

Empowering the Congregation through Evangelism

Course #: 34-537

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Note: This course involves some local travel (within an hour of campus), which will take place outside of the normal course meeting times, including during the weekend. Please check the course calendar to be certain you are available. Also, the calendar may shift as hosting churches change their schedules.

Description of Course

This course will acquaint students with the theological and practical considerations of conceptualizing evangelism and integrating evangelism into various aspects of congregational life. In doing this, the course will provide students with the core competencies needed for certification in Evangelism and/or for ministerial development through either the MA or M. Div. degrees:

- **Knowing** the intersection of ecclesiology and evangelism and how different theories of evangelism interpret this intersection.
- **Doing** the work of recognizing the role of mission in biblical texts and in the nature of the church, and using this recognition to develop a conceptualization of evangelism.
- **Being** leaders who can help congregations become evangelistic in the various aspects of their ministry.

Goals of Course

1. The student will become acquainted with the critical study of evangelism, including:
 - a. An appreciation of the biblical and theological foundations of evangelism
 - b. An understanding of how to conceptualize evangelism
2. The student will reflect theologically on the nature of the church by:
 - a. Understanding the relationship of the church to the *missio Dei* and recognizing the implications of this for how the church is to relate to those inside and outside of the church
 - b. Considering how the local congregation embodies the nature and mission of the church
3. The student will consider how evangelism integrates into the life of the local congregation through
 - a. Recognizing the importance of appreciating the culture of each local congregation

- b. Studying how evangelism informs various activities of the local congregation, including Spiritual Growth, Service, Worship, Education, Administration and Leadership.

Text List

Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8308-3394-8. \$14.90.

Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian*. New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2010. ISBN 9780199758661. \$10.49.

Dietrerich, Inagrace and Lacey Warner. *Missional Evangelism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002. No ISBN number. **Free - Posted on Moodle**

Hiebert, Paul G. and Frances F. Hiebert. *Case Studies in Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987. ISBN 0-8010-4308-5. **Free - Posted on Moodle**

Jones, Scott. *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor: A Theology of Witness & Discipleship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003. ISBN 0-687-04614-9. \$15.32.

Sweet, Leonard. *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's already There*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010. ISBN 978-1-4347-6474-4. \$16.58.

Course Policies

1. **Attendance:** You are not graded on attendance. However, you are graded on course participation and on the level of facility you demonstrate in your written work with the material covered in the class sessions.

2. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** These are serious breaches of academic integrity, involving claiming credit for the work that someone else has done. Don't do this! If you are uncertain in any way as to what is entailed in these activities, see the instructor.

3. **Excellence in Writing:** Even though this is an evangelism course, everything you have learned about good writing style still counts! Obtuse or inelegant writing in your essays will be reason for a reduced grade. If you need help with your writing, please see the instructor.

4. **Intellectual Virtue:** We are striving not only to learn about a subject, but to sharpen our abilities to think critically. To do this, we must practice intellectual virtue by being open-minded, straightforward and thoughtful in our spoken and written work. We show our Christian scholarship not only by considering issues and questions that are central to our faith, but by being careful and respectful in our treatment of the authors of our texts, the ideas we discuss, and the thoughts of our fellow classmates.

5. **Late Work:** The instructor is under no obligation to accept late work. It is the instructor's discretion whether to accept late work, and under what conditions to accept it if it is to be accepted. As a general rule, late work is unacceptable.

6. **Disability Accommodation Statement:** Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see "Disabilities Policies and Procedures" in the Student Handbook.

Assignments

1. Reading and Class Participation = 20% of grade

The students are expected to read the assigned texts in full before attending each class session and to be ready to discuss their understandings of the texts. Preparedness and participation in the course will be noted and graded.

2. Personal Conceptualization of Evangelism Sermon = 30% of grade

Write a sermon in which you introduce the topic of evangelism to your congregation. The paper must include the following:

1. At least one Scripture text with some exegesis of it using a missional hermeneutic.
2. Your personal conceptualization of evangelism (including your starting point, your theology, and your practices). You are welcome to use one of the conceptualizations we have encountered in the texts, to modify one of these conceptualizations, or to develop your own. If you use one from the texts, explain why you are using it – do not simply cite it.
3. At least one way your congregation's culture fits with your conceptualization of evangelism.

