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IS 501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World

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Welcome and Greetings:
Welcome to the exciting first step on a life-long journey of ministry! I am glad you have joined us, and I look forward to exploring some of the foundational aspects of what it means to be the Church in today's world with you. We all bring a part of ourselves and our context with us on this journey, and I want each of you to feel free to contribute to this adventure from your own experiences. I have seen the Kingdom of God at work throughout the world, in Canada, China, the Philippines, and Central America, as well as in different areas of the United States. Each culture and subculture of this world provides an unique lens through which to understand the person and nature of God in ways which might be surprising and disconcerting. It is important above all else, to listen to the voices of those who see God in different ways so we might grow spiritually and come closer to understanding the complete message of the Kingdom of God. I welcome you to this journey and look forward to seeing what lies just around the corner!

Personal Introduction:
Dr. Robert A. Danielson
Adjunct Professor
B.A. (Anthropology) Florida State University 1991
M.A. (Anthropology) McGill University (Montreal, Canada) 1994
Ph.D. (Intercultural Studies) Asbury Theological Seminary 2005

I grew up in a family of three generations of missionaries and Methodist ministers, but with a passion for understanding how culture works. After getting my M.A. in Montreal, Canada, I taught English in a remote part of the People's Republic of China for two years.
After I returned, I married my wife, a native of El Salvador in Central America, which has taught me more about cross-cultural communication than any class ever did. I have also traveled and done short-term mission in other places, including the Philippines and Honduras.

You may notice a decided bias in my choice of illustrations and subjects to talk about during this class. This is intentional. I have chosen in large part to use examples and focus on the peoples of Latin America and immigrants when I wish to illustrate a topic. This will form a sort of meta-narrative in this class, in other words, an example which we will go back to many times throughout the course. I have three main reasons for this bias:

1. I have a passion for this geographical area and its people, and with my wife being an immigrant, I have had a good deal of exposure to the immigration experience. My knowledge of this area is currently the most up-to-date, and therefore will be more accurate than if I draw on other areas and subjects. I also feel this issue is going to be a defining issue for the Church in our time.

2. By 2050, the various predictions from census figures claim that 25% or more of the population in the U.S. will be Hispanic. This is a trend which will affect all communities and all churches in the U.S. and those who will be in ministry need to recognize this shifting cultural reality and prepare for its effects.

3. As the global church shifts from its traditional center in the North and West to the South and East, we need to be listening to the theological voice of the church in these areas. They are growing and we are not. They have something to teach us, if we will listen. Latin America has one of the most developed and coherent voices from this growing part of the church.

**Course Description:**

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 (as this is expressed in the biblical story), 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.

We will consider the following questions, along with others which may arise:

1. What is the Kingdom of God?
2. What is the Church?
3. How is the Kingdom present in the World through the Church?
4. How are we to participate as the Church in God's mission to the World?

Sometimes these questions may challenge you and your accepted view of the world. Please remember that this is an on-going journey we are all on and different people may be at different stages. Listen, critique, and debate, but always in an attitude which expresses the love of God to others.
**Basic Structure of the Course:**

This course is loosely divided into three major sections, based on simple communication theory. To communicate successfully, you need a communicator (the Church), a message (the Kingdom of God), and an audience (the World). For successful ministry you need to understand each of these foundational elements and how they work together. This course will begin by examining the message of the Kingdom of God. We will then look at our roles as communicators of this message. What does it mean to be the Church? Finally, we will look at the changing world around us and how that context shapes our ministry.

**Course Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students should be able to...

1. Articulate an understanding of the overall storyline presented by the Bible as conveyed especially in Jesus' teachings of the Kingdom of God.
2. Identify the contributions of the Wesleyan Tradition to our understanding of the Kingdom of God.
3. Convey the major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of the message of the Kingdom of God for us as the Church, in terms of our identity, nature, and mission.
4. Evaluate various aspects of a culture in light of these theological, moral, and philosophical implications.
5. Be able to critique one's own cultural context and evaluate another culture's possible weaknesses and strengths in light of these theological, moral, and philosophical implications.
6. Articulate possible actions for the church to take within its current cultural context in light of the message of the Kingdom of God, and understand how this might affect the mission of the Church.
7. Exhibit a heightened sense of awareness and commitment to living out the message of the Kingdom of God, as the Church, within the global context of today's world.

