



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

CED790NN — CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT & MISSIONAL PRACTICE Online Summer 2010

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information. Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

Instructor Information

Professor: Dean Blevins, PhD
Office: (816) 268-5481
Office Hours: by appointment

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Home/Cell: (913)523-3857 Please do not call between
9:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Catalog Description

This course provides an approach to church revitalization through the process of congregational discernment and missional practices. Students will give special attention is given to developing skills studying congregational culture as well as vision practices that will make the church more missionally minded. This contextually based course requires current engagement in a local church with permission to engage in study with that community.

Course Narrative & Rationale

Ministry in our current society requires a deep understanding of the local context, both within and beyond the walls of the congregation. As the church continues to engage local culture, following God's mission into the community, ministers need to be able to discern both the culture of the local congregation as well as the broader social context where followers of Jesus seek to transform people and communities by God's grace. This on-line course provides an introduction to the field of Congregational Studies and seeks to understand our role as leaders in both understanding (exegeting) and leading the local church in its missional vocation. Implicit in this study is our understanding of what we mean by "church," context, and mission. As the course unfolds we will explore both meaning and practices that shape local congregations in ministry and mission.

Course Outcomes

Upon the completion of the course the student will:

1. Develop a working definition of the church (based upon biblical, historical and theological reflection).
2. Understand the basic definitions and approaches to congregational studies and contemporary understandings of missional practices
3. Apply these approaches in understanding and assessing a local congregation

4. Understand the implications of congregational discernment for missional practice
5. Demonstrate how insights of their discernment of a local congregation can influence the church leadership

Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies

- CP 22 Ability to identify social & congregational factors that influence church growth
- CX 1 Ability to discover sociological dynamics & trends & to apply that information to specific ministry settings
- CX 2 Ability to analyze & describe congregations & communities
- CX 3 Ability to describe socialization & to apply its dynamics to the life of the Christian community
- CX 11 Ability to describe basic missiological principles & to apply them to the development of the life of a church

Required Texts & Course Materials

<i>Why Church Matters</i>	Jonathan R. Wilson	978-1-58743-037-4	Brazos Press	2006	160 pgs	\$19.99
<i>Memories, Hopes, and Conversations</i>	Mark Lau Branson	1-56699-288-5	The Alban Institute	2004	156 pgs	\$18.00
<i>Energizing the Congregation</i>	Carl S. Dudley and Sally A. Johnson	0-664-25359-8	Westminster/John Knox Press	1993	132 pgs	19.95
<i>Studying Congregations: A New Handbook</i>	Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney	0687006511	Abingdon Press,	1998	226 pgs	28.00
<i>Treasure in Jars of Clay: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness</i>	Lois Y. Barrett	0-8028-2692-X	Wm B. Eerdmans	2004	192 pgs	\$20
<i>A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation: Embarking on a Journey of Transformation</i>	Rick Rouse	978-0806680446	Augsburg Fortress	2008	144 pgs	14.99
<i>Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory</i>	Randall Balmer	ASIN: B000HLDDBK	Vision Video	1992/2006	3 hrs	29.99

Recommended Texts & Course Materials

Karkkainen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002

Nelson, C. Ellis. Ed. *Congregations: The Power to Form and Transform*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1988.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of the Church*. New York: Image. 1992

Callahan, Kennon L. Callahan. *Small, Strong Congregations: Creating Strengths and Health for Your Congregation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000.

Course Outline

1. Defining Church/Discerning Congregations
2. Discerning Congregations from the Inside Out
3. Discerning Congregations from the Outside In
4. Discerning Congregations from their “Best Voice”
5. Missional Practices and Congregational Traits
6. Missional Practices and Congregational Life

Course Assignments & Requirements with Course Outcomes (CO)

- 1) **Active On-Line Participation (300 points)** students are required to provide substantive posts five days each week either in original thoughts or through measured responses. **All posts will be due no later than 11:59 pm Central Time on the day assigned through Moodle.** Late posting will result in reductions of the overall weekly class participation grade. CO #2 & # 4
- 2) **Ecclesial Position Paper (100 points) giving a basic definition of the church utilizing** theological and historical concepts (must include documentation) 1250-1500 words. CO #1
- 3) **Video Case Study assessment (200 points):** Students will engage in two video case studies from *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* to assess their working knowledge of the resources discussed in the class 1000-1250 words each (total 2000-2500 words). CO #2 & #3
- 4) **Congregational discernment/missional practice project (300 points): students will provide a 2500-3800 word congregational discernment** of a local church ethos based upon the concepts used in the congregational studies with support documentation. **The discernment must include a clear understanding of the local congregation using specific analysis and general comparative reviews. In addition, the discernment should lead to tentative recommendations for future missional practices that might further assist this congregation in ministry.** The report must include a peer review by a local minister or leadership (guide to be provided for the peer review). Students must secure permission to engage in this study and secure the name, address and email of their contextual reviewer the first week of class CO # 3, # 4, & # 5
- 5) **Summative essay (100 points)** addressing key issues in congregational discernment and missional practice 1250-1500 words. Guidelines to be provided. CO #1 & #2

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

SUMMARY

	hours
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	42
Reading	42
Writing	37
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	14
Exams & Quizzes	0
TOTAL	135

Method for Submitting Assignments

Please use the assignments section of Moodle unless otherwise directed.

Form and Style Expectations

All writing must meet the standards of graduate level, academic writing. Formal submissions, either as research papers or projects, should follow the basic guidelines of the Turabian (Chicago) Manual of Style. See Student Handbook for additional information.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

Late posts receive a 20% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Posting after the assigned week will not be graded. All research/project work is due 11:59 PM of the date assigned. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 10% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after the last day of the regular semester.

