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IS 501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World

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Asbury Theological Seminary-Distance Learning
IS501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World
Spring 2005 Tuesday 2:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

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Course Description/Content

What is the mission of the church? Behind this question is a cluster of related questions, the most important focused on the nature of God's creative and redemptive purpose, its ongoing expression in the world, and its consummation in the eschaton. Participants in this course will explore how the church might discern, embrace, and participate in God's own mission.

Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate their understanding of the biblical metanarrative that comes to focus for us best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God;
2. Identify the particular contribution of the Wesleyan tradition to our understanding of this metanarrative;
3. Draw out major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative, especially as these are related to the nature and mission of the people of God;
4. Evaluate cultural products (e.g., literature, television, movies, advertisements, print media, music) in light of major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
5. Exercise criticism with respect to one's own cultural context and discernment with respect to the context of others vis-à-vis major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
6. Articulate the ecclesial and missional implications of this metanarrative – specifically for one's own context and generally for our shared global context; and

7. Exhibit a heightened sense of commitment to serving the kingdom of God in mission in the world.

Required Reading:

Hauerwas, Stanley and William Willimon. *Resident Aliens*. Abingdon, 1989;
McClaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. Jossey-Bass, 2001;
Snyder, Howard. *A Kingdom Manifesto*. Wipf and Stock, 1997;
Walker, Andrew. *Telling the Story*. Wipf and Stock;
Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. InterVarsity, 1999; and
A Weekly Guide for Small Groups (packet available at Cokesbury bookstores in Orlando and Wilmore).

Recommended Reading:

Clapp, Rodney. *A Peculiar People*. InterVarsity Press, 1996;
Clapp, Rodney. *Border Crossings*. Brazos Press;
Hauerwas, Stanley. *A Community of Character*. University of Notre Dame;
Newbigin, Leslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*.
Eerdmans;

Evaluation:

- Active and Substantive Participation in Small Campus Groups. (10 pts)
The small campus group will meet every Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. to reflect, discuss, and fulfill assignments given in class. (Following the weekly guide for small groups). Each person in the group is expected to lead the group's work at least once during the semester.
- Active and Substantive Participation in On-Line Group Conferences. (5 pts)
In order to participate in the On-Line Conferences it is IMPERATIVE to have full access and basic knowledge of Asbury's First Class e-mail system (the On-Line Conferences will be conducted using this system). Each person in the class will have an IS501 icon in their First Class e-mail, and each *on-line* group will have an icon for their On-Line Conferences where you will find questions and other items for discussion and group interaction posted by the professor.
- Kingdom Project (a small group project) and Presentation (15 pts)
Each student in each small campus group is required to spend 12 hours of personal work/involvement in a "Kingdom Project." As a project of the on-campus small group, every member is expected to actively participate in the group's choice, however each member may participate (12 hrs) at a different time and date than the rest of the group. In order to facilitate this project, a list of local ministries and resources will be provided. After completion of Kingdom Project, each group will share its experience with the class on **Tuesday, May 10**. Thus the Kingdom Project, group and individual participation, should be completed beforehand.

- Personal reflection (written) Kingdom Project (10 pts)
Each member of each small campus group will write a personal reflection of his/her experience in the project in the light of class readings and lectures. The goal of this paper is to integrate your experience of doing the kingdom project with the theological reading and work done in class. Please write no less than 3 (three) and no more than 5 (five) pages and the reflection must be printed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing.
- Mid-Term: (Take-home exam) Students will receive it on **3/29 due on 4/5** (30 pts)
- Final-Exam: In class exam including objective questions (30 pts)

Grade Range: Work for IS501 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