**Required Texts:**

Clapp, Rodney  

Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon  

Jenkins, Philip  

Snyder, Howard  
2001 *Models of the Kingdom*. Wipf & Stock.
Snyder, Howard

Wakabayashi, Allen Mitsuo

**Recommended Texts:**

Ladd, George Eldon

Samuel, Vinay and Christopher Sudgen, eds.
2003 *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Wipf & Stock.

**Course Schedule:**

**Feb. 14, 2008 - Introduction and Organization (Week One)**

- Go over syllabus and discuss rationale of the course
- Reading for next week: *Kingdom Come* by Wakabayashi
- Assignment: Reflection Paper due on Feb. 21, 2008

**Feb. 21, 2008 – The Kingdom: The Scriptural Message (Week Two)**

- Discuss Wakabayashi’ book
- Reading for next week: *Kingdom, Church and World: Biblical Themes for Today* by Snyder
- Assignment: Reflection Paper due on Feb. 28, 2008
- Reserve reading for Wesley or handout for next week’s class

**Feb. 28, 2008 - The Kingdom: A Wesleyan View (Week Three)**

- Discuss Snyder’s book
- Guest Lecturer: Jeff Hiatt, Doctoral candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary and Adjunct Professor at Lindsey Wilson College.
- Reserve reading for Romero or handout for next week’s class
March 6, 2008 - The Kingdom: The Message in Today's Context (Week Four)

Video: Romero
Discussion of video
Audio (listen for today’s class): Tom Sine Chapels

http://media.asburyseminary.edu/audio/is502/rdanielson/beyond_secular_humanism_sine.mp3

http://media.asburyseminary.edu/audio/is502/rdanielson/beyond_the_american_dream_sine.mp3

March 13, 2008 - The Church: What is it? (Week Five)

Reading for next week: Models of the Kingdom by Snyder

Assignment: Reflection Paper due on March 20, 2008

March 20, 2008 - The Church: Who are we? (Week Six)

Discuss Snyder

Take home Midterm Exam due on March 27, 2008

March 27, 2008 - The Church: What are we doing? (Week Seven)

Video: The Ties That Bind

Reading for next week: Resident Aliens by Hauerwas & Willimon

Assignment: Reflection Paper due by April 10, 2008

April 3, 2008 - Spring Reading Break- No Class (Week Eight)

April 10, 2008 - The Church: It's Changing Nature (Week Nine)

Discuss Hauerwas & Willimon

Video (watch for this week): Tom Skinner Chapels

http://media.asburyseminary.edu/flash/courses/is501/rdanielson/

http://media.asburyseminary.edu/flash/courses/is501/rdanielson/skinner2.php
April 17, 2008 - The World: The Ultimate Context (Week Ten)

Reading for next week: Next Christendom by Jenkins

Assignment: Reflection Paper due by April 24, 2008

April 24, 2008 - The World: The Context of the Church Today (Week Eleven)

Discuss Jenkins

Video: Los Talcigüínes: The Possessed Men of El Salvador

Reserve readings on Polygamy and Pentecostalism or handout for next week’s class

May 1, 2008 - The World: It's All Around Us (Week Twelve)

Audio: Miriam Adeney Chapels

http://media.asburyseminary.edu/flash/courses/is501/adeny/index2.php

May 8, 2008 - Kingdom, Church, and World: Putting It All Together (Week Thirteen)

Video: The World’s Most Dangerous Gang

Reading for next week: Border Crossings by Clapp

Assignment: Reflection Paper due by May 15, 2008

May 15, 2008 - Kingdom, Church, and World: Concluding Thoughts (Week Fourteen)

Discuss Clapp

Kingdom Project due by May 22, 2008

Assignments:

1. Six reflection papers (30%): One paper for each required text. These should be at least two pages long and demonstrate a basic knowledge of the author's point of view, combined with your own opinions and experiences. **Do not simply repeat what the writer said, you need to show how you might apply lessons learned from the text to your own ministry.**
2. Participation in Forums and Group Work (20%): Each student will participate in the discussions each week by talking in class and working on in-class group work when assigned.

