

**Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Continuing Education Course
NORTH CENTRAL UNIVERSITY BRANCH CAMPUS
www.agts.edu**

at

**North Central University
Minneapolis, MN
<http://www.ncbc.edu/>**

July 29-August 2, 2002

3 Credit Hours

PTHB 640 COMMUNICATING WITH POSTMODERNS

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Summer 2002

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A discovery of the personal and organizational communication assets available to make the message and mission of the Christian church a reality for postmoderns.

COURSE REGISTRATION

Register for AGTS credit by contacting the Continuing Education Team:

Phone: 1-800-467-AGTS.

Email: lmayne@agseminary.edu

Online: http://agts.edu/continuing_education/index.html

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course is an arena for learning and growth of several kinds:

- *Cultural exegesis*: to experience and interpret major forms of cultural influence that are creating the context in which Christian communicators must operate.
- *Theological reflection*: to hear culture posing critical theological questions, and to exercise reflective skills needed to begin the process of developing meaningful answers that will form the process of Christian communication.

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- *Personal reframing*: to see personal and corporate communication as an evolving, holistic, missional calling rather than a set of static roles played by executing a list of functions, or a list of “tools” designed to hold attention and change behavior.
- *Professional networking*: to develop relationships with other leaders devoted to the communicative calling in an environment that maximizes long-term peer learning.
- *Communication enhancement*: to grow in the character, skills, and gifts associated with the communication arts as they relate to the emerging culture and church.

COURSE READINGS

Required Texts

(Note: you can save on shipping costs by ordering all the texts from the AGTS bookstore. Call Arlene at 1-800-467-AGTS x1055, or email her at adilley@agseminary.edu)

Grenz, Stanley, *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. (211 pages)

Kraft, Charles H. *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991 (180 pages)

Loscalzo, Craig A. *Apologetic Preaching: Proclaiming Christ to a Postmodern World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. (138 pages)

McLaren, Brian *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000 (227 pages)

Sweet, Leonard. *Postmodern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century Church*. Broadman & Holman, 2000. (224 pages)

Substitute Texts

(To be substituted for any required texts already read.)

Brasher, Brenda E. *Give Me that Online Religion*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001. (203 pages)

Gibbs, Eddie, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000. (249 pages)

Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to our Changing World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. (256 pages)

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Hunter, George. *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West...Again*. Downers grove: InterVarsity, 2000. (137 pages)

Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001. (189 pages)

McLaren, Brian. *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. (188 pages)

Morgenthaler, Sally J. *Worship Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. (320 pages)

Nash, Robert N. *An 8-Track Church in a CD World: The Modern Church in the Postmodern World*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001. (144 pages)

Webber, Robert E. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelism for a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. (240 pages)

COURSE OUTLINE

1. The Inspiration Age: Communication and Mission
2. The End of the World as We Know It: Audience and Experience
3. The Truth Isn't What it Used to Be: Message and Media
4. Inside Out: Authenticity and Vulnerability
5. Church.com: Technology and Media

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Pre-session:

1. *Read*: all the Required Texts (approximately 980 pages) prior to the first day of class. Replace any books you have already read with books from the Substitute Text list.
2. *Reflect*: write a 5-page paper summarizing what you believe to be the 3-5 most important ideas from the readings, *why* you feel they are significant, and how they relate to your ministry context. The paper will be turned in during the session.
3. *Report*: you will sign a reading report on the first day of class indicating that you have completed the assigned texts.

b. During the session

1. *Participation*: be present and on time for all sessions. Participation in class interaction, exercises, and assignments is critical for peer learning.
2. *Presentation*: be prepared to make a 3-5 minute oral presentation to the class based on your reading reflection paper, and to turn in a copy of the paper on the day of your presentation.

c. Post-session: CHOOSE 2 OF THE FOLLOWING 6 OPTIONS

1. *Reading Reflection*: read one of the Substitute Texts and write an 8-10 page paper that outlines the author's central thesis and responds to it in terms of your ministry context. This is to be a high-quality reflective essay, not a library research assignment.
2. *Personal Growth Plan*: write an 8-10 page paper detailing your plan for learning more about communicating with postmoderns and developing the ministry skills relevant to this challenge over the next year. Describe the area in which you feel the most need for development. The plan should include reading, personal research, peer consultations, spiritual disciplines, changes in your ministry context, and other personal growth assets.
3. *Sermons*: using insights gained from the class/conference, write two sermons of significant length designed to reach a postmodern, pre-Christian audience. *Do not recycle old messages!* You may do either a manuscript, or a very, very detailed outline. While all sermons must be turned in hard copy, they may be accompanied by audiocassette and/or media support (e.g., PowerPoint, video clips, etc.) If you speak without notes, an audiocassette is required.
4. *Research Paper*: choose a major theme related to the course and write an 8-10 page research paper. The paper should identify and reflect upon key ideas related to the topic, report on some of the major literature in the area, and apply conclusions to your ministry context. Supporting footnotes and a 15-item bibliography are required.
5. *Internet Project*: research emerging church models on the internet and prepare an 8-10 page paper on how they are communicating with postmoderns. The presentation should include brief descriptions of some of the churches, web links, their worship styles, and other key communication strategies. Draw conclusions about their use of the internet itself and the application of their ministry model to your own (i.e., what you learned from them that could be applied in your context).

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6. *Multimedia Project*: using the course as a starting point, develop a brief multimedia (Web-based, PowerPoint, etc.) presentation that would accomplish either of two goals: making the postmodern church comprehensible to the mainstream church, or, making the gospel comprehensible to a postmodern audience.
7. *Self-design*: every student has the option of proposing a self-designed post-session project. The proposal must be approved in advance by the professor and be submitted in a text form. All self-designed projects must be the academic equivalent of any two of the options above.

All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, represent quality graduate level work, and follow the *Turabian* style manual, 6th edition.

All assignments can be emailed to the professor (ecreps@agseminary.edu) with a title page that includes your name, address, phone and email, the course number, and the type of project.

Due date: November 2, 2002

Note: the participant will be charged a \$15 change-of-grade fee if work is turned in after the due date stipulated on the syllabus, even if permission has been given by the instructor.

GRADING PROCEDURE

	<i>Points</i>
Pre-session writings:	25
Class attendance and participation:	25
Post-session options:	150

Grading will be on a percentage basis, with 90% of the total points required for an A, 80% of the points required for a B, etc. Plusses and minuses will be used for point totals within 2 points of any grade level.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Emerging Church/Emerging Culture: A Select Resource List is available at my AGTS faculty web page in both an on-line and downloadable pdf version.

http://agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/bibliographies/creps_bibliography/index.html

The free Acrobat reader required to read pdf files is available at:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

SPECIFIC DATA

Course syllabus prepared by Earl Creps, March, 2002