

Empowering the Congregation through Evangelism

Course #: CL-611

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Description of Course

This course will acquaint students with the theological and practical considerations of navigating 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 Masters or Doctoral 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.

Course Learning Goals

- Students will learn to understand evangelism as an underlying ethic for congregational practice instead of being a discrete ministry.
- Students will learn to develop an authentic practice of evangelism based on their own experience and theological reflection.
- Students will learn to use a SWOT analysis to analyze how a congregation already undertakes evangelistic practices and to set goals for more effective evangelistic analysis.

Key Questions Addressed by the Course

- What does it mean for a congregation to engage in evangelism collectively?
- How can a congregation develop a common vision for engaging in evangelism?
- How can a congregation determine whether it is engaging in evangelism effectively?
- How can a congregation build on its existing assets to engage in effective evangelism?

Text List

- Committee on Faith and Order (CFO), *United Methodist Doctrine and Teaching on the Nature, Mission, and Faithfulness of the Church*, May 3, 2013. **Free - Posted on Moodle**
- Dietrerich, Inagrace and Lacey Warner. *Missional Evangelism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002. No ISBN number. **Free - Posted on Moodle**
- Heath, Elaine. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017. ISBN 978-0801098598. \$14.74.
- 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**
- Jackson, Jack. *Offering Christ: John Wesley's Evangelistic Vision*. Nashville TN: Kingswood Books, 2017. ISBN 978-1-5018-1422-8. \$23.61.
- Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), Sept 6, 2017, "America's Changing Religious Identity." **Free – Posted on Moodle**
- Teasdale, Mark R. article based on *Go! How to Become a Great Commission Congregation*. Nashville: Foundry Books, 2017. ISBN 978-0-9381-6228-5. **Free – Posted on Moodle**

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. 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 that you exegete in a way to present evangelism.
2. Your personal navigation of evangelism (including your starting point, your theology, and your practices). You are welcome to use one of the navigations we have encountered in the texts, to modify one of these, 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.

The sermon should be the length expected in your ministry site (hopefully you'll preach it!).

3. Final Presentation - Develop an Evangelism Profile of Your Ministry Site = 50% of grade (for DMin students, 30% 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 days 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 evangelism equation (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.

3. A snapshot of the ministry site. This should include appropriate statistics as well as a description of the culture of the congregation. When possible, you should include at least five years of data to show trends in the statistics. Use the appropriate areas covered in the lecture on congregational culture to describe the culture (you don't need to use all of them, just what is necessary to highlight important items for us to notice). It should specifically include the way that the people at the ministry site would define the words "evangelism" and "mission."

4. A SWOT analysis considering how the ministry site compares to your evangelism equation. The analysis should be presented in such a way that it is visible to the other members of the class (e.g., through handouts or projected on the screen). Areas to keep in mind while working on the analysis (though neither exhaustive nor 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 the analysis and a list of achievable, measurable short-term goals (up to 1 year) and long-term goals (1-3 years) 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

January 13

- First half of class: The Nature, Mission, and Faithfulness of the Church
Texts: CFO Document; Dietreerich and Warner (both posted on Moodle)

What did Jesus Christ establish the Church to be and do? Where does evangelism fit into this?

- Second half of class: New metaphors for evangelism
Texts: Heath, 1-105 (parts 1 and 2)

How have we experienced evangelism? How might we present the topic of evangelism to individual Christians?

January 14

- First Half of Class: New ways of thinking about church
Text: Heath, 109-176 (part 3)

We need to know what we believe. We need to model what we believe.

- Second half of class: Evangelism as grounding for all church activities
Text: Continue using Heath.

Look at the areas of worship, education, outreach, administration, and spiritual formation

January 15

- Morning Session: Demographics, Psychographics and Church Culture
Text: PRRI Report

How does a congregation become meaningful to those around it? Learning its own culture as well as about the people who live in its ministry area is essential to this.

