

ME 680: Biblical Paradigms for the Practice of Evangelism
Methodist Theological School in Ohio
Spring 2016

Tuesdays 2:00 PM–3:30 PM (G 150)
& Weekly Online (60 minutes)
3 Semester Hours

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the evangelistic praxis of Jesus and of the New Testament church in search for integral paradigms for the contemporary practice of evangelism. Special attention will be given to the understandings of evangelism in the life and teaching of Jesus and in the ministry and theology of Paul. Students will be encouraged to construct their own theology of evangelism grounded in the *missio Dei* and a faithful understanding of the gospel; and to develop a biblically grounded and culturally and contextually relevant model of evangelism. This course will combine lectures, class discussions, case studies, student presentations, and online activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To read the New Testament from an evangelistic/missional perspective, identifying texts that significantly reflect and illustrate the calling of the church as witness.
2. To study the life and teaching of Jesus and the ministry and theology of Paul for implications for the evangelistic ministry of the contemporary church.
3. To have a clear understanding of biblical foundations for evangelism, so as to communicate it plainly and clearly to one's own community of faith and ministry.
4. To have hands-on experience of presenting the gospel and to reflect on one's style, integrity, and effectiveness of faith-sharing.
5. To develop an integral program of evangelism appropriate to the ministry context in order to educate and motivate a local church for a holistic, transforming evangelistic outreach.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Flemming, Dean. *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013.

Fox, H. Eddie and George E. Morris. *Faith-Sharing: Dynamic Christian Witnessing by Invitation*. Rev. ed. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996.

Murray, Stuart. *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 2001.

Peace, Richard. *Holy Conversation: Talking about God in Everyday Life*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.

Reese, Martha Grace. *Unbinding the Gospel*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2006.

Senior, Donald, and Carroll Stuhlmueller. *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

- Arias, Mortimer. *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and Subversive Memory of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.
- Guder, Darrell L. *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Hooker, Morna D. *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Larkin Larkin, William J., Jr. and Joel F. Williams, eds. *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998.
- Legrand, Lucien. *Unity and Plurality*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Proper Confidence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- O'Brien, P. T. *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Swanson, Roger K. and Shirley F. Clement. *The Faith-Sharing Congregation: Developing a Strategy for the Congregation as Evangelist*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:(1) *Class Attendance and Participation:*

- Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may not be allowed credit if they are absent for 25% of class meetings or if 25% of online course work is not completed. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in class.
- Much of the value of this course will come from interaction among the participants. Students are thus to prepare for each class session by carefully reading the assigned texts, and to take an active part in the discussions.

(2) *Weekly Online Participation and Response:*

- Students are expected to be fully present online. Weekly online participation and response is an essential and vital aspect of learning. In this hybrid format, the student's role requires more active and self-disciplined participation. Online participation may include: turning in an assignment, posting an initial response and subsequent postings to the discussion board from midweek through Saturday, and other communication reflecting ongoing learning in the course. (See **Populi** each week for the assignment and online activity.) If no student response occurs during a week of the term, the student is considered absent. Lurking (reading only) does not earn credit, nor does it contribute to the class learning and community.
- Each student will lead online discussion once during the semester. They initiate the discussion by articulating what they understand to be the central issues raised by the week's readings and/or video/lecture. Leader's postings (around 200 words) should be posted by noon on the Thursday of the week. Students will sign up for the week in which they fulfill this assignment.

- It is important to manage your time.

Because hybrid courses move quickly and require self-discipline, it is important to efficiently manage time. It would include not waiting until the last minute to turn in assignments or responses. Technology is not fail-proof; you would need to allow time for unforeseen problems.

- Each student will belong to a Missional Formation Group.

Most focused discussions will take place within one or two groups. Groups are also designed to serve as Wesleyan class meetings, providing mutual support in a journey toward evangelistic/missional formation.

(3) *Critical Book Reviews:*

Students are required to complete **two book reviews**, critically reflecting on the text for implications for the practice of evangelism. Each review is to be **2 pages (1.5-spaced) in length**; and to use parenthetical citations, if necessary—e.g., (Flemming, 73). Name and save the reviews as **“Review1(Last Name)”** and **“Review2(Last Name).”**

The following is the quote from "How to Write a Book Review" by Joel Green, which I believe provides helpful guidelines:

“First, the review should indicate a thorough knowledge of the book as a whole, read on its own terms. . . . with an eye to several important questions, including: What is the book’s fundamental aim? Central theme(s)? Presuppositions? Method(s)? Second, the review should engage the book critically and personally. . . . Is its argument cogent? How has the reading of this book shaped you? . . . Whenever possible, you should situate your critique of the book within the larger discussion of the subject [that is, mission of the church].”

