

Houston Graduate School of Theology

PL 671 Leadership in a Postmodern Culture

Spring 2014, Tuesdays, 1:30 to 4:00 P.M.

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The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual, and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

I. Course Description:

A study of characteristics of postmodern contexts and spiritual leadership within those contexts. The conversation between postmodern culture and Christian faith will be examined with a view to exploring new ways of living and sharing the text to reach postmodern contexts with the gospel.

II. Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain key components of the postmodern context.
2. Explain and apply key principles of leadership.
3. Discuss theology from a modern viewpoint and the resulting effects on a postmodern context.
4. Explain the key transitions of post-Christendom.
5. Implement a missional strategy for impacting a postmodern and post-Christendom context.
6. Establish a leadership strategy appropriate for the postmodern context.

III. Textbooks

Required Texts:

Bass, Diana Butler. *Christianity After Religion*. New York: HarperOne, 2012.
ISBN: 978-0-06-200373-7

Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. ISBN: 978-0-8028-0864-6

Grenz, Stanley J. & John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
ISBN: 978-0-664-25769-9

Tomlinson, Dave. *How to Be a Bad Christian...And a Better Human Being*. London: Hodder & Stroughton, 2012. ISBN: 1 444 70382 5 or Ebook ISBN: 978 1 444 70384 9

Recommended Text:

Gibbs, Eddie & Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.
ISBN: 0-8010-2715-2

IV. Course Requirements:

1. Write a **three to four page response paper** to the book *How to Be a Bad Christian* by Dave Tomlinson. What did you resonate with in the book? What did you struggle with? What stirred you? What are the significant things to take away from the book for you? This paper is due **February 10th** and comprises **15% of the final grade**.
2. Complete a **four to six page expanded outline** of the book *A Primer on Postmodernism* by Stanley Grenz. The expanded outline should include key headings, key ideas/concepts, key individuals discussed, and significant pieces of learning for you. Students should format the paper so that each of these four components is easily identifiable. This paper is due **February 24th** and comprises **15% of the final grade**.
3. Write a **three to four page response paper** to the book *Christianity After Religion* by Diana Butler Bass. What did you resonate with? What did you struggle with? What stirred you? What are the significant things to take away from the book for you? This paper is due **March 24th** and comprises **15% of the final grade**.
4. Students will visit a **postmodern Christian expression/church the week of March 31st**. Students will **interview a key leader or participant** of the group. The student will solicit answers to at least the following five questions. What is different about this church experience? How does this group make disciples? How does this group share the gospel? Why do you participate in this group? What is different about your theology and or philosophy of ministry here? Students will write a four to six page report of their experience and their interview. This report is due on **April 7th** and comprises **15% of the final grade**.
5. A **final paper** will describe and apply learning from the course, as indicated in the outline below. The wise student will begin writing this **15-page paper** near the beginning of the semester, as soon as the initial section of class is complete, and will continue adding integrative learning as the semester proceeds. Prior to turning in the project, the wise student will spend a substantial amount of time editing the project in its entirety, adding general conclusions and overall learning as the paper draws to a close. Papers written in anything but Times New Roman, 12 point type, will not be graded. Please do not double-double space. Use citations as needed and third person writing throughout.
 - Title – begin two inches from the top of the page
 - Introduction – a good introduction will begin without a “label” or subhead. The 1-2 paragraphs will delineate the direction the writer will take in the paper and will provide a synopsis of the paper’s parts.

- Part 1 – Discuss the key components of a postmodern mindset.
- Part 2 – Compare & contrast the forming of theology from a modern perspective and from a postmodern perspective.
- Part 3 – Discuss the key components of Post-Christendom.
- Part 4 – Develop & describe a leadership strategy for transitioning an existing congregation toward ministry in a postmodern context.
- Part 5 – Develop & describe a missional strategy for ministry to people within the postmodern/Post-Christendom context.
- Conclusion – a good conclusion will begin with a subhead and will recap in summary fashion the contents of the paper in order to draw a substantive conclusion.
The project should provide evidence of a semester of thinking, discovery, and integration. **Due May 5th, this project will comprise 25% of the final grade.**

