

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PTH 551 Effective Evangelism and Assimilation

Marshall M. Windsor

Spring 2009

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines our changing cultural landscape and the challenges facing the church's mission in this context. Emphasis is placed on understanding the unreached, discovering the relevance of the gospel, and evangelizing through the application of biblical principles. The foundations, strategies, and methods for effective evangelism will be explored.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the priority and process of evangelism in the New Testament.
2. Identify the hindrances to evangelism today, and appreciate the challenges of developing more effective evangelism.
3. Understand the generational and cultural contexts in which the Church proclaims the gospel.
4. Comprehend the relevance of the gospel for individual and societal needs.
5. Understand the foundational objectives, strategies, and methods for effective evangelism.
6. Enhance the quality of personal witness and corporate evangelism.
7. Identify means for assimilating people into the local church.
8. Design an outreach strategy for a specific ministry context.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Mittelberg, Mark. *Building a Contagious Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2000.

Sjogren, Steve, Dave Ping, & Doug Pollock. *Irresistible Evangelism: Natural Ways to Open Others to Jesus*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004.

Stetzer, Ed. *Breaking the Missional Code*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2006.

Recommended:

Hybels, Bill. *Just Walk Across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2006.

McLaren, Brian. *More Ready than You Think*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Richardson, Rick. *Evangelism Outside the Box*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

COURSE OUTLINE

- I. BIBLICAL EVANGELISM: PRIORITY AND PROCESS
 1. Jesus
 2. Early Church

- II. UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING CULTURE
 1. Generations
 2. Worldviews and religions (PTH 622 Comm. Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Society or CCFPS)
 3. Other significant factors in target audience

- III. RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL
 1. Individual needs (CCFPS)
 2. Societal needs (CCFPS)

- IV. HINDRANCES TO HARVEST IN THE CHURCH
 1. Power challenged churches
 2. Nonmissional churches
 3. Lack of serious disciple-making
 4. Flawed understanding of conversion and witness
 5. Substitutes for genuine harvest
 6. Lack of relationships with non-Christians
 7. Lack of friendliness and genuine Christian community
 8. Lack of servanthood
 9. Ignorance of changing culture: worldviews, concerns, questions
 10. Inappropriate strategies and methods
 11. Incomplete message that is perceived as irrelevant
 12. Inadequate apologetic based on rational arguments

- V. FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

1. Spiritual renewal and empowerment
2. Determination to be a missional church
3. Serious disciple-making (PTH 650 Building a Disciple-Making Ministry)
4. Understanding of conversion and pathways to faith
5. Rejection of substitutes for genuine harvest
6. Relationships with non-Christians
7. Welcoming and genuinely Christian community
8. Holistic ministries
9. Cultural understanding and contextual relevance (PTH 622 Communicating Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Society or CCFPS)
10. Appropriate strategies and methods
11. A complete and relevant message (CCFPS)
12. An adequate, more broadly based apologetic; intelligent response to tough questions and issues (CCFPS)

VI. STRATEGIES FOR EVANGELISM

1. Demonstrate spiritual power
2. Employ multi-faceted approach to individual witness: relational, testimonial, intellectual, confrontational
3. Employ team and community witness
4. Develop holistic ministries
5. Employ penetrating as well as invitational approaches
6. Target children and youth
7. Target specific groups: generational, socio-economic, ethnic, neglected
8. Target responsive groups
9. Start new services
10. Plant new churches
11. Preach with persuasion

VII. METHODS OF EVANGELISM

1. Witness
2. Seeker services (Willowcreek, Saddleback)
3. Seeker retreats (IVCF, Young Life)
4. Revival services (Brownsville)
5. Evangelistic studies and discussions (Alpha, IVCF GIGs)
6. Side door evangelism
7. Event evangelism
8. Community events
9. Crusade evangelism (Billy Graham, Luis Palau)
10. Servant evangelism
11. Worship evangelism
12. Recovery ministries
13. Media and literature evangelism

VIII. ASSIMILATION

1. Connecting: friendship, small groups, Sunday school
2. Growing: class for new believers/newcomers, discipling ministry (PTH 650 Building a Disciple-Making Ministry)
3. Involving: opportunities for ministry according to gifts and interests

METHODOLOGY

Class and small group discussions, student presentations, supplementary readings, tapes, videos, and lectures will be used to facilitate learning. A project will be assigned which requires students to integrate the concepts that they learned.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Presessions

1. Before the January 16-17 weekend:

- a. Read Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (approx. 385 pp.)
- b. Submit a two page typewritten “Reading Analysis.” Indicate which concepts and practices were of most value to you and the reasons why. State the overall value of the book to you and assess its strengths and limitations. Your goal is not simply to summarize, but primarily to analyze and evaluate. You need to interact and wrestle with the authors ideas – this is not a “book report.” This is **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, January 16.** The value of an intensive weekend class is multiplied when you have had prior opportunity to interact with the material and reflect on it.

