

CHS530: HISTORY AND POLITY OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Nazarene Theological Seminary

Semester I, 2008-2009

Module (August 19-29)

3 hours credit

Dr. Harold Raser

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

The main persons, ideas, and events that have shaped the Church of the Nazarene from its beginnings to the present are examined together with the historical setting in which the church began, and the system of polity (organization) that the church has developed.

COURSE NARRATIVE AND RATIONALE

This course exposes students to the main persons, ideas, and events that have shaped the Church of the Nazarene as a particular historical expression of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world.

The history of the church is examined against the background of the American holiness movement and the wider currents of American Christianity (these being the most formative influences on the Church of the Nazarene), with the aim of understanding who the Nazarenes are and how they fit into the broad stream of the Christian tradition.

Nazarene polity (system of organization) and other matters addressed by the Nazarene *Manual* (e.g., doctrine and Christian practice) are examined and analyzed in order to understand how the church is organized for ministry in the world, and how it expresses its doctrinal and ethical convictions in a systematic way.

This course specifically addresses the goals and objectives of each of the NTS degree programs, which call for students to develop an understanding of the history and heritage of the Christian faith and familiarity with the context in which ministry takes place today.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Conscientious investment of oneself in the learning activities of the course should enable students to:

1. Learn the "Nazarene story" – how and why the Church of the Nazarene came into existence and how it has attempted to fulfill what it has understood to be its special "calling" throughout its history.
2. Develop the ability to tell the "Nazarene story" accurately and with critical insight into the church's history.
3. Gain an understanding of Nazarene doctrine and ethics as expressed in the *Manual*.
4. Develop understanding of Nazarene polity – especially be able to identify the important principles of the *Manual* that pertain to the organization and ministry of the local church

and to the responsibilities of the pastor at local and district levels, and be able to explain the governance systems of the church at local, district, and general levels.

5. Acquire the ability to enter into critical and fruitful conversation with the past in order to appropriate the historical heritage of the church as a resource for responsible and faithful ministry in the present and future.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

1. *Called Unto Holiness*, Volume I, Timothy L. Smith.
2. *Called Unto Holiness*, Volume II, W.T. Purkiser.
3. *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene: the First Generation*, Rebecca Laird.
4. *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene, 1905-2004*, Mark Quanstrom.
5. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John Wesley.
6. *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, 2005-2009.
7. **Assorted Articles and Readings** (provided by the professor).

FORMAT AND PROCEDURE

This course is primarily a lecture course. Most class time is given to lectures and presentations by the instructor. Material presented in these lectures and presentations relates to assigned reading, but does not simply duplicate, or repeat the content of assigned reading. From time to time the instructor may use discussion, role-playing exercises, films or videos, presentations by guest lecturers, and other aids to learning to supplement instructor lectures/presentations.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. PRE-CLASS WORK

1. Read *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* by John Wesley **prior** to the beginning of class. **On or before the first day of class (Tuesday, August 19)** students are to submit a 3-4 page (i.e. approximately 750-1,000 words) reflection essay discussing Wesley's understanding of the doctrine of Christian Perfection as stated in this book. Please see "Reading Reports" below for more detailed instructions for this assignment. The essay will be graded and returned to students by the end of the first week of class.

2. Read *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene: the First Generation* by Rebecca Laird prior to the beginning of class. **On or before the first day of class (Tuesday, August 19)** students are to submit a 3-4 page (i.e. approximately 750-1,000 words) reflection essay on this book. Please see "Reading Reports" below for more detailed instructions for this assignment. The essay will be graded and returned to students by the end of the first week of classes.

3. Read ***Called Unto Holiness, volume I***, by Timothy L. Smith, **pp. 1-179** prior to the beginning of class. This need not be a *detailed* reading, but it should result in students being able to recognize *major* events, persons, and issues covered in this portion of the book. Students will be asked on the first day of class to certify that they have completed this reading. There is no written assignment for this reading, but the in-class written examination on Monday, August 25 will assume familiarity with this material.

4. Read the article ***"Trunk and Branches: the Nazarene Family Tree"*** by Dr. Raser. This article is posted on Blackboard under "Course Documents" for this course (CHS530: History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene). Be prepared to discuss this in class during the first class session.

B. IN-CLASS WORK

1. Read the **HANDOUTS, ARTICLES, AND OTHER MATERIALS** provided by the professor to supplement reading in the textbooks and class lectures, and participate in class discussion of this material. All of this material is posted on NTS Blackboard under "Course Documents" and is accessible prior to the beginning of classes. Each class meeting (see syllabus "Tentative Class Calendar") indicates "Required Background Reading" for that class session.