V. Grading Scale

A	96-100	C+	84-85
A-	94-95	C	80-83
B+	92-93	C-	78-79
B	88-91	D	70-77
B-	86-87	F	69 or below

VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and regular submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time. Two excused absences will not affect the student's grade, but more than this will affect the student's class participation grade. The student could lose as much as a letter grade for excessive tardiness and absences.
- B. Work is expected on the due date.
- C. Cell phones provide distractions to class. The student should turn cell phones to silence or vibrate and should only respond to calls during breaks.
- D. *Incompletes*
In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the Instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments that are not completed before the end of the semester or term, subject to a half-letter grade or more reduction on the final grade (e.g., A to A-; B to B-). If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and set an extension of time within which to complete the work that shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days from the end of the term. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline listed in the school calendar.

Additional extensions may be granted only by the Dean of the Faculty and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of "I" will be converted to the grade earned by the student

up to that point. A failing grade, or “F,” will be counted as hours attempted in computing the grade point average.

E. *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one’s own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.

1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
 - a. The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.
 - b. For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.
 - c. For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Dean of the Faculty.
3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Dean of the Faculty. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President’s decision will be final.

F. *Library Usage*

A student’s ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, one or more of the following libraries.

Houston Public Library — Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library’s website, www.houstonlibrary.org, to search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832-393-1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832-393-1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website.

Fondren Library at Rice University— The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. Please visit www.rice.edu/fondren for more information. The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [www.rice.edu/fondren] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records).

Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary's Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6 miles from HGST. For more information, please visit <http://beran.stthom.edu>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.

Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant – as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalogue, go to <http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi>.

Other options include Harris County Public Library (www.hcpl.net) and the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

Students should consult the HGST *Writer's Manual*, available from the Business Office or online (www.hgst.edu) for all writing matters. When an item is not addressed in the *Writer's Manual*, all writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition. This includes matters of style and format. Counseling students should pay particular attention to the *Writer's Manual* for guidelines on submission of academic papers.

The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except on pages with major headings. Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings require a two-inch top margin.

The student should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- Avoid 1st or 2nd person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.

- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e. The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Dr. Shuman does not tolerate misspelled words. Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
- Grammar check works as well!
- All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

VIII. Class & Reading Schedule

1. January 27
 - a. Introduction to the class- review the syllabus
 - b. Leadership defined
 - c. Understanding Contextualization
 - d. The Postmodern shift
2. February 3
 - a. Read chapter one – pages 1 - 27 in the book *Beyond Foundationalism*.
 - b. Discuss the need for transformation and deep change.
 - c. Discuss the missional change model
3. February 10
 - a. Read chapter two – pages 28 - 54 in the book *Beyond Foundationalism*.
 - b. **Response to *How to Be a Bad Christian is due.***
 - c. Discuss the contents of the book *How to Be a Bad Christian*.
4. February 17
 - a. Read chapter three – pages 57-92 in the book *Beyond Foundationalism*.
 - b. Discuss the concept of post Christendom.
5. February 24
 - a. Read chapter four – pages 93-129 in the book *Beyond Foundationalism*.
 - b. **Expanded outline of *A Primer on Postmodernism is due.***
 - c. Discuss the content from *A Primer on Postmodernism*.
6. March 3
 - a. Read chapter five – pages 130 -166 in *Beyond Foundationalism*
7. March 10
 - a. Read chapter six – pages 169 – 202 in *Beyond Foundationalism*
8. March 17 – **Spring Break no class**

9. March 24
 - a. Read chapter seven – pages 203 – 238 in *Beyond Foundationalism*
 - b. Discuss the contents of the book *Christianity after Religion*.
10. March 31
 - a. **No class session this week** – students will visit a postmodern expression of church.
11. April 7
 - a. Read Chapter eight – pages 239 – 273 in *Beyond Foundationalism*
 - b. **Report on the postmodern expression experience is due.**
12. April 14
 - a. Discuss concepts from the book *Emerging Churches*
13. April 21
 - a. Discuss principles of leadership from the book *Ten Truths about Leadership*.
14. April 28
 - a. Discuss the characteristics of a missional leader.
15. May 5
 - a. Wrap up and final paper is due
 - b. Five things to take away from the class

The professor reserves the right to adjust classroom topics as the course develops.