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MS 625 Principles of Interpersonal Evangelism

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COURSE SYLLABUS
MS 625—Principles of Interpersonal Evangelism
ME 710—Dynamics of Interpersonal Evangelism
(Prerequisite: IS 501)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: A survey of interpersonal evangelism theory, theology, models, and training resources employed mainly within the American culture with some attention to cross-cultural witness to persons of other faiths.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES: Evangelism, like the gospel itself, is ultimately a relational experience and an encounter between persons. Thus, interpersonal evangelism is at the heart of all evangelism. Our aim is to equip students to better understand, practice and train others in sensitive and faithful evangelism on a one-to-one and small group basis. Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Clearly define evangelism and the nature of the gospel's call on individuals;
2. Understand the nature and problems of interpersonal communication and achieve greater personal sensitivity to others' interests, sensibilities, worldviews, and life experiences;
3. Be conversant with several existing and emerging models of interpersonal evangelism and able to train others to use them;
4. Define critical issues for communicating the gospel in a postmodern cultural context;
5. Discern the spiritual issues involved in one's passage over the frontier from non-faith to faith in Jesus Christ;
6. Feel more deeply committed to the ministry of evangelism and more comfortable and confident in the personal practice of evangelism;
7. Articulate the place of evangelism within the church's community life and its larger apostolic calling;
8. Appreciate the Wesleyan tradition's unique insights into the nature and practice of evangelism;
9. Develop an effective evangelism program for use within a congregation or mission organization setting.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Instruction includes class lectures, guest speakers, discussion, reading, along with personal research and reflection outside of class. One class absence is allowed. Additional absences will lower your grade.

A. READING REQUIREMENTS

Required texts for all students. Submit typed (single-spaced) “Reading Interaction Summary” (see attached format, one for each chapter/article) in class for each week’s assigned reading. See Class Schedule, below.

6. Articles as assigned (see Class Schedule). Available on closed reserve in the library.

**Additional required texts for ME710 students.** Submit a 3-5 p. (double-spaced) “Reading Report” for each text by March 16. Briefly summarize the text’s argument, your critical analysis of it, and personal insights into evangelism that you have gained from it.

**Collateral texts for all students.** In addition, read 250 pages including at least one of the following texts (not previously read). Submit a 3-5 p. (double-spaced) “Reading Report” for each of at least two texts by May 4 (and make a note of other texts read). Briefly summarize the text’s argument, your critical analysis of it, and personal insights into evangelism that you have gained from it. In order to monitor your grade throughout the semester it is suggested that you turn in reports as you finish them rather than turning them all in on the deadline.
1. *Finding Faith*, by Brian McLaren
2. *More Ready Than You Realize*, by Brian McLaren
5. *Witness*: (A small group resource), by Ron Crandall
7. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, by Mark Mittleberg and Bill Hybels
8. *Faith-Sharing*, by Eddie Fox and George Morris
9. *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, by Thom Rainer
10. *Conspiracy of Kindness*, by Steve Sjogren
11. *Evangelism Outside the Box*, by Rick Richardson
12. *One to One*, by Terry Wardle
13. *How to Reach Secular People*, by George Hunter
15. *Can We Talk?*, by Robert Tuttle
16. *How to Give Away Your Faith*, by Paul Little
17. *Questioning Evangelism*, by Randy Newman
22. *Conversion*, by E. Stanley Jones
27. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James
30. The Religious Experience, by Batson and Ventis
31. Jesus for a New Generation, by Kevin Graham Ford
32. The Power of Story, by Leighton Ford

Other titles may be added as approved in advance. See BV3790-96, or BV4520 in the Library. For additional resources also see: Barna Research Online (www.barna.org); American Demographics (www.demographics.com): Evangelism Tool Box (www.evangelismtoolbox.com); etc.

B. INTERACTIVE PROJECT

1. Interviews and reports (MS 625 students only): Using Ron Crandall’s questionnaire (The Contagious Christian, Appendix, pp. 162-164) as a starting point, interview three persons that you know to have made a clear decision to follow Christ as adolescents or adults. Summarize each interview in 3 to 4 pages (typed, double-spaced), describing their experiences including the settings, circumstances, questions, and processes leading to their conversion and what you have learned from them. Or, alternatively, interview three persons you know not to be Christians but who will consent to being interviewed about the reasons why they have chosen not to become followers of Christ. Summarize each interview, as noted above, describing their thoughts, experiences, and what you have learned from them.

Interview reports are due in class on March 16.

2. Develop evangelism case studies (ME 710 students only): Using the interview reports prepared by the class as a database, analyze them and develop three composite case studies suitable for teaching in a course on evangelism and reflecting the issues raised in this course. As a starting point, see the work on the case study approach by missiologist Alan Neely.

Present the case studies in class as an hour-long teaching exercise on May 11.

C. MAJOR PROJECT OR FINAL EXAMINATION

Each student must select a research project on some facet of interpersonal evangelism or complete a take-home final examination.

