

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

Text to be purchased (paperback or e-book is fine):

Bowen, John, *The Unfolding Gospel: How the Good News Makes Sense of Discipleship, Church, Mission, and Everything Else*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1506471679. \$20.23 (Amazon).

Texts provided free on Moodle:

Committee on Faith and Order (CFO), *United Methodist Doctrine and Teaching on the Nature, Mission, and Faithfulness of the Church*, May 3, 2013.

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

Articles from *Witness: The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education*:

Affleck, Bert, "Cross-cultural Evangelism: A Case Study in New Mexico" (vol. 2)

Arias, Mortimer, "'The Great Commission': Mission as Discipleship" (vol. 4)

James, Christopher, "Missional Acuity: 20th Century Insights toward a Redemptive Way of Seeing" (vol. 26)

Lear, Heather, "Reclaiming Evangelism for the Local Church" (vol. 28)

Lovin, Robin W., "Evangelism, Ethics, and Evil" (vol. 18)

Oglesby, Enoch H., "The Ethics of Communitas: Toward a Social Evangelism in the Black Church" (vol. 5)

Peters, Ted, "Evangelization within a Religiously Plural Society" (vol. 5)

Taylor, Lynne Maree, "Reaching out Online: Learning from One Church's Embrace of Digital Worship, Ministry and Witness" (vol. 35)

Thomas, Norman E. Case Study: "Evangelism Explosion on Trial at First Church" (vol. 1)

Warner, Lacey, "Methodist Episcopal Deaconesses and the Social Gospel: Social Service with Evangelistic Ministry" (vol. 18)

Assignments

1. Reading and Class Participation = 45% of grade (5% per day x 9 days of class)

The students are expected to read the assigned texts in full before attending each class session.

Students will demonstrate that they read the text by being prepared to share *at least* one of the following items in class discussion:

- A new insight they had not had before.
- A question about something that was unclear to them.
- A way they could see applying the reading to their ministry.

In addition, there are regular case studies throughout this course. Students are expected to be active participants in working out the case studies, working with their peers to develop responses, and presenting those responses back to the group.

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. Team Case Study = 25% of grade

Using the guidelines in the appendices of the Hieberts text, the students will form teams and develop case studies related to evangelism. They will then swap these case studies with the other team(s) in the class. Each team will provide a peer review of the team that addresses the case study they sought to develop.

Course Calendar

Date	Theme	Reading – to be done before assignment	Activity for the Day
1/10	The Nature, Mission, and Faithfulness of the Church	CFO, entire	Thomas Case Study
1/11	Doing Evangelism with a Church in Quarantine	Exponential Documents	Develop personal evangelism equations
1/12	Community and Social Ethics	Lovin, Oglesby	Case, Hieberts ch. 52
1/13	Diversity of Practices	Arias, Warner	Case, Hieberts ch. 48
1/14	Forming Congregations	James, Lear	Case, Hieberts ch. 47
1/18	Pluralism and Evangelism	Peters, Affleck	Case, Hieberts ch. 4
1/19	Preach Sermons	N/A	If time, begin developing Team Case Studies
1/20	Evangelism, Church, and Discipleship	Bowen, entire	Team Case Study Development
1/21	Team Case Studies	N/A	Teams swap and address each other's case studies

Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

Writing

- **Academic integrity and plagiarism:** (See 19-20 Handbook, 12, 78-83) All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.

- **Writing and citations:** The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- **Writing Support:** The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

- **Inclusivity/Diversity:** The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed....All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 19-20 Handbook, 9)
- **Attendance and lateness policies:** Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (19-20 Handbook, 19)
- Some faculty may limit on the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session.

Academic Accommodations

- Student accommodations for documented conditions should be developed and requested before the beginning of the semester. See the Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities policy and process set out in the Academic Handbook (19-20 Handbook, 12). Such accommodations are developed in consultation with the Registrar.
- **Extensions:** For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (19-20 Handbook, 20)

Course Policies

1. **Excellence in Writing:** Even though this is an UM Studies 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 contact the instructor.

2. **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.

3. **Late Work:** Late work is not accepted in this course.

Technology Notes

Given the lack of personal contact during the course, you will need to be certain you have sufficient technological ability to access and participate in this course. **It is the student's responsibility to have sufficient technology to access and participate in the course.** The instructor will assume this and is not obligated to take technological difficulties into account when assessing the student's work.

Minimum technological requirements:

- Web Browser – You will need the latest version of the web browser you are using (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, Google Chrome, etc.). Note that not all browsers work equally well with Moodle, so you may need to experiment with them if you have difficulty using all the functions on the site. (I use Firefox and have never had issues.)
- Operating System – In order to use the latest browser, you will need to have an operating system (Windows, Mac OS, etc.) that is up-to-date enough to handle it. Please be certain you have such an operating system.
- Internet Connection – You will need a high-speed internet connection that is sufficient to run streaming video with no difficulty. Usually cable and dsl connections can do this. Dial up cannot. If your home internet connection is not sufficient to provide this kind of connection, you will need to find access to a computer that does have this connection.

- Hardware – You will need sufficient computing power in terms of memory, speed, audio, and video for the different aspects of this course to work well. Make certain you can run the necessary software and fully participate online.

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 Average – 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.).	The student followed the directions in a way that addressed the core learning objectives, but did not follow the logistical directions (e.g., word counts, outline of assignment).	The student followed the logistical directions but did not address the core learning objectives.	The student failed to follow the logistical and learning objective directions provided by the instructor in the syllabus or online.
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 all the course materials (readings and lectures) appropriate to the topic, 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 refer to any course material or clearly misunderstands the material it does use.
Collegiality	The assignment is academic in tone (or is appropriate to the intended audience), 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 (or is appropriate to the intended audience), though can emphasize deconstructive interaction more than constructive.	The assignment is more conversational than academic in tone (or is not entirely appropriate to the intended audience) and/or is defensive about engaging in constructive self-reflection.	The assignment is entirely informal (or is inappropriate to the intended audience) and/or may be entirely negative by attacking others and resisting reflection on one's own work invited by course material or peer feedback.