



HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5902 Ministry and Community through Small Groups

Harding School of Theology

Spring Semester 2012

Monday evenings, 6:00-9:00

Classes begin January 23, 2012

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course studies how small groups are used in contemporary Christian settings. Special attention is given to Christian community and ways small groups can help foster that community and its growth. Different models of small-group communities will be explored along with reasons for their popularity and success. Strategies will also be presented for beginning and maintaining healthy small group ministries in different contexts: church plantings, developing congregations, established congregations, and house churches. The primary course objective is to prepare students to develop and lead effective small group ministries that are missionally-sensitive to their ministry context.

OUTCOMES: This course will meet the following objectives for students in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Christian Ministry:

Master of Divinity

- Be able to integrate the scriptures and theological tradition with diverse contemporary cultural contexts
- Evidence a love for God and others and a personal commitment to spiritual formation
- Demonstrate knowledge and competencies associated with providing ministerial leadership for churches and communities

Master of Arts in Christian Ministry

- Become a leader in their ministry specialization within the broader range of ministry and the broader social context in which they minister
- Evidence a love for God and others and a personal commitment to spiritual formation
- Gain an understanding and skills for leadership in their area of specialization

LIBRARY RESOURCES: If you have *not* taken Advanced Theological Research (5990) or took it more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site (www.hst.edu) for information concerning library services to students. Under the “library” tab you will find

a link to and instructions for searching the HST online catalog (called Quest). There are also instructions for using the following databases available through the library: OCLC FirstSearch, EBSCOhost, Infotrac, and *Religious and Theological Abstracts*. Contact the library for passwords to these databases. Also available are the research guides distributed in Advanced Theological Research (5990). These annotated bibliographies list basic tools you will find helpful in your research.

TEXTBOOKS: Textbooks are available through our book services on campus. You may order books by contacting Brenda David by email (bdavid@hst.edu), by phone (901-432-7735 or 800-366-7481), or by fax (901-761-1358).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Required Readings:

1. Basic Texts:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. Translated by John W. Doberstein. San Francisco: Harper, 1954; reprint, 1978. [ISBN: 0060608528; 128 pages]

Boren, M. Scott. *Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community that Makes a Difference in the World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. [ISBN: 0801072301; 186 pages]

Ellas, John W. *Small Groups & Established Churches: Challenge and Hope for the Future*. Houston: Center for Church Growth, 2005. [ISBN: 096424473X; 157 pages]

Gorman, Julie A. *Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. [ISBN: 0801091454; 264 pages]

Hellerman, Joseph H. *When the Church Was a Family*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009. [ISBN: 0805447792; 224 pages]

Lee-Thorp, Karen. *How to Ask Great Questions*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998. [ISBN: 1576830780; 80 pages]

Course Manual. This will be provided electronically the first day of class.

2. **Additional Readings:** Special articles will be assigned throughout the course of the semester. These special readings are on the Course Schedule. These readings are available from the HST Library.
3. **Student's Choice Readings:** Read a minimum 200 pages from course bibliography (supplied at the first class meeting) in an area of your personal interest related to some aspect small groups and community (journal articles or

books totaling 200 pages). Write a two to three (2-3) page summary of your chosen readings (**Due on or before April 30, 2012**).

4. **Ministry Context Paper:** Present a 4-5 page paper describing your present or expected future ministry context (congregation, mission, parachurch setting, etc.) briefly outlining your history with small groups in general and Christian small groups in particular. List, analyze, and summarize the strengths and weakness of existing small groups or small groups programs within your ministry context, if there are any. Conclude with a statement of your learning goals for this course. (**Due the first day of class, January 23, 2012**).

B. Exams:

1. **Mid-term Exam:** The mid-term will be given **March 19, 2012**. To prepare for this examination, please be familiar with all the required readings from the Course Schedule and Lecture notes up to this point. The exam will be primarily discussion/short essay.
2. **Final Exam:** The final exam will be given **May 7, 2012**. To prepare for this examination, please be familiar with all the required readings from the Course Schedule and Lecture notes *since the midterm*. The exam will be primarily discussion/short essay.

