

BRIERCREST

CM 814 Ministry Issues in Contemporary Culture Winter 2020

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Course Dates: March 23-27, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will appraise significant theological, missiological and methodological trends and shifts in the evangelical ministry in North America. An examination and evaluation of current literature and models of evangelical church and para church ministry will also be included. Specific topics and methods of instruction will vary by the instructor's background and ministry experience.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course will be treated as a senior level seminar with the expectation of high-level student participation. The challenges of secularism, materialism and individualism will be explored with consideration of their impact upon church life and ministry in the 21st Century. While not being overly negative of the current cultural milieu, students will be stretched to consider how to do meaningful ministry in the contemporary context of the western church. Students should expect to participate in group scripture reading and prayer each morning for the first 30 minutes of class.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Ian and Steve team up to teach this course together for the second time. Their ministry partnership ended in 2012 after eleven years of church ministry at the Evangelical Free Church of Lethbridge. Steve resigned to engage in a business opportunity for 5 years, after which he returned to ministry at St. Augustine's Anglican Church. Ian recently resigned after 20 years as Lead Pastor at the church.

COURSE TEXTS

Allberry, Sam. *Is God Anti-Gay? And other questions about homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex attraction*. Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2015.

OR (students will select the book they're not familiar with)

Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Beach, Lee. *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2015.

Keller, Timothy. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

Smith, James K. A. *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Having successfully completed this course the student will be able to:

- 1) Identify the philosophical challenges to ministry in the 21st Century.
- 2) Define the trends of contemporary ministry and describe their roots.
- 3) Evaluate the models of ministry existent in today's churches.
- 4) Appreciate the challenges faced by the leaders in today's church.
- 5) Display a growing maturity in handling ministry issues.
- 6) Articulate the ministry issues facing the contemporary church.
- 7) Discuss with growing confidence valid approaches to ministry.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

A. Theological Foundations

- The Church in the 21st Century
 - How We Got Here: S.B.
 - Grappling with The Nature of the Kingdom: I.L.
 - Christendom vs. Christianity: I.L.
 - Foundations for Mission: S.B.
- Leading the church in the 21st century
 - The Pastoral Calling: S.B.
 - Formative Prayer: S.B.
 - Leadership Character: I.L.
- Theological Vision for Ministry
 - Discussion of Keller's *Center Church*: I.L.

B. Cultural Challenges

- Secularism: S.B.
 - Discussion of Smith's *How (Not) to be Secular*
 - Recognizing and Grappling with Secularity in the Church
- Consumerism: I.L.
 - Use and abuse of money
 - Religious Consumption/Consumers
- Individualism: S.B.
 - Discussion of *Washed and Waiting* and *Is God Anti-Gay*: I.L. and S.B.

- Meaningful Christian Community: S.B. and I.L.
- Attendance Trends in the Church
 - Discussion of *Pew Research Material*: I.L.
- C. Missional Implications
 - Church Size Dynamics: I.L.
 - Governance
 - Programming
 - Models for Ministry: S.B.
 - Missional
 - Attractional
 - House Church
 - Traditional Liturgical
 - Traditional Non-liturgical
 - Cell Based
 - Seeker Centered
 - Use of Technology: S.B.
 - The Smartphone and the Smart Christian
 - The Medium is the Message?
 - Wise Integration of Technology

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Reading (40%) – Due Monday, March 23, 2020, submitted to Canvas.

Students will complete a written response to each of 4 course textbooks. These should be no more than 1000 words each and should include:

- summary of the central argument of the book
- areas of agreement and/or disagreement with the author
- opportunities for further research or personal growth
- specific points of application to church ministry in general and your church in particular

Sam Allberry **OR** Wesley Hill – 10%

Lee Beach – 10%

Tim Keller – 10%

James Smith – 10%

Mid-Course Assignments:

2. Oral Presentation (10%)

Each student will verbally present a ten-minute proposal for their major project which outlines their topic and approach, methodology, challenges in their research to that point, preliminary hypotheses (if applicable), and areas for further exploration. Each presentation will be followed by a Q and A involving both classmates and instructors. Suggested refinements will be considered when writing the Major Project.

3. Readings assigned in class (10%)

Students should expect to spend approximately an hour each evening from Monday to Thursday reading articles as assigned in class. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions arising from the readings.

Post-Course Assignments:

4. Major Project (40%) – Due Friday, May 22, 2020, submitted to Canvas.

Choose one of the following options. Each option should be no more than 3000 words.

1. Theological Vision for Ministry – Using Tim Keller’s *Center Church* as an example, construct a biblically based “Theological Vision for Ministry” which could serve as an overarching guide to you and/or your church in its ministry. If applicable, describe how the adoption of this model might affect your current ministry.
2. Secularism – Outline one or more of the key challenges associated with conducting church ministry in a secular age and propose biblically and theologically informed responses. Describe how said responses may impact church programming, structure, or practice.
3. Contemporary Ministry Models – Create a taxonomy of major models of ministry in use today. Identify potential strengths and weaknesses of each and suggest which sorts of cultural or sub-cultural contexts might fit which model(s). Identify which model best fits your context and gifts and, if applicable, develop a specific plan for integration into your ministry.
4. Alternate project of the student’s choosing (subject to instructor approval).

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Course Schedule – classes begin at 9:00 AM on Monday morning and run for 30 hours through the course of the week as follows:

Monday	9:00 am to 12:00 pm; 1:15 pm to 4:30 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am to 12:00 pm; 1:15 pm to 4:30 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am to 12:00 pm; 1:15 pm to 4:30 pm
Thursday	8:30 am to 12:00 pm; 1:15 pm to 4:30 pm
Friday	8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week

after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bloesch, Donald G. *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions*. Leicester, England: Apollos Press, 1999.

Dawn, Marva J. *Truly the Community – Romans 12 and How to Be the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

Geisler, Norman. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Getz, Gene. *Sharpening The Focus of the Church*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. 1979.

Kaiser, Walter C Jr. *What Does the Lord Require: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching Biblical Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.

Keller, Timothy. *Counterfeit Gods – The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2009.

Kinnaman, David and Lyons, Gabe. *Unchristian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

McKnight, Scot. *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*. Grand Rapids, MI:

- Zondervan, 2011.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Misional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1951.
- Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994,
- Olson, Roger E. *How to be Evangelical without being Conservative*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Osborne, Larry. *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2014.
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- Rainer, Thom S. & Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2006.
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- Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994.
- Smith, James K.A. *Desiring The Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
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- Stafford, William S. *Disordered Loves: Healing the Seven Deadly Sins*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications.
- Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996.
- Stetzer, Ed & Warren Bird. *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Stott, John. *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2002.

_____. *Issues Facing Christians Today*, Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Wright, Christopher J.H. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.