You will preach your sermon to the class on Friday of the first week. This sermon should take no longer than 10 minutes to preach.

3. Final Presentation - Develop an Evangelism Profile of Your Ministry Site = 50% of grade

I define "ministry site" broadly. It could be the congregation you are serving, your home congregation, or another ministry site in which you are active such as a nursing home, a hospital, a social justice organization, or any parachurch organization.

On the final day of class, students must deliver an evangelistic profile of their ministry sites as a final presentation which synthesizes the major themes of the class.

The presentation must include the following:

1. Your personal conceptualization of evangelism (including your starting point, your theology, and your practices) - this should be based on the sermon that you wrote.
2. A snapshot of the community surrounding the congregation. This should include pertinent demographic data as well as descriptions of aspects of the community's cultures not apparent in the statistics. You can find the demographic data several places, including www.census.gov, www.link2lead.com, and <http://zipskinny.com/>. Some denominational conferences and

judicatories have free demographic services they provide to congregations, such as through the Percept Group. Local newspaper articles and other news outlets, websites, blogs, newsletters, police blotters, etc. should be helpful in providing a sense of the larger concerns and cultural issues affecting the people in your community.

3. A snapshot of the ministry site. This should include statistics as well as a description of the culture of the congregation. Find the statistics on your denominational annual statistical sheet. This data can also be found in Conference Journals for UMs. When possible you should include at least five year's worth of data to show trends in the statistics. Use the areas covered in the lecture on congregational culture to describe the culture. It should specifically include the way that the people at the ministry site would define the words "evangelism" and "mission." You may wish to consult mission statements, bulletins, sermon transcripts, or minutes from meetings to back up your claims on this. Moreover, you may make use of these as show-and-tell items as part of your presentation.

4. A SWOT analysis considering how the ministry site compares to your personal conceptualization of evangelism in each area of ministry. The analysis should be presented in such a way that it is visible to the other members of the class (e.g., through hand outs or projected on the screen). Areas to keep in mind while working on the analysis (though by no means exhaustive or specifically required) are:

- a. Worship
- b. Christian Education
- c. Administration
- d. Outreach/Service
- e. Spiritual Growth

5. A conclusion that ties together the information included in the profile, including key observations from each section and recommendations/strategies for improvement. Based on these, provide a list of achievable, measurable short-term goals and long-term goals for the congregation to strive for to empower it for better evangelism.

The presentation should take approximately 20 minutes (subject to change based on the number of students in the course) and may be in the form of an oral report, a Power Point presentation, a movie, a script, or any other means that you might share this information with your local congregation. The goal of this assignments is for you to have something that you can use in your local congregation.

Course Calendar

June 9 We are already empowered!

Texts: Bible; Dieterich and Warner, entire; Hieberts, selections posted online
The Great Commissions and developing a missional hermeneutic for both the Bible and ecclesiology. Testing this in missional case studies.

Conceptualizing evangelism

Text: Jones 9 -118

Emphasis on learning how to discern and articulate the starting point, theology and practice of evangelism. Use Jones' conceptualization as an example.

June 10 One-on-ones with Dr. Teasdale

June 11 Facing the Current Cultural and Religious Landscape

Texts: Dean - entire, Crouch - entire

Congregational culture, Demographics and psychographics

Practice finding demographic and psychographic data about the neighborhood in which your congregation is located. How to discern the values and cultural practices most important to your congregation, as well as to find important statistics about your congregation.

June 12 Helping Christians and congregations come to grips with evangelism

Texts: Sweet, Part I; Jones 119-205

How might we present the topic of evangelism to individual Christians? How can we interpret the work of evangelism in the practices of the church, especially membership?

June 13 First half of class: preach sermons

Second half of class: SWOT Analysis

Learn how to do a SWOT analysis and use it with a case study in a group exercise.

Possible Weekend Church Visit

June 16 Church visits – will last most of the day

June 17 Church visits – will last most of the day

June 18 Final Presentations and last day of class