

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AGTS WEST – CUPERTINO CAMPUS**

**PCSE 640: Contemporary Issues in Pentecostal Theology
(3 Credits)**

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Course Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a thorough examination of some of the key theological issues that confront 21st century Pentecostals and Charismatics. Topics include, but are not limited to issues such as Spirit-Baptism, Local Church authority and structure, the unique nature of Pentecostal identity and a survey of popular teachings in the churches and national/international media. Topics are representative, not exhaustive and students will learn and devise assessment tools to Biblically evaluate the issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion, the diligent student will:

- Understand the key issues of theology confronting Pentecostals and Pentecostal spiritual leaders.
- Integrate this understanding into their personal belief structure and spirituality.
- Be acquainted with select sources that define and evaluate the issues.
- Appreciate the diversity and unity of Pentecostalism and see the differences between permissible perspective and outright doctrinal heresy.
- Be able to articulate a Biblical-Pentecostal belief system and compare it with other Christian systems
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate the major ideas of Pentecostal theology.
- Be able to teach about the current issues that divide and unite Pentecostal Christians.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

- It is expected that graduate students have bibles in modern translations and access to basic Greek, Hebrew and Commentary resources. There will be extensive Biblical reading for this course. Unlike some, this instructor believes that the diversity of biblical materials creates the framework excellent theological reflection.
- Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology*. Zondervan. 2006
- Michael Peters, *The Case for Charismatics*. Trafford Publishing, 2006.

- Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Baker Academic. 2005

METHODOLOGY

There will be a combination of class lecture and discussion, personal reading and research and select guest presenters and other resources will create a rich environment for academic and spiritual growth.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Consistent attendance and participation is vital – especially in a concentrated course. This will contribute to the overall grade.
- Weekly and supplemental reading needs to be completed in a timely manner according to the schedule below.
- There will be four reflective essays due – it is best to complete one each week of the course in order not to have the pressure to complete heavy writing just before the due dates. These essays will be 3-4 pages and demonstrate interaction with the assigned reading, classroom discussion and personal reflection. The topics are given below (See Course Schedule)
- There will be a research paper/project due by March 15. This will be on a subject of the student’s choosing, in consultation with the professor. The focus will be a thorough evaluation of a current academic or popular teaching promoted by a Pentecostal leader or group. The aims are threefold: 1) an accurate description of the teaching; 2) biblical-theological analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; and 3) the impact of this emphasis upon personal and local church spirituality.

COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
1-6	Defining Pentecostal/Charismatic Distinctives	Acts; I Cor 12-14
1-13	The Baptism in the Spirit – Evidence and Signs	Macchia
1-20	Popular Conceptions and Misconceptions	Peters
1-27	Church Leadership and Structure	Eph.; I, II Tim & Titus; Yong (1/3)
2-3	Emerging Global Debates	Yong (finish)

Reflective Essays:

1. How does Macchia make the case for what the Assemblies of God calls the “initial physical evidence” of the Baptism in the Spirit? Comment at length on his use of the term “sign.”

2. Comment on three popular teachings circulating in the churches today that you confront as a leader. What are strengths and weaknesses of these ideas? How does Peters address the concerns of evangelicals that Charismatics are “dangerous”?
3. What do you see as the best structure of local church authority according to scripture? Comment on the issues of accountability, guidance, vision and authority.
4. Yong’s ideas have stirred controversy among theologians and leaders. What is the main thesis of his work? What assertions do you find enriching? Troubling? Worthy of more examination?

GRADING

Done on a percentage scale:

- 94-100% = A - outstanding
- 90-94% = A-
- 87-89% = B+
- 84-86% = B - good
- 80-83% = B-
- 77-79% = C+
- 74-76% = C - fair
- 70-73% = C-
- 67-69% = D+
- 64-66% = D - poor
- 60-63% = D-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This will be distributed in class

HELPFUL INSIGHTS

- Keep up with the reading and essays. You DO have time after the class sessions and before the end of the semester to complete your work, but timeliness is important to stay on track as you enroll in other classes.
- Communicate with the instructor and your fellow students in between classes to maximize learning
- Above all, walk in faith, believing that God will empower you as a leader to learn – in order to better serve those he has called you to!