; 7 Key Biblical and Christocentric Principles	Online Exercise
2	9/14	Biblical Foundations for Discipleship & Disciple-making :Etymology	Read <i>Transforming Church</i> —Introduction and Chaps. 1-3 Online Exercise
3	9/21	Biblical Foundations for Discipleship and Disciple-making (cont.) Jesus' Methodology of Making disciples considered; Coleman Practices Project Discussed; Spiritual Formation Practices	Read <i>Transforming Church</i> —Chaps. 4-7 Read <i>Practicing Our Faith</i> Chaps. 1-4 Note: Pay particular attention to Chapter 4 <i>Household Economics</i> Online Exercise Pay particular attention to Chapter 4 <i>Household Economics</i>
4	9/28	Practicing Our Faith: Household Economics (Bass) Jesus' Methodology of Making Disciples considered	DUE: Reading <i>Transforming Church</i> (Chaps 8-12) and Paper Due Online Exercise: Masterplan
5	10/5	<i>Transforming Church</i> Discussion and Presentation Introduction to Pastoral Action for Making Disciples	DUE: 5 minute Oral report on Practices Project Proposal Online Exercise: Pastoral Action for Making Disciples
6	10/12	Introduction to Pastoral Action for Making Disciples: focus on Teaching	DUE: Reading <i>Called to Teach</i> Chaps. 1-3 Online Exercise: Teaching

7	10/19	Pastoral Action for making Disciples: Teaching (cont.)	DUE: <i>Called to Teach</i> Chaps. 4-6 Online Exercise: Yount Questions
8	10/26	Pastoral Action for making Disciples: Catalyzing, Modeling, Organizing;	DUE: <i>Called to Teach</i> (Chs.7-10) Online Exercise: Yount Questions
9	11/2	Soteriological Considerations and Disciple-making	Online Exercise: Soteriological Exercise
10	11/9	Pastoral Action for making Disciples: Teaching and Catalyzing,	DUE: <i>Called to Teach</i> (Chs.7-10) Online Exercise: Yount Questions
11	11/16	Pastoral Action for Making Disciples: Catalyzing, Organizing; Modeling	Learning Styles Identification and Exercise; Discussion of S.N. Kibbey's "Ministry Leadership Components" and Small Group Work
12	11/23	Teaching the Lessonettes	DUE: <i>Teaching of Lessonettes by students; Meaningful participation with your student colleagues</i>
13	11/30	Teaching the Lessonettes	DUE: <i>Teaching of Lessonettes by students; Meaningful participation with your student colleagues</i>
14	12/7	Christian Growth Outcomes: Metaphysical, Epistemological, and Axiological; Practices Project Report and Paper	DUE: <i>Practices Project Report and Paper</i> Online Exercise: Oral Reports
15	12/14	Final Discipleship considerations Practices Project Report and Paper	DUE: <i>Practices Project Report and Paper</i> Online exercise: Oral Reports

Note about the Course Schedule:

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. Ashland Multiliteracy Center

The Ashland Multiliteracy Center can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified Consultants can advise you online or in person.

To schedule an appointment, visit [Ashland Multiliteracy Center](#) and select "Online and Graduate" from the schedule menu.

C. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations.

It is Ashland University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at [419-289-5904](tel:419-289-5904), or send an email to dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

D. ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	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.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	
B	3.0	86-88	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.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.
C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

VII. Selected Bibliography

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1954.
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Eims, Leroy. *The Lost Art of Disciple-making*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978. ISBN: 0-310-37281-x

Habermas, Ronald T. *Introduction to Christian Education and Formation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-310-274261

Gorman, Julie A. *Community that is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups, Second Ed.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2002. ISBN: 978-0801091452

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Kerr, Hugh T. and Mulder, John M. editors, *Famous Conversions: The Christian Experience.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983. ISBN: 0-8028-4065-5

McLaren, Brian. *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith.* San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010. ISBN: 978-0061853982

Moots, Paul. *Becoming Barnabas: The Ministry of Encouragement.* Herndon, Virginia: Alban Institute, 2004. ISBN: 1-56699-293-1

Pagitt, Doug. *Church Re-Imagined: The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2005. ISBN: 978-0-31026975-5

Palmer, Parker. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for Your Voice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999. ISBN: 0-7879-4735-0