

Wesley Theological Seminary Course of Study
for the
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

CS-523 Evangelism
October 12-13, 2018
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Instructor

Dr. Teddy Hickman-Maynard
Associate Dean for Student and Community Life
Assistant Professor of Black Church Studies
Boston University School of Theology
E-mail: teddyhm@bu.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students to the theology and practices of evangelism as an expression of the mission of God.

Learning Objectives

1. Reflect on and articulate the meaning of the gospel and an understanding of the church as bearers of God's Word to the world.
2. Ground a theology of evangelism in scripture, the gospel, and the mission of God.
3. Interpret the Wesleyan heritage of evangelism.
4. Reflect on and implement strategies and models for evangelism by the congregation.
5. Critical analysis of and appreciation for electronic media as instruments of evangelism.

Required Reading

- Arias, Mortimer. *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Cauley, Marty. *Effective Ministry Action Plans: Your MAP Out of the Wilderness of Ministry*. E-book, 2014: <https://nccumc.org/newfaithcommunities/files/Effective-Ministry-Action-Plans.pdf>.
- Fox, H.Eddie and George E. Morris. *Faith-Sharing: Dynamic Christian Witnessing by Invitation*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2003.
- Knight, Henry H. and F. Douglas Powe. *Transforming Evangelism: The Wesleyan Way of Sharing Faith*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2006.
- Powe, F. Douglas and Jasmine Rose Smothers. *Not Safe for Church: Ten Commandments for Reaching New Generations*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015.

Assignments

A. *Practicing Evangelism Reflection*

Evangelism is a practice. For this assignment, you are asked to engage in an activity that you understand to be a faithful public witness to the gospel. You will then submit a 2-page paper (double-spaced, 12pt standard font, 1" margins) reporting on what you did, why you did it, and what you learned through the experience. As you choose how you will practice evangelism for this assignment, remember that your options are not limited to one model/method. While you should not do anything that you believe is a poor witness to the gospel or that violates your conscience, you *are* encouraged to step outside of your comfort zone into a dimension of the practice you may not have engaged before. To stimulate your thinking, here is a list of possible practices:

- Initiate a conversation with someone regarding your faith or regarding the gospel
- Provide some form of service to someone or some group in a manner that you believe is a visible and embodied witness to the good news
- Create and post a personal video "testimony" online (see www.iamsecond.com for inspiration)
- Lead or participate in a communal, public ministry of your church
- Preach an "evangelistic" sermon

This list is neither exhaustive nor necessarily exemplary; it is only meant to be suggestive. Keep in mind that whether you choose something above or another idea, you will need to answer, "Why is this action/activity evangelism?"

B. *Reading Response Papers 1 & 2*

Each student will write two 4-page papers (double-spaced, 12pt standard font, 1" margins) in response to Mortimer Arias' *Announcing the Reign of God* and Knight & Powe's *Transforming Evangelism*. The reading response papers should be divided into two equal parts:

1. Provide a comprehensive, yet concise **summary** of the book that clearly identifies the author's thesis and fairly represents the basic structure of the author's argument and its development.

Note: The structure of the "argument" is not identical to the structure of the book. Thus, a good summary may not always follow the table of contents. In fact, attempting to comment on every topic and sub-topic in the book will often hinder the construction of a good summary.

2. Provide a **critical evaluation** of the reading. What did you find helpful, interesting, challenging, provocative, difficult, unhelpful, incomplete, etc.? Why? How does this reading contribute to your thinking about the theology and practice of evangelism? How does your own ministry context impact your evaluation of the text?

Note: A "critical evaluation" is not synonymous with a "negative appraisal." Rather, "critical" refers to the process of making reasoned judgments about the contents of the text. A good critical evaluation should not read as a running commentary on various ideas in the text. Instead, it should be organized around your own thesis regarding the import of the text, followed by a defense of your thesis as substantiated by rigorous engagement with the text.

The Practicing Evangelism Reflection and Reading Response Papers 1 & 2 are DUE on Thursday, October 11 by 11:59pm on the course Blackboard site.