- Afternoon Session: Library research
Texts: < <http://www.umdata.org/>>, < <https://census.gov/>> (American Communities Survey), Mission Insite or other psychographic group

Go to the library to learn about your congregation and your neighborhood.

January 16

- First Half of Class: Why do people say “yes?”
Text: Stone, 1-111

What are the factors that bring people to affirm or reaffirm faith in Jesus Christ through joining a congregation today?

- Second Half of Class: The Ethics of Evangelism
Text: Hieberts, selections provided in class. No pre-reading necessary.

What are the ethical implications laid upon the evangelist so they do not violate carrying good news? Use the Hiebert case studies to consider appropriate ethical responses that embody the good news.

January 17

- Whole class: Practical Steps for Improving Evangelism in the Local Congregation
Text: Teasdale

Based on the “secrets” in the text, this will cover multiple ideas and practices for moving a congregation forward.

- Second half of class: SWOT Analysis
Text: N/A

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

January 21

- Whole class: Wesleyan Evangelism in a New World
Texts: Jackson, Entire

How did Wesley experiment with evangelistic proclamation and structures? How can we learn from this in structuring our congregations today?

January 22

- Whole class: Take Your Pick
Texts: Watch any one of the videos at the following link before you come to class. Come prepared to discuss the video with a brief explanation of what it covered, questions it answered for you, and questions it raised for you.
<<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>>

January 23

- Final Presentations

January 24

- Final Presentations and wrap up

How I Grade

Below is a rubric that offers insight into how I grade all the assignments. Please notice that turning in work late or without following the directions provided in the syllabus leads to a failing grade.

Please notice, also, that it takes creative work to receive an “A.” Work that shows a good grasp of material, but that is not creative in a way that looks to construct new pathways of learning and ministry, is worth a “B.”

	Excellent – 100%	Above Avg. – 85%	Average - 70%	Failing – 0%
Timeliness	The student turned in the assignment by the due date.	N/A	N/A	The assignment was late. (This causes a failing grade for the entire assignment.)
Followed Directions	The student followed all the directions provided by the instructor in the syllabus or online for the assignment (including word counts, content, format, etc.).	N/A	N/A	The student failed to follow the directions provided by the instructor in the syllabus or online. Depending on how severe the breach of directions is, this can lead to a failing grade for the entire assignment.
Coherence	There is a logical flow throughout the assignment such that it is easily understandable and persuasive in the points it makes.	There is a logical flow throughout the assignment such that it is easily understandable. It may not be persuasive in its presentation, however.	There is an overall logic apparent in the assignment, though it requires some effort to grasp what the logic is.	There is no apparent logic to the assignment. It is obtuse and difficult to understand the points it makes.
Content	The student clearly interacts with the course materials (readings and lectures), demonstrating both comprehension of the material and offering creative and constructive insight for further conversation on the topic at hand.	The student clearly interacts with the course materials (readings and lectures), demonstrating comprehension of the material.	The student clearly interacts with only some of the materials appertaining to the topic of the assignment, demonstrating comprehension of the material. Alternately, the student uses the appropriate materials, but does not represent them accurately.	The student’s assignment either does not make reference to any course material or clearly misunderstands the material it does use.
Responses (When a response to other students is required)	The student responds to others substantively by finding points to agree with, disagree	The student responds to others substantively by finding points to agree with, disagree	The student responds to others, but shows little interaction with	The student responds in a hostile way that seeks to end conversation, or the student’s

	with, or to nuance based on ideas raised in course materials. The response invites constructive conversation.	with, or to nuance in based on course materials.	course materials in the response.	response clearly does not address the issues raised by the other student.
Collegiality	The assignment is academic in tone, inviting further constructive conversation on the topic, even in the case of disagreeing with authors, the instructor, or other students.	The assignment is academic in tone, though can emphasize deconstructive interaction more than constructive.	The assignment is more conversational than academic in tone and/or is defensive about engaging in constructive self-reflection.	The assignment is entirely informal and/or may be entirely negative by attacking others and resisting reflection on one's own work invited by course material or peer feedback.