



The Institute for Christian Learning
Evangelism & Discipleship
Fall 2020

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“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20

COURSE OVERVIEW

What is the gospel, and how can we best convey it to others in our day? What is discipleship, and how can we best lead new believers to grow in their faith? This course studies the biblical principles and practice of evangelism and discipleship as they relate to today’s increasingly complex, secularized, and postmodern world. The overarching goals of this course are for ministry-minded individuals to develop skills, discover resources, evaluate methods, consider strategies, and establish a theology for personal and corporate evangelism and discipleship in their own ministry contexts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Establish a biblical-theological foundation for the gospel, conversion, evangelism, and discipleship.
2. Become familiar with current issues and helpful resources in the fields of evangelism and discipleship.
3. Assess the challenges, opportunities, and distinctives associated with serving and reaching postmoderns.
4. Compare and evaluate various methods and strategies for personal and congregational outreach.
5. Sharpen gospel testimony skills by making a class presentation and receiving constructive feedback.
6. Develop strategies for creating a grace-oriented, disciple-making culture in a church or ministry context.
7. Grow in “gospel winsomeness” in preaching, teaching, conversation, service, outreach, and social media.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (3)

Everyone:

Dodson, Jonathan K. *The Unbelievable Gospel: Say Something Worth Believing*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

ISBN: 978-0310597247

Amazon List Price: \$4.50 (Paperback); \$11.99 (Kindle); \$13.77 (MP3 CD)

Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*. Rev. and exp. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.

ISBN: 978-0830841318

Amazon List Price: \$13.99 (Paperback); \$9.99 (Kindle)

Choose One:

Geisler, Norman, and David Geisler. *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2014.

ISBN: 978-0736950831

Amazon List Price: \$12.99 (Paperback); \$9.99 (Kindle)

– OR –

Sweet, Leonard. *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010.

ISBN: 978-1434764744

Amazon List Price: \$12.71 (Hardcover); \$0.99 (Kindle); \$9.26 (Audio CD)

Note: If you are more wired as a direct, linear thinking “apologist” who likes to engage people on worldview issues and consistency of belief systems, you will likely resonate more with the Geisler book. If you are more wired as an indirect, holistic thinking “artist” who likes to engage people on heart issues, literature, and aesthetics, you will likely resonate more with the Sweet book.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following titles are not required for this course, but students may find them to be helpful additions to their evangelism and discipleship library:

Aquilina, Mike, and James L. Papandrea. *Seven Revolutions: How Christianity Changed the World and Can Change It Again*. New York: Image, 2015.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Touchstone, 1995.

Chester, Tim, and Steve Timmis. *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.

Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993.

Everts, Don, and Doug Schaupp. *I Once Was Lost: What Postmoderns Taught Us about Their Path to Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Hirsch, Alan, and Jeff Vanderstelt. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016.

Holland, Tom. *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*. New York: Basic, 2019.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

Newman, Randy. *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017.

Richardson, Rich. *Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Smith, James K. A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016.

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*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

_____. *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

Wilkins, Michael J. *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

Willard, Dallas. *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

CLASS SESSIONS

Ephrata Community Church
Wednesday Evenings in Conference Room A
September 16 – November 4, 2020
8:00 – 9:30 p.m.

COURSE TOPICS

The following topics are typically part of the flow of this course. The instructor may, in response to class members' personal and ministry needs and interests, vary the time and depth of exploration allotted for each topic.

Unit 1: Biblical-Historical Foundations

1. Paul's Second Missionary Journey—1st Century Evangelism & Discipleship in Action
2. Martyrs for Jesus—What Was So Worth (Living and) Dying For among the Faithful?
3. The Grace Revolution—How Christianity Transformed the Roman Empire

Unit 2: Biblical-Theological Foundations

4. Clarifying the Gospel—Not Good Do's, Not Good Views, but Good News
5. Adorning the Gospel—Why Gospel Implications Must Be Distinct but Never Dismissed
6. Myriad Little Stories, One Big Story—Images of Personal and Cosmic Redemption (*Gospel of the Kingdom*)
7. What Just Happened to Me?—Assurance, Doubt, and *Simul Justus et Peccator*

Unit 3: The Gospel in a Google World

8. Contemporary Approaches to Evangelism—Consider, Critique, and Construct
9. The Ethics of Persuasion—Gospel Invitations or Spiritual Muggings? Says Who?
10. Finding an Evangelistic Voice—Gospel Truth through *Your* Personality
11. Student Gospel Stories (Testimonies)—Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So!

Unit 4: Forging a Discipleship Path in Our Day

12. The Discipleship Funnel—A Fluid and Functional Pattern in the Gospels (Still Applicable Today?)

13. Life on Life—Dyads, Triads, and Non-Programmatic Approaches (Making Disciples Who Make Disciples)
 14. Millennials & Discipleship—Points of Entry and Inspiration (Fresh Expressions and a Generous Orthopraxy)

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
1	September 16	Unit 1 Topics (See Above)	
2	September 23	Unit 1 Topics (See Above)	
3	September 30	Unit 2 Topics (See Above)	Evangelism Textbook Review
4	October 7	Unit 2 Topics (See Above)	
5	October 14	Unit 3 Topics (See Above)	“What Is the Gospel?” Paper
6	October 21	Unit 3 Topics (See Above)	
7	October 28	Unit 4 Topics (See Above)	Student Testimony, Group 1
8	November 4	Unit 4 Topics (See Above)	Student Testimony, Group 2
	November 8		“Disciple Me!” Outline

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Your grade for the Evangelism & Discipleship course will be based on the evangelism textbook review (20%); the “What Is the Gospel?” paper (30%); the student testimony and follow-up (20%); the “Disciple Me!” Outline (20%); and preparation and participation (10%).