1. The Research Project: This is a 15 page paper (double-spaced) that includes background reading/research, personal experience (as applicable), analysis, and reflection. Give full credit to all sources and follow standard style guidelines (cf. Slade, Form and Style, 11th Ed.). ME710 students must follow ESJ School of World Mission guidelines. To make sure your intended project will meet course requirements, please submit a one-page summary of your topic, outline of your approach to it, and suggested bibliography by March 9. The project is due in class on May 11. Suggestions for projects include:

   a. Keep a journal with at least three entries per week of your regular efforts at interpersonal evangelism. Establish goals for growth and report your progress in a weekly summary and evaluation. Include observations from your readings. In your paper summarize the experience, how you were
able to engage others, lessons learned, and additional areas needing work and exploration. Focus on real-life experiences with others and reflection on your interactions with others, points of tension, and personal struggles. (As approved, this may be done as a group.)

b. **Develop your own model** for training persons in witnessing and/or interpersonal evangelism. Describe how you might offer this either as a weekend workshop (specify hours required) or a multi-session training model for a local church.

c. **Redevelop or adapt an existing model/program** for training in personal evangelism to fit a more Wesleyan theological stance or a particular cultural context.

d. **Write three case studies** for dealing with problems and opportunities in interpersonal evangelism. Include guidelines for using each: steps, suggestions, major issues, alternative actions or strategies, and recommended reading. Research must include an analysis of the case study method of instruction.

e. **Become involved in a personal evangelism training program** that involves contact with undiscipled people (local church visitation, Operation Appreciation, ICHTHUS counseling, etc.). Evaluate the program and your experience in light of class materials, class texts, and your additional research.

2. **The Final Examination:** A take-home final examination will be available on May 11. It will consist of selecting five detailed questions from a larger field and writing short essays (4 pages) on each, drawing on materials covered in class and presented in the texts. The finished examination (typed, double-spaced) will be due in the ESJ Office by 4:00 p.m. on May 18.

D. **GRADE FOR THE COURSE**

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IV. CLASS OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE:

February 9  Course Introduction
   Interpersonal Evangelism: Good News and Real People
   Reflection: Mark 1:14-15

February 16  Theological Perspectives: Evangelism's Purpose and Goal
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 1-3
            Crandall—Chapters 1-2
            Kraft—Chapters 1-4

February 23  Guest Speaker: Pete Hise, Quest Community Church
   Reflection: I Corinthians 9:19-23
   Reading: Kraft—Chapters 5-8

March 2  Interpersonal Communication
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 4-6
            Kraft—Chapters 9-12
            Kallenberg—Chapters 1-3

March 9  Encountering a Person: Prayer, Discernment, Need, and the Gospel
   Reflection: John 4:5-42
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 7-8
            Kallenberg—Chapters 4-6
            James Engle—"The Engle Scale"
            Paul Hiebert—"Bounded and Centered Sets"
   Submit major project topic summary

March 16  Low Context Evangelism—Part 1: Proclamation Model, Apologetics
   Reflection: John 9
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 9-10, Appendix 1
            Poe—Part One (Chapters 1-3)
            Paul Hiebert—"Critical Realism"
   Interview reports due (MS625 students)
   Reading reports due for Abraham and Jones (ME710 students)

March 23  Reading Week: No Class

March 30  Low Context Evangelism—Part 2: Apologetics, Postmodernity
   Reflection: John 16:5-15
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 11-12
            Poe—Part Two (Chapters 4-5)

April 6  High Context Evangelism—Part 1: Lifestyle and Narrative Evangelism
   Reflection: Acts 10
   Reading: Pippert—Chapters 13-14
            Poe—Part Three (Chapters 6-7)

April 13  High Context Evangelism—Part 2: Evangelism in Community
Reflection: Acts 26
Reading: Pippert—Chapters 15-17
Poe—Part Four (Chapters 8-9)

April 20
**Crossing the Frontier: Coming to Faith in Christ**
Reflection: Romans 10:1-17
Reading: Pippert—Chapters 18-19
Crandall—Chapters 3-6

April 27
**Fears, Questions, and Other Things We Need to Talk About**
Reflection: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

May 4
**Guest Speaker: Rebecca Pippert, Author of Out of the Saltshaker**
Reflection: 1 John 3:11-24
Deadline for submitting Reading Reports

May 11
**Case Studies/Leading Others in Interpersonal Evangelism/Wrap-Up**
Reflection: Revelation 3:14-22
Major Project due; or Final Exam assigned

May 18
Final Exam due (see above)
READING INTERACTION FORM  
MS 625/ME 710 – Interpersonal Evangelism

Name/Date:

Chapter(s) or Article Title:

Summary:

What new insights have you gained from reading this material?

1.

2.

3.

4.

What are some applications of these insights to interpersonal evangelism?

1.

2.

3.

4.

What are some issues, concerns, or questions you would like to see discussed in class? 
What contributions can you make from your own experiences?