C. Ministry Action Plan

Each student will prepare an 8-page Ministry Action Plan (MAP) that documents the contextual analysis, theological vision, and strategic proposal for the practice of evangelism in your specific ministry context. Your MAP will follow the template provided in Dr. Marty Cauley's *Effective Ministry Action Plans*, which can be accessed for free at the link listed in the "Required Reading" section. The basic outline for the MAP is:

- 1) **Assess:** Identify the particular context or aspect of contemporary culture that will be the locus of your practice of evangelism and articulate the theological paradigm of evangelism that will guide your engagement with your chosen mission field. Your theology of evangelism should answer the following questions: . What is evangelism? What is the gospel? [Bear in mind that the good news may not be a "message" whose "meaning" has to be decoded and translated. Perhaps it is better understood as a way of life with social patterns, practices, and relations to be adopted. You may wish to think in aesthetic and practical, not only cognitive, terms.] What are the most important biblical and theological insights you have gained from your reading and from this course that shapes the way you propose we think about the practice in this particular context. How you're your chosen context shape your theology?
1. **Analyze:** Conduct in-depth investigation of both the chosen mission field and your own context of ministry the levels of local congregational life, the surrounding community, and the wider culture.
2. **Assets:** Identify the resources that your context of ministry already provides to meet the task, from theological resources such as scripture, tradition, and liturgy to the practical resources of organizational structure, finances, communal relationships, etc.
3. **Actions:** Describe the strategic plan you will employ. What does evangelism "look like" in this context? What specific actions will you take? What is the timeline? What are the benchmarks? What are the measures by which you will assess the plan's effectiveness?
4. **Ask:** Identify the spiritual partners, financial supporters, core leaders, and key participants whom you will invite to implement the plan with you. This section should also include consideration of the various forms of "buy-in" that you will need to initiate the MAP. For example: What denominational or congregational figures will you need to enlist in order for the plan to be viable? Whose permission do you need? Whose blessing would you like? These may not be partners who will help you execute the plan, but whose support or lack thereof may influence potential partners.

The Ministry Action Plan is DUE on Thursday, November 1 by 11:59pm on the course Blackboard site. Students will also present a brief summary of their MAP to their classmates on November 2 & 3.

D. Reading Response Paper 3

In preparation for this assignment, students are required to read Douglas & Smothers' *Not Safe for Church* and Fox & George's *Faith-Sharing*, as these texts provide models for the kind of contextualized practical theology that you are being asked to produce in the Ministry Action Plan. You will then choose one of these books for which you will write a 2-page response paper, following the same structure/format described above, with the exception that this paper will be 2 pages instead of 4.

Reading Response Paper 3 is DUE on Thursday, October 18 by 11:59pm on the course Blackboard site. Please note that this deadline is PRIOR to the deadline for the MAP assignment.

Evaluation

Assignment	% of Grade
Practicing Evangelism Reflection	10
Reading Response Paper 1	20
Reading Response Paper 2	20
Reading Response Paper 3	10
Ministry Action Plan (MAP)	40
TOTAL	100

If, in the professor's opinion, the student is not actively participating in the classroom sessions or is over-participating (i.e. dominating discussion) this can affect the student's final grade – sometimes seriously. Class participation is a key to meeting the course objectives. Please consult with the professor ahead of time if you believe you will have difficulties in this area.

Course Policies

Academic Conduct – The Wesley Student Handbook may be found online at:

<https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Student-Handbook-2018-2019-Final.pdf>. All students are required to familiarize themselves with the academic policies contained therein. Students should especially familiarize themselves with the section on academic honesty and **plagiarism**.

Language – The course seeks to be inclusive of people of different genders, races, cultures, and physical ability. Students are expected to use language that reflects this commitment. Similarly, students are encouraged to explore the rich diversity of language and imagery used to describe God within the Christian tradition. Students should especially endeavor to be conscious of the implications that the way God has been imagined and described have for human constructions of gender, race, and class.

Late Policy – No written work will be accepted late unless with the expressed permission of the instructor in response to extraordinary circumstances. If such circumstances arise, please contact the instructor immediately.

Course Calendar

Thursday, October 11	Reading Response Papers on Arias and Knight & Powe due by 11:59pm Practicing Evangelism Reflection Paper due by 11:59pm
Friday, October 12 – Saturday, October 13	Class Session: lecture, group discussion, and student presentations on “Practicing Evangelism” exercise
Thursday, October 25	Reading Response Paper #3 (on one of either Powe & Smothers or Fox & George) due by 11:59pm
Thursday, November 1	Ministry Action Plan due by 11:59pm
Friday, November 2 – Saturday, November 3	Class Session: student presentations on MAP project, group “consulting” exercises