1. Evangelism Textbook Review (20%)

For this course, you selected one of the following evangelism textbooks to read:

- Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There*.
- Norman Geisler and David Geisler, *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus*.

Write a **brief review** of the book you chose. Your 2- to 3-page paper should be written in a 12-point Times New Roman (or similar) font, double-spaced, and contain the following four (4) paragraphs:

- Paragraph 1: Summarize the author’s overarching concerns and purpose for writing the book.
 2: Discuss some strengths of the book and insights gained about the gospel and how to share it.
 3: Discuss some weaknesses of the book and suggestions for possible improvements.
 4: Offer a brief critical evaluation of the book and its usefulness for your own ministry.

A more in-depth review is permissible if you have the time and inclination to go deeper in your analysis, but please follow the above format/flow, and do not exceed 7 double-spaced pages. **Due: By midnight Wednesday, September 30.**

2. “What Is the Gospel?” Paper (30%)

Write an 8- to 10-page paper titled, “**What Is the Gospel?**” Define the word “gospel” with attention to biblical, historical, and theological considerations. Anchor your assertions in primary source citations where possible. You may cite biblical scholars and theologians who support your claims, but keep these secondary source citations to a minimum. Primary sources are often more accurate and illuminating. You may address the *cosmic* dimensions of the gospel if you think it is important to do so, but be sure to articulate how you think the cosmic dimension relates to the *personal* dimension. (Are they related? Is one more important than the other? What are the consequences of emphasizing one over the other, or to the exclusion of the other?)

You must also explain why the gospel must be shared (i.e., state the biblical and theological rationale for its proclamation). Doing so will require that you: (a) briefly describe the problem for which Christ is the solution; and (b) discuss what is biblically necessary and sufficient for a person to be “saved.” What is God’s “end game” in salvation? In your paper, distinguish clearly between the gospel and the *implications* of the gospel. This distinction is vitally important in New Testament theology, so do not overlook it. Be clear and concise in your paper as you may want to reformat it someday into an outreach brochure for your church. As such, be as winsome as you can.

Note: While the focus of this paper is on what the gospel *is* rather than how best to *share* it, you may—if you wish—devote a few paragraphs near the end of your paper to what you think are some overarching principles on the effective sharing of the gospel in our day (e.g., the importance of patience, kindness, relationship, contextual intelligence, etc.). Keep in mind that your target audience is a reasonably educated seeker or layperson. **Due: By midnight Wednesday, October 14.**

3. Student Gospel Story (Testimony) & Follow-Up Q&A (20%)

Each student will share a brief (10- to 12-minute) **gospel story (i.e., a personal testimony)** with the class. Build a gospel presentation around a “theme-hook” or motif pertaining to your own life story. (We will discuss theme-hooks and motifs in class.) Presentation notes are suggested but optional; nevertheless, you *must* submit on the day of your presentation a 1-page bulleted list of key points or movements you intend to share in your testimony.

Your testimony *must* include a **brief but clear presentation of how a person becomes a genuine Christian**. In addition to the “theme-hook,” you may approach your testimony from the standpoint of “how and why I became a Christ follower.” The goal is to help crystallize your thinking about your own journey to Christ, and to develop a practical tool that you can use to share your faith with others. *Do not exceed the time limit.*

After your presentation, the instructor will put you on “the hot seat,” spending another 3-4 minutes, asking you a question or two about your spiritual journey, perhaps even challenging some of your beliefs! The goal here is to give you practice in moving *graciously* from a testimony (a controllable monologue) to a conversation (an unpredictable dialogue), with its myriad twists, turns, opportunities, and apologetic implications. **Due: In class on Wednesday, October 28 or Wednesday, November 4 (schedule TBD).**

4. “Disciple Me!” Outline (20%)

Scenario: A believer who’s been hanging around your church for a while comes up to you one day and says, “It’s time for me to get serious about my faith. I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, but I need to cultivate my relationship with him. I’m spiritually stagnant, and I want to grow deeper. Would you disciple me?” You pray about it, and your answer is yes, you will disciple this person—not through the formal programs of the church, but in a one-on-one context (or in a triad if you prefer).

What will you teach him/her/them? What Scriptures, biblical themes, and/or other resources will you study together? What assignments will you give him/her/them, if any? What character issues will you address, if any? What apologetics topics will you cover, if any? What servant evangelism projects will you do together, if any? What community service projects or justice causes might you engage in, if any? How will you ensure

that your disciple begins to make disciples? Where and how often will you meet? How will you measure progress? This project will serve as your discipleship plan. **Due: By midnight on Sunday, November 8**—four days after the last class session.

5. Preparation & Participation (10%)

The value of this course will not reside merely in the lectures and presentations given, but in the exchange of ideas they provoke. Assigned readings, handouts, projects, and instructor/student presentations are all geared toward introducing students to the vast and vital subject of evangelism and discipleship, and its growing arsenal of quality resources. A single course, and a brief one at that, can never prepare an individual for every situation or contingency in ministry, but it is well positioned to challenge students how to think, learn, and be directed to further resources that are useful in ministry. Students are therefore asked to come to class prepared and also to **participate substantively and respectfully each week** with their classmates.

ASSIGNMENT POINT SUMMARY

Evangelism Textbook Review.....	20 points
“What Is the Gospel?” Paper.....	30 points
Student Testimony and Follow-Up.....	20 points
“Disciple Me!” Outline.....	20 points
Preparation & Participation	10 points
TOTAL	100 points