

BRIERCREST

CM 814 Ministry Issues in Contemporary Culture Winter 2022

Professors: Ian Lawson and Steve Bateman

Email: ilawson@briercrest.ca; sbateman@briercrest.ca

Phone: Lawson: 403.359.4620; Bateman: 403.795.0138

Course Dates: March 14-18, 2022

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will appraise significant theological, missiological and methodological trends and shifts in 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 expertise.

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 third time. Their ministry partnership ended in 2012 after 11 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 resigned in 2018 after 20 years as Lead Pastor at the church.

COURSE TEXTS

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

Bloesch, Donald G. *The Church – sacraments, worship, ministry, mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

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

Trueman, Carl. *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2020.

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 complex ministry issues.
- 6) Articulate the ministry issues facing the contemporary church.
- 7) Discuss with growing confidence valid approaches to ministry.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

(Adjustments are expected to be made – a variety of guests may be joining us electronically for discussion and lecture purposes.)

A. Theological Foundations

- The Church in the 21st century
 - How We Got Here - A Brief History
 - Christendom vs. Christianity
 - Discussion of Beech's *The Church in Exile*
 - Toward a Christian Social Theology in the Post-Christian Era
 - Foundations for Mission
 - Discussion of Bloesch's *The Church*
- Leading the church in the 21st century
 - The Pastoral Calling
 - Formative Prayer
 - Leadership Character
- Evangelical Leadership in the 21st century
 - Bebbington's quadrilateral
 - The Gospel and Power - Mars Hill, Willow Creek, Harvest Bible Chapel

B. Cultural Challenges

- Secularism
 - Discussion of Smith's *How (Not) to be Secular*
- Consumerism
 - Use and abuse of money
 - Religious Consumption/Consumers
- Individualism
 - Discussion of *Rise and Triumph of Modern Self*
 - Meaningful Christian Community
- Attendance Trends in the Church
 - Discussion of *Pew Research Material*
- Race and Reconciliation
- Sexual Ethics
- Women in Leadership

- “Official” vs. “Unofficial” Knowledge
 - Covid-19
 - Conspiracy Theories
 - Politics and the Church
 - Thinking / Acting for the “common good”
- C. Missional Implications
- Church-Size Dynamics
 - Governance
 - Programming
 - Use of Technology
 - The Smartphone and the Smart Christian
 - The Medium is the Message?
 - Wise Integration of Technology
 - The Livestream Revolution
 - Contemporary Ministry Models

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

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Reading (40% - 10% for each of the 4 reflection papers)

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

Due: March 14, 2022

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 significant evening time 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%)

Choose **one** of the following options. Projects should be approximately 3000 words.

1. Choose a real life “ministry issue” that you expect to deal with in your context. Identify the problem(s) associated with this issue and describe the process that you will employ to arrive at a solution. Be sure to include theological reflections in your description of both the problem(s) and solution(s).
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. Develop a working ministry philosophy/theology of electronic media to guide your decisions around how to best employ these resources in your context. Be sure to identify both the opportunities and limitations presented by these media.
5. Alternate project of the student’s choosing (subject to instructor approval).

Due: May 13, 2022

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

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

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 Student Success in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (egordon@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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.
- Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflection on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- 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.
- Penner, Myron Bradley. *The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a Postmodern Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Platt, David. *A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture*. Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Ill: 2015.
- Purves, Andrew. *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*, Louisville, KY, 2004.
- Rainer, Thom S. & Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2006.
- Roberts, Vaughan. *Transgender*. The Good Book Company, 2016

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.

_____. *You are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016.

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.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.

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