

WESTERN SEMINARY
Portland, Oregon 97215

PTS 503 -- Practicing Evangelism & Apologetics

Fall Semester, 2009

Dr. James Martin & Dr. Gerry Breshears, Instructors

SYLLABUS

CLASS TEXTS

Mittelberg & Hybels, *Building a Contagious Church*
Newman, *Questioning Evangelism*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Strategies and programs for biblically based evangelism are explored in this course. You will develop your own skills in personal evangelism, as well as how to do evangelistic outreach through the local church. You will develop an ability to address questions about the truthfulness or believability of Christianity that often arise in evangelistic moments through a biblically based and personally relevant apologetic strategy. 2 hours

CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES

A well equipped leader

1. properly emphasizes glorifying God by fulfilling faithfully the evangelizing, edifying, and worshiping functions of the Church
2. is able to train others to develop their God-given capacities for Christ-like character and ministry (including evangelism, edification, worship, leadership and other essential functions of the Church)

COURSE GOALS

After completing this course you will

BE:

1. more confident in telling the good news of Jesus.
2. committed to the mobilizing the church for evangelistic ministry.

KNOW:

1. the true meaning of evangelism and apologetics.
2. some methods of developing relationships with lost people.
3. the place and power of prayer in evangelism.

4. how to develop evangelism as a total church ministry.
5. the reality of the devil's opposition to evangelism.

BE ABLE TO:

1. make the gospel of Christ clear and relevant.
2. deal with various categories of irreligious people.
3. develop approaches to sharing the gospel that fit your personal style.
4. share the gospel personally with at least one non-believer.
5. overcome some of the barriers that hinder faith in Christ.
6. answer key questions about the truth of Christianity.
7. defend against the traditional attacks on Christianity.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Attend and actively participate in all class discussions and activities. This is a way you model commitment.
- B. Read the Mittelberg & Hybels (8 hours) as soon as you can and no later than January 29. Read Newman (10 hours) by February 12. Write a 15 word summary of each chapter AND a 15 word summary of each book as a whole. Rate each book giving one to five points each for the five categories of readability, insight, practicality, challenge and biblical faithfulness, explaining briefly your rating. (24 hours)
- C. You will write a 3 to 5 page paper evaluating the strengths and weaknesses your church's evangelistic philosophy and practice. Be sure to assess such issues as congregational involvement, utilization of outside resources, how success is measured. In a page each, explain the philosophy, how it works in practice, and how effective it is from your viewpoint. Conclude with suggestions for greater impact on lost and unchurched people. You will present your paper to the church's leadership for response which you will include with the paper. (8 hours) Due October 19
- E. You will do an oral presentation in class on October 26. In five minutes, you will formally give a verbal presentation of the gospel to the class, receive oral and written suggestions including a grade based including the key facts, clarity, creativity, and persuasiveness.
- G. In a creative, fresh, and theologically accurate way, develop a tract or pamphlet that explains the Gospel to a seeker. Use whatever you wish to communicate clearly and effectively: graphics, colors, pictures, a story or parable. It can be any size or shape, but *you must make copies for each person in the class* as well as for the teachers. Your tract will be graded on the following:
 1. Does the tract include the salient points of the gospel, as well as the proper response and results?
 2. Is it creative and appealing?
 3. Is the presentation clear and uncluttered of "Christianese"?
 Along with your tract, include the answers to these three questions:
 1. Who is my target audience (i.e. who did I write the tract for?)
 2. What is my strategy for bringing the Gospel into a conversation? How would I

bring up the need for Christ, and perhaps pass on the tract with an encouraging word?

3. How did you accept Christ (OR what is your testimony of Christian experience)? Keep it short and sweet—no more than one single spaced page (total) for all three questions. (Due October 26)

F. Present the whole gospel, including giving an opportunity for response with at least one person. They may well be people with whom you have had long term relation. In a couple of pages, summarize how your presentation developed, your results and recommendations for how to make your future presentations more effective. The final grade come from the depth and clarity of your preparation, the effectiveness and winsomeness of your presentation and the quality of reflection on the presentation. (3 hours) Due no later than December 11.