3. Mid-Term Exam (25%): This will be an essay exam with a five page limit.

4. Kingdom Project (25%): Every student must spend a minimum of 12 hours participating in a Kingdom Project. This project must be a group ministry where the church is interacting with non-Christians in some way demonstrating the Kingdom of God. This might be an existing program or you may create a short-term program from scratch. Each student must have the project approved by the professor early in the semester. This project might include work with the homeless, the poor, at a food bank, or any other number of similar type projects. After choosing the project, the student will do some research on the underlying socio-cultural problem and various Christian responses to this problem. In light of the research and personal experience, the student will critique this Kingdom project from a Biblical perspective and assess whether it was a successful project or not. This paper should be at least 5 pages in length.

**Expectations:**

What you can expect from me:
1. I will provide timely and substantive feedback on all graded assignments. Assignments turned in on time have priority and should be graded and returned within a week or two.

2. I will be available in my office on the third floor of the Beeson building most days during the day. If you go up the elevator and turn right, I am straight through the glass doors. You may set up an appointment with me or just drop by as I am usually in the office. If these times do not work for you, we can work out an alternative which can meet your schedule. Please come and see me if you are having problems and we will work them out together!

3. If I need to be away from class, I will let you know as much in advance if possible.

4. This is my first physical class (I have taught online before) and as such I expect to make the occasional blunder as I try to find the best way to teach this material, I ask for your patience and sincere criticism, if you feel I can improve this class in any way to enhance your learning experience.

5. I will pray for each of you by name throughout the semester and ask that you do the same for me.

What I expect from you:
1. You will actively participate in this classroom. Classroom discussions and questions are what make this course successful. We want to learn from your experience and wisdom too, so please do not keep quiet when you may have something important to say which we need to hear.
2. You will commit to doing your best in this course and to do this you will need to read the assignments and prepare for each class.

3. You will turn in all assignments on time and give them the attention they deserve. These assignments are to help make you a better minister and leader in Christ’s Kingdom and therefore deserve to be taken seriously.

4. You will interact with me and your fellow students with respect and courtesy. We may not agree with each other on some serious issues, but we will respect each other as brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of our one Lord.

5. If you need to be away from class due to a crisis or if an emergency hits your household, please let me know as soon as possible. Send an email or leave a message on my office phone. Then we will be able to lift you up in prayer. Please don't wait until the last minute to talk to me about any concerns you may have regarding this course.

6. Pray for your classmates and me by name throughout this semester. We need all the help we can get!

**Course Assessment:**

**Grading:**
Grading for this class will follow the guidelines posted in the ATS Academic Catalog. Remember that a good grade for an ATS class is a "B." The posted grading scale is as follows:

A 95-100% Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.

A- 90-94.9%

B+ 87-89.9%

B 83-86.9% Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

B- 80-82.9%

C+ 77-79.9%

C 73-76.9% Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

C- 70-72.9%

D+ 67-69.9%

D 63-66.9% Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

D- 60-62.9%

F Below 60 Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives
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.’ ” (See ATS Catalog)

Attendance and Late Work:
It is expected that each student will attend class each week. Since we only meet once a week, it is vital that you are here. Any absences will be reflected in your participation grade. Absences or delays in submitting assignments will be permitted only under extreme circumstances and must be arranged in advance if at all possible.

Assignments:
All assignments are due by the stated due dates. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late. For example, a B paper turned in one day late becomes a C, etc.

Discussion:
A crucial element of this course is the dialog that we enter into with each other. All discussions are to be in the vein of encouragement, gentleness, patience, persistence, and hope. This does not mean that we will not challenge, confront, or question each other. It does mean that these things will be undertaken for the purpose of growth and stimulation to think and understand the subject at hand more deeply and more intimately.

Please use gender inclusive language in all of your writing. Also use appropriate language and professional grammar, while at the same time trying to communicate in a brief manner. While I will not be specifically looking for spelling or grammatical errors, such mistakes are not expected at the graduate level of academic professionalism and will tend to lower your grade.

Additional Support:
For technical support, library research support, library loans, and ExL media contact Information Commons at:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu or phone 859-858-2233 (toll-free: 866-454-2733)

Accessing Information Commons (Library) Materials:

1. General Questions:

The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommmons/hours.shtml.
2. Materials Requests:

To search the library catalog for available materials, go to:
http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml

3. Research Questions:

Students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal database, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml and enter your 10-digit student ID# in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration web page. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX is your student ID).

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