2. Before the February 13-14 weekend:

- a. Read Sjogren, Ping, & Pollock’s book: *Irresistible Evangelism: Natural Ways to Open Others to Jesus.* (approx. 188 pages).
- b. Submit a “Reading Analysis” as described for the first book. This is **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, February 13.**

3. Before the March 20-21 weekend:

- a. Read Ed Stetzer’s book, *Breaking the Missional Code* (approx. 240 pages).
- b. Submit a “Reading Analysis” as above. This is **due at the beginning of the first class session, Friday, March 20.**
- c. Read any supplementary materials selected or designated. (Available in the library on 2 Hour Reserve)

Sessions

1. Attend all sessions punctually. **Bring the book due to be read** and be prepared to discuss it.
2. Participate in class through discussion, small groups, and a brief student presentation (5 to 6 minutes) on a chapter from one of the textbooks and/or one of the supplementary readings. Story-telling, public readings, or a skit may substitute for the presentation.
3. **Chapel** may be scheduled as part of our class on one day.

During the semester

- Choose **one of three options** below:
 1. Share a meaningful **witness** with 3 individuals. For each, write a one or two paragraph summary briefly describing the context and principles applied from the course. Submit these to the Faculty Secretary **as each occurs**, but no later than **Friday, March 20 at the beginning of class**
 2. Collect 15 useful **illustrations** (stories that help paint a biblical principle) for the 19 areas of "Relevance of the Gospel." These may be spread over many areas or be limited to a few areas of your choosing. These may come from books, periodicals, or media. **Limit those from collections to a total of 5. Cite sources for all illustrations.** Submit these on **Friday, March 20, at the beginning of class.**
 3. Any combination of 1 and 2. Each experience of witness reduces the total number of illustrations by 5.

Post-session

1. Complete a final **examination** and turn in to the Faculty Secretary by **Friday, April 3, 4:00 p.m.** These exams can be picked up from the faculty secretary, who will designate an exam room, and must be turned in within a 2 hour period. Those living out of town will be given their final exams prior to the end of the March 21st class session, and may return them by mail to AGTS, ATTN: Marshall M. Windsor.
2. **Option A:** Design a **comprehensive outreach strategy** for a **specific ministry context and target audience.** This may be a church or ministry with which you have had past or present involvement or an anticipated ministry in your future. This project should be **10 to 12 pages and integrate the insights gained** through your reading, class participation, and experiences in outreach.
 - a. Describe the ministry context and target audience in terms of generations, worldviews, culture, and other applicable characteristics. Elaborate on the issues and factors to which you would need to be especially sensitive.
(Approximately 2 to 3 pages)

- b. Describe comprehensively the strategies and means of evangelism which you would employ. Explain why you are choosing them and excluding others.

Option B: Choose a topic from the 19 areas of the relevance of the gospel (to be distributed in class), and write a **10 to 12 page research paper**. In general, the presentation of the need, exploration of alternative solutions, the biblical response, and support material for the biblical response should each comprise approximately one-fourth of the paper. Do **not** use more than 2 items from the supportive material given in class. You may use any of the items that you have personally collected.

Due: This paper should be submitted to Marshall Windsor or the Faculty Secretary no later than **Wednesday, April 15, at 4:00 p.m.** Those living out of town by sending it by email attachment to windsmin@aol.com

Format: Use Times-New Roman font, 12 point type. Make all margins 1" and place page numbers in the upper right hand corner. *Quotes longer than two lines should be single-spaced and indented.* Be sure to cite your sources through an attached bibliography and footnotes. *If used, lists and summaries longer than a quarter page should be placed in appendices.*

Recommendations for Papers. Strive to write at a graduate level, realizing that what may have been acceptable in undergraduate work may not be for master's degree papers. While the quality of your content is the most important, the use of poor grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style detracts. Deficiencies in these areas will result in a lower grade. (After graduation, they will reflect poorly on your ministry.) If possible, ask several people knowledgeable in English and writing to thoroughly critique your work before submission. Recognize, as all good writers do, that extensive rewriting is a normal part of writing well. Allow time for the process of revision, which may require several drafts.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Reading analyses	11.5%	30 points (@ 10 per book)
Class participation, including class presentation	5.8%	15 points (@ 5 per weekend)
Assignment: witness or illustrations	5.8%	15 points
Examination	38.5%	100 points
Post-session paper	38.5%	100 points
TOTAL	100%	260 points

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This will be distributed during the course.

SPECIFIC DATA

Revised by Marshall M. Windsor, October 29, 2008