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CS 630 Public Theology: Engaging the World

Brian G. Edgar

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Course: CS630 X1 (SP 2009)  
Title: Public Theology: Engaging the World  
Hours: 3.00  
Published: Yes, on 01/13/2009  
Prerequisites: None  

Department: Church in Society  
Faculty: Dr. Brian Edgar  

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Office: EXL EXL  
SPO:

Meetings:  
During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.

Maximum Registration: 27  
Catalog Description:

Objectives:  

Syllabus: Public Theology: Engaging the World  

CS630  

Number of Hours/Units: 3  
Prerequisites: None  

Enrollment Limitations: an enrolment of 22 when conducted via the virtual seminary  

Course Description:  
The term 'public theology' is used to speak about the way that biblical and theological principles have relevance for a wide range of issues outside the church including politics, workplace relations and cultural analysis. It assesses the foundations on which society is built and creates a theology of engagement in the public arena.

This course examines the current state of public theology, its characteristics, trends, strengths and deficiencies through an examination of the major historic and contemporary visions of the relationship between church and culture (with special attention paid to the Wesleyan contribution) in order to enable students to gain an understanding of the corporate responsibility of the congregation in the world; the role of the public theologian and the public responsibilities of Christians.
**Professor: Brian Edgar**

Office Hours and Contact Information:

Primary contact: is via the facilities of the virtual seminary.

Email: brian.edgar@asburyseminary.edu

Skype video contact: is voluntary but encouraged: Skype ID: brianedgar1

Contact via mail or telephone: will not be the norm but is possible by arrangement.

**Purpose**

To enhance the public ministry of the church by forming Christians who are able to engage theologically with fundamental social and cultural issues, positively influence public life and thought, and actively participate in social transformation.

**Objectives**

Having successfully completed this course, the study should be able to:

1. Express clearly their understanding of the current general state of public theology, its main characteristics, trends, strengths and deficiencies.

2. Locate this in the overall context of the major historical and theological approaches which have developed public theology.

3. Identify contemporary challenges and opportunities facing local congregations and the wider church in its public role.

4. Analytically and critically apply their understanding of the essential biblical and theological principles of public theology to some specific contemporary issues.

5. Communicate to others an understanding of (a) the nature of the corporate responsibility of the church in the world; (b) the role of the pastor as public theologian and (c) the public responsibilities of Christians in their workplace and in other social activities.

**Required Textbooks (this is the final list; orders can be made on the basis of this list )**


Sider, Ronald J, and Diane Knippers (eds), Toward an Evangelical Public Policy: political strategies for the health of the nation, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 370 pages

Hunsberger, George R. and Craig van Gelder (eds), The Church Between Gospel and Culture: the emerging mission in North America, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 350 pages


**Course Evaluation**

1: On-line interaction - involving regular, specific questions requiring short answers (10%) and general discussion (10%). (total of 20%)
2: Two book critiques (1000 words each) requiring an assessment of set texts (2 x 10% = 20%).

3. A reflection paper (1000-1500 words) requiring an assessment of a specific public/cultural issue (20%).

4. A paper (2000-2500 words) requiring research on the theological principles involved in public theology (40%).

**Course Schedule**

Weeks 1-2: What is public theology? Defining public theology in contemporary context

Weeks 3-4: The public relevance of biblical and theological themes

Week 5: The Wesleyan contribution to social transformation.

Weeks 6-8: Visions of church and society:

Weeks 9-10: Methods in Public Theology for Social Renewal

Weeks 11-13: Specific Public Issues