Course Grading

1000-901: A 900-801: B 800-701: C 700-600:D 599 or Below: F

Grade Descriptions

“A”-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)

“B”-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)

“C”-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)

“D”-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)

“F”-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

See rubrics for major assignments and posting for further information on assessment.

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities, Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Calendar

Date	Week	Assignment
5/18	1	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
5/20	1	Complete Assigned Reading & 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
5/22	1	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
5/25	2	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
5/27	2	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
5/29	2	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
5/29	2	Ecclesial Position Paper due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday
6/1	3	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
6/3	3	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
6/5	3	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/8	4	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday

		evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
6/10	4	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
6/12	4	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/12	4	Video Case Study due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/15	5	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
6/17	5	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
6/19	5	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/22	6	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Tuesday evening, Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday evening.
6/24	6	Complete Assigned Reading & Post 200 word reflection no later than 11:59 pm Thursday Respond to at least two reflections no later than 11:59 pm Friday evening
6/26	6	Summarize online course conversation with a 200 word summative reflection due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/27	6	Video Case Study due no later than 11:59 pm Saturday evening
6/28	7	Week given to continue research on Congregational Discernment/Missional Project
7/9	8	Congregational Discernment/Missional Project Due no later than 11:59 pm Friday,
7/14	9	Peer review due no later than 11:59 pm Wednesday
7/16	9	Summative Essay due no later than 11:59 pm Friday

Rubrics

Posting Rubric

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Great
Participation and Initiative Shown	Rarely participates in discussion; does not make an effort to participate; seems indifferent	Limited initiative, does not post minimum requirement; occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Posts minimum requirement; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group	Demonstrates good self-initiative; posts frequently; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely
Relevance of Posts	Posts responses which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most responses are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts responses that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts responses related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic to further discussion
Clarity of opinions/ideas; connection to topic	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; evidences grammatical/spelling mistakes	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas; occasional spelling/grammatical errors	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly; occasional lack of connection to topic; well-written and presented	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic; well-planned
	2 points	4 points	7 points	10 points
Totals				

Congregational Assessment Peer Review Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Relationship to Church studied: _____

Contact information for follow-up:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

General Observation (What did you think of the study? Suggest strong points, points that might require further review, possibilities for future practice, and overall “tenor” of the report.)

Grading Rubric for Reading and Research

Student _____

Preliminary Considerations	Cognitive Levels (Reasoning)	Recognition & Recall	Comprehension	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	Comments
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
	Reading/ Research Indicators						
Point/ percentage of writing	Overview of writing or introduction to paper	Able to identify/ state key claim(s) of reading/ paper	Able to explain claims in clear & concise manner	Able to indicate how key claim develops through reading/writing	Relates Key Claim to Class focus	Indicates importance of material to Class focus	
Point/ percentage of writing	Primary review/ development of writing	Identifies primary support claims and backing	Able to define clearly & concisely support claims, backing, and qualifications	Able to identify warrants & assumptions support claims & backing	Relates support claims to each other and to class focus	Able to show relative strengths and weaknesses of support claims	
Point/ percentage of writing	Personal Interaction	Connects specific claims to personal interaction	Demonstrates why claim elicits response	Reflection nuances range of writings support claims	Reflection indicates sources that endorse/dispute writing	Reflection references constructive alternatives or application	
	Argumentation Level	Attention	Structure	Response	Detail	Demand	
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
Point/ percentage of writing	Form & Style Level	Demonstrates standard form (pagination) and clear writing style	Consistent outline with headings and subheadings detailing development of argument	Forceful writing with consistent documentation at key claims and clear transitions and anticipates qualifications	Documentation addresses supporting claims & backing internally with detailed transitions and intersects with issues in class	Wide range of academic sources with strong rhetorical skills at each level. Clearly identified audience to elicit response	
	Surprise Factor						
Total point/ percentage							

Congregational discernment/missional practice Rubric

Congregational discernment/missional practice project (300 points): students will provide a 2500-3800 word congregational discernment of a local church ethos based upon the concepts used in the congregational studies with support documentation.

- 1) **The discernment must include a clear understanding of the local congregation using specific analysis and general comparative reviews.**
- 2) **In addition the discernment should lead to tentative recommendations for future missional practices that might further assist this congregation in ministry.**

Domain	Non-compliance	Recognition	Comprehension/Analysis	Synthesis
Specific Assessment of ethos	Congregational context ignored	General context given without systematic analysis	General context analyzed systematically according to basic categories	General context analyzed systematically but woven within a narrative that reveals basic elements and ministry examples
75 Possible				
Comparative Review of ethos	No Image/Model Given	Image or Model given with only minimum comparative work	Image or Model given with only basic evidence drawn from congregational study	Image or Model given and supported with suggestions on how congregation might relate/compare with similar churches
75 Possible				
Missional Practice Assessment	Congregation/Context practices not identified in light of missional tendencies	Congregation/Context practices identified in light of missional tendencies	Congregation/Context practices analyzed in light of missional tendencies with specific examples	Congregation/Context practices analyzed in light of missional tendencies and compared to general congregational ethos
75 Possible				
Missional Practice recommendations	No recommendations given	Recommendations given but no discussion how they might unfold	Recommendations given with discussion of how they might unfold	Recommendations given and related both to how they might unfold and how they might change overall ethos
75 Possible				
Total/300				