FINAL GRADE

The final grade will be determined on the following basis:

Reading & Summaries	300
Gospel Tract	100
Class Gospel Presentation	100
Gospel to a Person	100
Church Evaluation Project	100
Class Participation	<u>100</u>
Total Points	800

The grading scale is A+ 99-100%, A 95-98%, A- 94-93%, B+ 92-91%, B 90-88%, B- 87-86%, C+ 85-84%, C 83-81%, C- 80-79%, D+ 78-77%, D 76-74%, D- 73-70%. Borderline grades will be determined on the basis of class participation and pattern of improvement. To receive audit credit, you must attend at least 80% of the class sessions and report that fact to the instructor by the day of the final. We are quite willing to negotiate due dates in advance to allow for your demanding schedule. Talk to one of us no less than a week in advance of the due date and give me a note with the revised due date. If satisfactory prior arrangements have not been made, the mark on assignments turned in late will be reduced at the rate of one half letter grade per week day and one letter grade per weekend up to a maximum deduction of two letter grades. Unless you qualify for an incomplete as defined in the catalog, all assignments must be turned in by December 11.

“Western Seminary is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Western students are assisted individually as their needs dictate. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to identify themselves and the nature of the disability. Any student who has a disability should contact the seminary’s Disability (Section 504) Coordinator, Ken Epp, at 503-517-1815/1-877-517-1800, ext. 1815. His office is at the Portland campus. Appropriate forms will be provided and must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator’s office.”

TENTATIVE CLASS OUTLINE

- Aug. 31 Class Introductions, Review of Class Syllabus
What is the Gospel? Identifying the revelation, responses and results biblically
Read: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-3/the-gospel-and-the-poor>
- Sept. 7 **Labor Day: No Class**
- Sept. 14 The Great Commission; Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 15:15-16; Lk. 24:46-46; Jn. 20:21;
Acts 1:8
The Meaning of Evangelism and Why Many Christians Do Not Do It
Motivations for Evangelism
- Sept. 21 Becoming A Contagious Christian
Understanding the Lost and Unchurched
Qualities of an Effective Evangelist
The Art of Bridge Building
Mittleberg, Chapter 1-4
- Sept. 28 Becoming A Contagious Christian
Proper Communication
Presenting Jesus Christ
Mittleberg, Chapter 5
- Oct. 5 Characteristics of Evangelistic Churches; Acts 2:41-47
Mittelberg, Chapters 6-7
- Oct. 12 Strategies for Evangelistic Church Growth
Mittelberg, Chapter 8, 9
- Oct. 19 Evangelism Styles
Socratic Evangelism; Luke 10:25-37; John 10:31-42; Acts 17:16-32
Paper Due: *Summary of Mittelberg*
Paper due: The evaluation of your church's Evangelism emphasis
Mittelberg, Chapters 10-15
Newman, Chapters 1-3
- Oct. 26 *Gospel Presentations*
Paper due: 2- page summary of Gospel presentation and personal testimony
- Nov. 2 What is Apologetics? Approaches to Apologetics
Paper Due: *Summary of Newman*
- Nov. 9 The Problem of Evil/Suffering
- Nov. 16 Creation vs. Evolution
- Nov. 23 Is Jesus the Only Way?

Nov. 30 Is There Such a Thing as Absolute Truth?

Dec. 7 Hypocrisy

Bibliographical Suggestions:

Tim Keller, *The Reason for God* (Dutton, 2008)

Ken Boa and Robert Bowman, *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists*, RiverOak, 2002.

William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions* InterVarsity, 2004

Alstair McGrath, *Intellectuals Don't Need God*, (Zondervan, 1993)

Art Lindsley, *True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World*, InterVarsity, 2004

James Sire, *Why Good Arguments Often Fail: Making a More Persuasive Case for Christ* InterVarsity, 2006

John Fischer, *Fearless Faith: Living Beyond the Walls of 'Safe' Christianity* (Harvest House, 2002).

Lee Strobel, *Case for Christ, Case for Faith, Case for Easter, Case for a Creator* (Zondervan, 1998, 2000, 2004).