C. Research Project (Due on or before April 23, 2012):

Choose one (1) of the following three options:

1. Develop a complete manual (not more than 20 pages, *including* diagrams, appendices, supporting documents, etc.) for a small group ministry contextualized to the DNA of your congregation or ministry setting. Presentation/style of the manual will be 20% of the grade and content will be 80%.
2. From an on-site visit, data gathering, and interviews prepare a thorough analysis and evaluation of a small group ministry in a growing church (15-20 pages, *including* diagrams, appendices, supporting documents, etc.).
3. Write a research paper on Small Groups and the Development of Christian Community (13-17 pages, *including* diagrams, appendices, supporting documents, etc.). **DO NOT choose this option if you have not taken Advanced Theological Research (5990).**

D. Weight of Course Components (Late assignments are automatically docked 20%):

- Completion of required readings on time *140 pts*
(*See attached sheet for self-grading*)
- Class Participation and attendance: *100 pts*
- Research Project: *250 pts*
- Exams: (*100 points each X 2 tests*) *200 pts*
- TOTAL:** ***690 pts***

Total Points	Percentage	Letter Grade
690 -- 642	93%	A
641 -- 580	84-92%	B
579 -- 518	75-83%	C
517 -- 449	65-74%	D
>449	>65%	F

E. Policy for Late Assignments: All late assignments will be automatically docked 20%. Assignments are considered late if they are not received by 11:59 p.m. on the day they are due. *Late work will be accepted, with appropriate deductions, for two weeks after the due date without prior approve of the professor.*

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Cheating in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice and will result in penalties which could include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the course, and even dismissal from school.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Dr. Steve McLeod, Associate Dean, at 901-761-1353.

Course Schedule

Session	Subject	Module
Jan 23	<p><i>Introductions and Ground Rules</i></p> <p><i>Where the Saints Met: The Context of the Early Church (Part 1)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filson, Floyd V. "The Significance of the Early House Churches." <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 58 (June 1939): 105-12. • Linton, Gregory. "House Church Meetings in the New Testament Era." <i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i> (Fall 2005): 229-44. <p>✓ Due: Ministry Context Paper.</p>	1
Jan 30	<p><i>Where the Saints Met: The Context of the Early Church (Part 2)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hellerman, Joseph H. <i>When the Church Was a Family</i>, pp. 1-162. • Klauck, Hans-Josef. "The House-Church as Way of Life." <i>Theology Digest</i> 30 (1982): 153-57. • Jewett, Robert. "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church." <i>Biblical Research</i> 38 (1993): 23-43. [Available through ATLA Religion Database] 	1
Feb 6	<p><i>Hospitality in the Early Church: Getting the Word Out</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton, Stephen C. "Hospitality." In <i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments</i>, edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, 501-07. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997. • Green, Michael. <i>Evangelism in the Early Church</i>, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, 2003. (Read pp. 300-55) [pp. 194-235 in the 1970 edition] • Hellerman, Joseph H. <i>When the Church Was a Family</i>, pp. 163-229 • McRay, John. "House Churches and the Lord's Supper." <i>Leaven</i> 3, no. 3 (1995): 13-16; 48-49. 	2
Feb 13	<p><i>The Nature of Christian Community: The Ties that Bind</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. <i>Life Together</i>. [entire book] • Gorman, Julie A. <i>Community That Is Christian</i>, pp. 1-75. • Malherbe, Abraham J. "The Household of God." <i>Mission</i> 3 (November 1969): 13-17. • O'Brien, P. T. "Fellowship, Communion, Sharing." In <i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i>, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, 293-95. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993. 	3-4

Feb 20

Quest for Community and the Modern Small Group Movement: A Culture without Moorings

- Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. (Read pp. 89-134.)
- Gorman, Julie A. *Community That Is Christian*, pp. 79-105.
- Keifert, Patrick R. *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992. (Read pp. 27-36; 57-73 with appropriate notes)
- Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Touchstone, 2000. (Read pp. 15-28, 65-79, 91-115, 148-80 with appropriate notes.)

