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# CD 690 Discipleship Development Through Trail Camping

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## **PROSPECTUS: CD 690 DISCIPLESHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRAIL CAMPING**

Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY 40390  
Faculty trip director, Chris Kiesling with guest associate Chuck Vernon

**DESCRIPTION:** *Backpacking experience in Daniel Boone National Forest and/or Sheltowee Trace, with parish-based youth living and working in trail families of eight to ten persons in a summer backpacking trip. Course requires securing Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and Red Cross first aid certification, and readings related to mentoring and discipling youth.*

**OBJECTIVES:** Upon completion of this course the student will:

1. Be able to design and implement effective camping experiences for church or agency-based ministry with effectiveness in planning, budgeting, and executing the trip including skill development in:
  - Wilderness respect and safety
  - Trail navigation
  - Group process in wilderness settings
  - Basics of backpacking equipment
  - Food planning and preparation
  - First aid applications
2. Develop a deep appreciation for the revelation of God through creation and grow an initial understanding of self as co-revelator with God.
3. Faithfully exegete teenagers and their culture for the purpose of reaching them for Christ in their own context.
4. Deepen an awareness of the developmental processes at work in adolescents and how storytelling and intentional relationship building can create the context for spiritual maturation
5. Understand and embrace the power of rites of passage to encourage the initiation of adulthood and be able to utilize them in the context of ministry settings.
6. Broaden their knowledge of resources available for conducting effective recreation ministries.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

BACKPACKERS FIELD MANUAL directed by Rick Curtis - a reference guide to remind you of crucial info while on the trail

HOW TO USE CAMPING EXPERIENCES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION by Stephen Venable and Donald Joy - a proposal for future use in recreating meaningful camping experiences

EMPOWER YOUR KIDS TO BE ADULTS by Donald Joy - a reflection on the need for and how to's of rites of passage

WINDOWS OF THE SOUL by Ken Gire - a personal reflection paper on this devotional book that really touches the heart

### **OTHER REQUIRED READING**

At least four articles, one from each area (i.e. rites of passage/contextualization, theological reflection, wilderness ethics) from the CD 690 notebook on the reserve shelf of the library.

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

Papers for this class consist of responses for each of the required texts, a summary paper integrating knowledge of the four selected articles, and an evaluative personal reflection paper after the week in the wilderness. Following are guidelines for each of these assignments and their weight for the course grade.

1. (15 points) From your reading of THE BACKPACKERS FIELD MANUAL prepare at least a three to four page ready reference instructional guide that details important information that you may need to know while spending this week in the gorge. I'm open to whatever format you choose for writing this paper. One possibility is for you to create a training guide for an adult sponsor, who had never before been on a camping trip, but wanted to feel equipped for whatever situation might be encountered while in the wilderness with a group of teens.
2. (15 points) In your reading of HOW TO USE CAMPING EXPERIENCES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION consider what ministry positions you currently occupy or hope to occupy after graduation. Write a two to three page proposal that projects how you could utilize camping experiences in the spiritual formation of people in your sphere of ministry. This could entail such things as using camping as part of a confirmation curriculum, as a rite of passage, as part of a family-based ministry, or simply as a personal retreat for you and friends or family.
3. (15 points) EMPOWER YOUR KIDS TO BE ADULTS is filled with important and far-reaching concepts that touch everything from unpacking your own family history, to mentoring youth, to creating communities of faith that give adult responsibility to youth rather than perpetuate adolescence. In this paper spend at least one page responding to the book on each of the following levels:
  - Name specific ideas, concepts, or events that "leaped out" at you and articulate why you believe this impacted you as significant.
  - Report how this material connected with you personally, what life events came to focus for you in reading the material, and/or any emotional responses you had to the text.
  - Project how this material will be useful to you in the future. What decisions/commitments do you need to make personally or in ministry because of having read this material?

4. (15 points) WINDOWS OF THE SOUL is intended to be a text to nurture your spiritual life, enhance your appreciation of being in creation, and touch a different part of you than is often focused on in seminary education. I anticipate this text moving you in some way or another and am interested in having you respond freely to how the Holy Spirit may use it in your life. If you like to journal and it provokes a desire to write then do so; if it stimulates sermon ideas or illustrations, report on how you used the material in preaching or teaching; if it recalls certain memories or renews some dimension of your spiritual life, make a personal response; if it inspires you to share part of it with a significant person, write about that experience or copy the letters or e-mails you created; if there were just certain passages you loved, recount them and indicate why they meant something to you; or if you think it was a waste to cut down a tree for this drive, then critique the author for his wastefulness.
5. (15 points) In a single two to three page paper integrate the selected articles you read from the reserve shelf. Indicate what interested you about these articles, what you found helpful from reading them, what future questions they raised that you might want to pursue, or what new possibilities for ministry were suggested.
6. (25 points) The bulk of your grade comes from your participation in the trail camp itself - helping with preparation, interacting with the youth, fulfilling your role in the evening worship times, and evaluating the entire experience. For a final paper write several pages on what this experience meant to you and any suggestions you would have for improving future trail camps. You may wish to focus on a particular event that occurred on the trip, a relationship that became important, a new direction in your sense of calling, or how this experience fits in the whole of your seminary experience. Evaluate your own participation throughout the course and suggest a final grade for yourself.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

**July 24** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - on campus first aid/cpr training. Entire cost is \$40 payable to Marcie Thobaben at the beginning of the sessions. If you need only first aid or only CPR training call Chris for details. **EVERYONE MUST BE certified in both areas!!!**(you can get this certification elsewhere.)

**July 25** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. teams meet to coordinate final preparations. This evening we will likely need to meet to clean up the chuck wagon. **ALL PAPERS EXCEPT THE FINAL EVALUATIVE PAPER SHOULD BE TURNED IN ON THIS DAY (i.e. written assignments 1-5 above). YOU MUST AT LEAST HAVE THE FIRST THREE COMPLETED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING AS SPONSOR/MENTOR ON THE TRIP. If this presents a problem call me immediately as it may be necessary to postpone your involvement until next summer.**

**July 26** travel to the Gorge as a seminary team

**July 28** youth arrive at the gorge

**August 2** return to campus for pizza/debriefing over lunch and equipment clean-up

**August 16** All written assignments are due. SPO them to Chris or slide them under his office door.

Send me the registration of \$55 a.s.a.p. and in response I'll send additional information. Also, if you know of potential youth whom we could recruit, send me an address and we will mail them a brochure. Cost for youth is \$110. Wilmore UMC can rent us equipment but may entail an additional cost to those needing equipment. Call me if you have need in this regard.

There is a more extensive bibliography for this course included in the notebooks on the reserve shelf in the library if you desire to do further study. I will be in touch periodically during the summer to get you working in teams for making additional preparations.

Call me at 858-2382 or e-mail if you have questions or run into difficulties.