<i>A = 95-100 Unusually high quality, exceptional work</i>	<i>D+ = 67-69 Minimal work</i>
<i>A- = 90-94 Far above average, fine work</i>	<i>D = 63-66 barely acceptable</i>
<i>B+= 87-89 Above average for graduate work</i>	<i>D- = 60-62 for specific assignment</i>
<i>B = 83-86 Very good, average for graduate work</i>	<i>F = 59 or below Failure.</i>
<i>B- = 80-82 Slightly below average for graduate work</i>	
<i>C+ = 77-79 Meets requirements, but noticeable inadequacies for graduate work</i>	
<i>C = 73-76 Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work</i>	
<i>C- = 70-72 Meets requirements, but serious gaps</i>	

Incomplete Work: “A grade of ‘I’ denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an *unavoidable emergency*, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of the course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as ‘F.’ ” From ATS 2001-03 Catalog p. 29 (emphasis added)

Attendance Policy: One class may be missed without makeup. After this (one class missed), extra reading is required (50 pages per day missed: from the recommended reading list) and a one page single-spaced paper summarizing the extra reading. If three classes are missed—serious conversation between student and professors is needed and reduction of grade might be required.

Notes on Small Groups:

The first week of class you will be assigned to a small on-campus group of five persons. This group will be an essential part of the class. With these five people you will work on assigned material, process readings and class material and work together on a Kingdom project. A minimum of 50 minutes of each week will be devoted to working with your small group. This same small group will also be responsible for organizing and completing together a Kingdom Project.

Small Campus Group Guidelines:

1. During the first week of class, you will be placed in a KCW Group of 5 persons. Because Christian living and witness are important aspects of this course, we have set aside 50 minutes of class time for you to meet. We hope that your schedules may permit you to meet longer in order to facilitate group cohesion and trust. We have built this group experience into our weekly class time so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find time for an additional meeting outside of class.
2. The purpose of this group is to meet together to share insights from the weekly disciplines, to hold each other accountable, and to encourage each other toward living faithfully as witnesses to the Kingdom and the lordship of Christ in our lives.
3. Each group will be student led and all group members will share leadership. Leaders will be selected for the first all sessions during the first meeting of the group.
4. One student in each group will take attendance. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
5. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

Online Discussion Guidelines:

1. You will also participate in online discussions related to the course material. During the first week of class, you will be placed in an on-line discussion group of 10 persons. You will need to have an Asbury Seminary e-mail address to access the class folder on First Class Client.
2. Every other week your team will discuss the question as it is posted within the team folder.
3. This class feature calls for good “e-manners.” Please limit each posting to 50 words or less [unless instructed to do otherwise]. Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, ***so be careful how you put things in writing!*** You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis.
4. The professor will monitor and grade the team interaction and discussion assignments that occur via e-conference.

Distance Education Expectations:

The mandate of the Board of Trustees of Asbury Theological Seminary with regard to the Orlando Campus is clear: one faculty, one School of Theology. The commitment of the School of Theology to distance education, then, is one important means to operationalize this mandate. For purposes of this statement, “distance education” refers to the Seminary’s use of synchronous, interactive audio-video broadcast technology, with a course originated on one geophysical campus (originator-campus) and involving students on another geophysical campus (receiver-campus) in real time. Distance learning in this modality thus allows for the two campuses, Wilmore and Orlando, to be woven together with reference to faculty, students, and program, at the instructional level. The overarching commitment of the School of Theology with regard to distance education—namely, to maximize the quality of this mode of delivery as a teaching-and-learning process so that the same learning objectives are met by students on both campuses—leads to the following instructional goals:

Faculty who engage in distance-learning instruction will receive training specific to the audiovisual and other communication requirements relative to this mode of delivery.

Prior to enrolling in a course involving distance-learning instruction, students on both campuses will be alerted to the particular challenges and requirements of mixed-media educational delivery.

At the beginning of a course involving distance-learning instruction, students on both campuses will receive training specific to the requirements of mixed-media educational delivery (specifically, the use of FirstClass Client for students on both campuses, and V-Tel for students on the receiver-campus).

Courses involving distance-learning instruction will be structured in a way that allows persons on both campuses to interact substantively in either synchronous or asynchronous ways, or both.