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Feb 27

Groups and the Contemporary Christian Setting

- Gorman, Julie A. *Community That Is Christian*, pp. 109-202.
- Griffin, Emory A. *Getting Together: A Guide to Good Groups*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1982. (Read pp. 86-110, with appropriate notes).
- Olson, Daniel V. A. "Church Friendships: Boon or Barrier to Church Growth?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28 (September 1989): 432-42. [Available through ATLA Religion Database]
- Rynsburger, Mary, and Mark A. Lamport. "All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults." *Christian Education Journal*, 3rd ser., 5 (Spring 2008): 116-37; 5 (Fall 2008): 391-414; 6 (Spring 2009): 112-25.

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Mar 5

Intensive Course Week

Mar 12

Spring Break

Mar 19

Mid-Term Exam

Mar 26

Small Group Models and Functions, Part 1: A Structure Runs through It

- Boren, M. Scott. *Missional Small Groups*. [entire book]
- Hurston, Karen. "Types of Home Groups." In Win Arn, *The Church Growth Ratio Book*, 25-30. Pasadena, CA: Church Growth, 1987.
- _____. "Six Group Models." (This resource is no longer available online, but will be on reserve in the HST Library)

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Apr 2

Small Group Models and Functions, Part 2: Modern House Churches

- Banks, Robert, and Julia Banks. *The Church Comes Home*. Peabody:

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	<p>Hendrickson, 1998. (Read pp. 74-125.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craigen, Clive. "House Church: Historical and Current Trends." In <i>A Heart for Community</i>, edited by John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, 219-30; 483. Chicago: Moody, 2009. • Towns, Elmer, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird. <i>11 Innovations in the Local Church</i>. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007. (Read pp. 24-50; 259-60.) • Zdero, Rad, ed. <i>Nexus: The World House Church Movement Reader</i>. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007). (Read pp. 385-407; 415-53.) 	
Apr 9	<i>Small Groups and Established Churches: Vision, Adaptation, and Change</i>	11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellas, John W. <i>Small Groups & Established Churches</i>. [entire book] 	
Apr 16	<i>Small Group Leadership and Maintenance</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorman, Julie A. <i>Community That Is Christian</i>, pp. 205-244. • Lee-Thorp, Karen. <i>How to Ask Great Questions</i>. [entire book] 	12 & 13
Apr 23	<i>Evangelism in Small Groups</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arnold, Jeffrey. <i>Small Group Outreach: Turning Groups Inside Out</i>. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998. (Read pp. 22-53; 85-94.) • Hunter, George G., III. "The Bridges of Contagious Evangelism: Social Networks." In <i>Church Growth: State of the Art</i>, edited by C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn, and Elmer L. Towns, 69-87. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1987. 	14
Apr 30	<i>Small Group Resources, The Dark Side of Small Groups</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Due: Research Project. ✓ Due: Summary of "Student Choice Readings." 	15
May 7	<i>Final Examination</i>	

Reading Grading Scale (circle only one number per date)

- 10 – I have read 90-100% of the readings by the date due
- 9 – I have read 90-100% of the readings by the next class meeting after due date
- 8 – I have read 80-90% of the readings by the date due
- 7 – I have read 80-90% of the readings by the next class meeting after due date
- 6 – I have read 60-80% of the readings by the date due
- 5 – I have read 60-80% of the reading by the next class meeting after due date
- 4 – I have read 40-60% of the readings by the due date
- 3 – I have read 40-60% of the readings by the next class meeting after due date
- 2 – I have read 20-40% of the readings by the due date
- 1 – I have read 20-40% of the readings by the next class meeting after due date
- 0 – Readings? What readings?

Date due	Scale (Please Circle the appropriate scale)										Subtotal	
Jan 23	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Jan 30	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Feb 6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Feb 13	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Feb 20	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Feb 27	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Mar 19	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Mar 26	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Apr 2	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Apr 9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Apr 16	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Apr 23	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Apr 30	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Student choice readings	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Total (your grade for readings)												

Signed: _____

Date: _____