2. Read ***Called Unto Holiness, volume I***, by Timothy L. Smith, **pp. 180 to the end**. There is no written assignment for this reading, but the final post-class examination will assume familiarity with the material in this portion of the book.

3. Read ***A Century of Holiness Theology: the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene, 1904-2005*** by Mark Quanstrom. On or before **the last day of class (Friday, August 29)** students are to submit a 3-4 page (i.e. 750 – 1,000 words) reflection essay on this book. Please see "Reading Reports" below for more detailed instructions for this assignment.

4. An in-class mid-course **exam** will be administered on **Monday, August 25**.

5. Regular attendance and participation in class learning activities. Since class only meets nine times during the module session **it is imperative that students be consistent in their attendance**. Students that miss more than the equivalent of one day of class may have their final grade in the class significantly reduced.

C. POST-CLASS WORK

1. Read ***Called Unto Holiness, volume II*** by W.T. Purkiser. **On or before Monday, October 20** students are to submit a 3-4 page (i.e. 750-1,000 words)

reflection essay on this book. Please see "Reading Reports" below for more detailed instructions for this assignment.

2. Read (or re-read) the *Manual, 2005-2009*, pp. 16- 217. This reading should not be for purpose of "memorizing" the content, but rather for the purpose of developing general familiarity with the way in which the various "parts" of the denomination are organized and function, and the ways in which they interact with each other (some, but not all, of this material will be carefully analyzed in class).

3. Complete a final written examination posted online. **This will be available any time between October 20 and December 11.** The examination is timed, and can only be taken once. It will cover all material introduced in class after the first examination (Monday, August 25), *Called Unto Holiness, volume I*, by Timothy L. Smith, pp. 180-end, and the assigned sections of the *Manual*. Do not attempt to complete the exam until you have carefully reviewed all of this.

READING REPORTS

1. The assigned reading report on *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* by John Wesley is to be 3-4 pages (i.e. 750-1,000 words) in length. It should discuss Wesley's understanding of the doctrine of Christian Perfection as stated in the book. Special attention should be given to Wesley's definitions or descriptions of Christian Perfection, the means by which a Christian believer is "perfected," according to Wesley, and the role or purpose of "perfection" in the life of a Christian. Also, be sure to note any questions or problems the book raises for you.

2. The assigned reading reports *on Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene: the First Generation* by Rebecca Laird, *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene, 1905-2004* by Mark Quanstrom, and *Called Unto Holiness, volume II* by W.T. Purkiser should each be reported on in a reflection essay 3-4 pages (i.e. approximately 750-1,000 words). These essays should include a brief summary of the content of the book, but their main purpose is not summarization. Their main purpose is to address three questions: 1) how has this person (or persons, or these events, or this doctrine, debate, etc.) helped to make the Church of the Nazarene what it is today?; 2) how does the information in this book change/alter/contribute to my understanding of the Church of the Nazarene?; 3) how has the information and insight gained from reading this book affected my understanding of how ministry is (and ought to be) carried on in the Church of the Nazarene?

In addressing these questions, one should reflect carefully and not be satisfied with only the most obvious answers. Draw upon your own experience in the church, and your developing knowledge of its identity and character (as you read, think about, and discuss this with the professor and your classmates) as well as the information in the books, to

help you with this. The brevity of these reports requires that you think and write carefully!

METHOD FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

For all written assignments there is an **"Assignment"** section for the class on **NTS Blackboard**. Completed assignments may be posted there, where they are accessible to the professor for reading, evaluating, and returning to you. All four written reports are **due no later than 8:00 a.m. Central Daylight Time of the day they are due**.

POLICY REGARDING LATE WORK AND RESCHEDULED OR MISSED EXAMS

Late work is reduced ½ letter grade for every one day (or portion thereof) overdue.

The in-class examination **may be rescheduled or made up only through petition to the Dean's Office**, and under the most compelling circumstances. The post-class online examination must be taken during the time it is accessible online (see "Post-Class Work" above).

COURSE GRADING

1. **Class participation throughout the two weeks of class counts 12% of the final grade.** Students are evaluated on the consistency and quality of their preparation for and participation in class activities.
2. The 4 reading reports together count 48% of the final grade.
3. The two exams together count 40% of the final grade.

All written work is expected to evidence graduate level writing skills and this will be given due consideration in grading. In addition, all students are expected to be familiar with the *NTS Handbook for Inclusive Language* and to follow its guidelines in the preparation of written work.