Courses offered through distance-learning modalities will provide multiple means of access to the professor outside of class-time—including the professor’s geophysical presence on the receiver-campus (a presence that should also include the receiver-campus’ becoming the originator-campus) (typical expectation: 3 on-campus visits/semester), V-Tel (through office hours and/or by appointment), FirstClass Client Conference (discussion center, chat room, and private e-mail), and telephone.

Courses involving distance-learning instruction will provide means for students on the receiver-campus to receive feedback on written and other assignments at a level of substance and on a timetable equivalent to those on the originator-campus.

Course Schedule:

Introduction

Week 1 – Feb. 8 Introductions and Organization of the Course

- Introductions and General Overview
 - Course Objectives
 - Course Procedures
 - Small Groups: Selection, Process, Leadership, and Expectations
 - Conferences: Selection, Process and Expectations
- Required Reading for next week: Walker, pp. 1-46

Module One: Kingdom – Living the Biblical Story

Module Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the importance of “story;”
2. Discern how cultural products participate in inviting us into certain stories;
3. Articulate the basis for the unity of Scripture in the overarching plan of God, from Creation to New Creation;
4. Articulate the hermeneutical importance of the incarnation for understanding the biblical story;
5. Articulate how Wesley’s understanding of the soteriological journey serves as a hermeneutical compass for reading the biblical story;

Week 2 – Feb. 15 Narrative and Post Modernism.

Required Reading for next week: Walker, pp. 47-100

Week 3 – Feb. 22 Biblical Story and Narrative

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 13-73; Snyder, pp. 9-76

Week 4 – March 1 Old Testament

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 74-149

Week 5 – March 8 New Testament

Required Reading for next week: Wright, pp. 150-197.

Week 6 – March 15 Thematic integration of Scripture and Wesley's Order of Salvation

Required Reading for next week: McLaren, pp. 1-53; Walker, pp. 103-160.

Week 7 No Class Today: March 22 Spring Reading Week!

Week 8 – March 29 Who are the People of God?

Required Reading for next week: McClaren, pp. 54-93; Walker, pp. 161-187.

Assignment: Pass out Take Home Exam

Module Two: Kingdom and Church

Particular Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Enumerate significant ways in which the ongoing life of the people of God participates in and extends the biblical story;
 2. Articulate how kingdom-living relates to a community of believers;
 3. Articulate an ecclesiology oriented around participation in the kingdom;
- Articulate basic forms of ecclesial practice (e.g., hospitality, mission) that are a necessary outgrowth of an ecclesial commitment to performing the kingdom.

Week 9 – April 5 The People of God Through History

Required Reading for next week: McLaren, pp. 94-165

Mid-Term Exam Due today, April 5, at the beginning of class

Week 10 – April 12 The People of God in Contemporary Context

Required Reading for next week: Walker, pp. 188-204; Snyder, pp. 79-120

Week 11 – April 19 The People of God in Contemporary Context (Cont.)

Required Reading for next week: Hauerwas & Willimon, pp. 1-48

Module Three: Kingdom, Church, and World

Particular Objectives

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the significance of the kingdom in terms of its cosmological and eschatological significance (rather than in individual and subjective terms);
2. Demonstrate that they have begun the process of thinking theologically – i.e., situating life within the interpretive and critical horizons of a theological vision of the purpose of God for creation that comes into focus best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom;
3. Draw out inferences of this view of the kingdom with respect to a range of social-ethical issues (e.g., racial reconciliation, environmental ethics, gender issues);
4. Demonstrate the importance of understanding one's world in performing the kingdom;

Week 12 April 26 Listening to the World

Required Reading for next week: Hauerwas & Willimon, pp. 49-111

Week 13 May 3 Acting in the World

Required Reading for next week: Hauerwas & Willimon , pp. 112-172

Assignment: Work on Kingdom Project Presentations

**Week 14 – May 10 Speaking to the World: Thy Kingdom Come
Kingdom Project Class Presentations**

Week 15 – May 17 Final Exam

The final exam should be taken during May 10 – 17. Details and explanations will be given during the semester.