For the four reading reports, **the following criteria are employed in evaluation and grading:** 1) **"A" quality work** – is superior in every way – writing is clear, essentially without errors in grammar, syntax, word usage, spelling, etc. – content evidences careful reflection, insight, and originality; 2) **"B" quality work** – is above average – writing is generally clear, with few errors of grammar, syntax, spelling, word usage, etc. – content evidences careful preparation and meets the expectations of the assignment; 3) **"C" quality work** – average – writing is adequate, but may have errors – content is adequate, meets the minimum expectations of the assignment, but lacks insight and originality; 4) **"D" quality work** – below average – writing is poor, marred with frequent errors – content evidences lack of insight or lack of understanding of assigned material; 5)

"F" quality work – failure to do satisfactory work – work evidences haste, lack of careful preparation, lack of basic understanding of the assigned material.

NOTE: NTS is committed to make every reasonable effort to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may hinder full demonstration of his or her abilities (e.g., difficulty seeing or hearing, dyslexia or other learning disabilities) should contact the instructor immediately, or as soon as possible, to discuss learning needs, alternatives which have worked for the student in the past, and mutually acceptable learning/teaching strategies to ensure the student's full participation and appropriate evaluation in the course.

CONSULTING THE INSTRUCTOR

My office is room 352 (through the door behind the organ in the chapel, to the top of the stairs, and down the hall). I aim to be available to students outside of class as much as I possibly can. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss course matters, or any other matters in which I might be of help to you. You can also e-mail me at: school - heraser@nts.edu or home – hjderaser@aol.com

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

Date

Topic

Tuesday, Aug. 19

- I. The Nazarene Family Tree – Our Roots in Christian History
 - A. Christian, Protestant, Wesleyan, and Holiness
 - B. American
 - C. Methodist

Required background reading: ***"Trunk and Branches: the Nazarene Family Tree"***

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Wednesday, Aug. 20

- I. (continued)
- II. The Holiness Awakening of the 19th Century
 - A. Methodist Antecedents
 - B. Pre-Civil War Holiness "Awakening"
 - C. Post-Civil War "Organized Holiness"

Required background reading: 1) ***"Wesleyan Revival of the 18th Century;"***
2) ***"John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection;"*** 3) the two articles on **Phoebe Palmer**

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Thursday, Aug. 21

- II. (continued)
- III. Answering the "Church Question:" Building Blocks of the Church of the Nazarene
 - A. The Chronology of Separation
 - B. The non-American Link
 - C. The Impulse for Union

Required background reading: 1) ***"Oberlin Perfectionism and the Rise of the 19th Century Holiness Awakening;"*** 2) ***"Organized Holiness and the 'Church Question';"*** 3) Chart – ***"The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene"***

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Friday, Aug. 22 III. (continued)

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Monday, Aug. 25 **EXAM #1**

IV. Possibilities and Problems of Union

- A. 1907 Merger
- B. 1908 Merger
- C. Post-1908 Unions

Required background reading: 1) **"The Classical Types of Church Polity;"**
2) **"The Basis of Union of 1907;"** 3) **"Nazarene Beginnings: the 'Unifiers' and the Impulse for Union"**

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Tuesday, Aug. 26 IV. (continued)

- V. Mission to the World
 - A. Evangelism and Missions
 - B. "Compassionate Ministries"
 - C. Christian Higher Education

Required background reading: 1) **"Divine Healing: the Nazarene Article of Faith in Historical Context;"** 2) **"Views on Last Things in the American Holiness Movement"**

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Wednesday, Aug. 27 V. (continued)

VI. Called Unto Holiness in an Ever Changing World: Nazarenes Seek Their Place in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century – and Beyond

- A. Standards and Separation
- B. "Internationalization" and a Global Church
- C. Holiness and Identity

Required background reading: 1) **"Early Nazarene Social Ministries;"**
2) **"Church of the Nazarene Universities, Colleges, and Theological Seminaries"**

Thursday, Aug. 28

VI. (continued)

VII. Nazarene Organization and *Manual*

- A. The Development of Structure and Organization
- B. Doctrine
- C. Ethics of the "Holy Life"

Required background reading: 1) ***"Things Shakeable and Things Unshakeable in Holiness Theology"*** by Rob L. Staples; 2) ***"Documents and Charts Relating to Nazarene Polity"***

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Friday, Aug. 29

VII. (continued)

VIII. Final Course Wrap-Up

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