Given its limited length, your review is to be **succinct** and **to the point**. You would thus need to be very **selective** of the themes to critically reflect on. What I hope to see are indications of **your thorough reading of the text** and of **your critical engagement with it**. Also you are to briefly share how the text has shaped and affected your own understanding and practice of evangelism.

(4) *Reflection Paper on a Biblical Understanding of Evangelism:*

Each student will choose and study a book in the New Testament with an eye for understanding the biblical meaning of the gospel and evangelism, and will provide **a reflection paper (2 pages, 1.5 spaced) plus bibliography (minimum of 5 sources)** based on a careful reading and interpretation of the book.

The reflection will also be presented either in class (15 minutes) or online (20 minutes). ***The use of PowerPoint, Prezi, or equivalent technology is expected. Online presentations should include both visual and audio components. The more inventive and insightful your presentations, the more likely the class will be interested and responsive.***

For tech support regarding online presentation, please contact Shannon Harper (Gault 245) at support@mtso.edu.

(5) *Holy Conversation on Christian Faith:*

Students are to find a conversation partner who is not a Christian as explained in **Richard Peace, Holy Conversation** (see “Introduction”). Throughout the semester they are to engage in a holy, evangelistic conversation with the partner (at least three times) and to write a reflection (1 single-spaced page).

You are to pay attention to the questions your conversation partner have about Christianity, and the hindrances that keep the person from coming to the Christian faith. You are encouraged to share your faith with the person as well as to suggest some steps that could help the person travel further in her/his journey toward Christian faith.

(6) *Research Paper:*

A carefully researched paper of **2,500–3,000 words (1.5-spaced) not counting notes and bibliography** is due by May 16 (by May 13 for graduating seniors). *The paper should reflect a working knowledge of resources currently available. In addition to careful research (minimum of 5 books and 3 articles), students are to engage various aspects of the course learning, including the readings, in an integrative way.*

The focus of **the first part** (1,750–2,000 words) is on constructing a biblical theology of evangelism based on a careful interpretation of Scripture. Students are to wrestle with the understanding of the gospel and with the issues of motivation and substance of evangelism.

The second part (750–1,000 words) is to be devoted to developing an integral program of evangelism—which is context specific (rural, urban, suburban, etc.)—based upon one’s freshly constructed biblical theology of evangelism. Students could provide a brief reflection on the current state of the church in North America from an evangelistic perspective.

WRITTEN WORK:

All written work must be typed with 12-point font. It will be evaluated on the basis of (1) clarity of the writing, (2) critical interaction with the text, and (3) the student’s own integrative reflection. There will be a **penalty for late papers** commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

In accordance with MTSO’s policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the masters level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school’s policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If a student has questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism they should consult the course instructor, the school’s writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Please note that *plagiarism includes self-plagiarism*—that is, students may not utilize work submitted for one class in another class. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion.

Please See Student Handbook for Sections Providing Policy Details on the Following:

- **ADA**—MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented

disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

- **Electronic Devices**—Turn mobile devices off or “vibrate only” during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices. Students are to demonstrate, through their engagement and participation in class, that their attention is focused in the classroom.
- **Human Subjects Research**—Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.
- **Incompletes**—To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean’s Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.
- **PASS/FAIL**—The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the second week of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of “pass” the student must do at least the equivalent of C- work in the course.

EVALUATION:

- 10% Class Attendance and Contribution
- 20% Online Assignments (including leading online discussion)
- 20% Critical Book Reviews (10%x2)
- 10% Reflection Paper on a Biblical Understanding of Evangelism
- 10% Reflection on Holy Conversation
- 30% Final Research Paper

GRADING STANDARDS:

- A+ (97%), A (93%), A- (90%):
Superlative work that demonstrates a profound commitment to the course material, and excellence in thinking and performance as well as depth of insight.
- B+ (87%), B (83%), B- (80%):
Very good work that completely fulfills all the requirements of the course in a conscientious and dedicated manner, and that demonstrates good mastery of the course content.
- C+ to C-:
Satisfactory work that fulfills all the requirements of the course in an acceptable manner, but that falls short of demonstrating rigor and mastery.
- D+ to D-:
Unsatisfactory work that reflects poor thinking and performance as well as lack of clear comprehension and understanding of the subject.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

February 2 (Week 1)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (2/3–2/6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Course • Definitions of Evangelism 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC Webinar #1, “Reclaiming Evangelism” (http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/wcc-reclaiming-evangelism)

February 9 (Week 2)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (2/10–2/13)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evangelism and Hospitality • Theological Foundations • Discussion of Arias • Conversion Stories (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Park, “Evangelism and the Practice of Hospitality” in <i>Considering the Great Commission</i> • M. Arias, “That the World May Believe,” <i>IRM</i> 65 (1976) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC Webinar #2, “Evangelizing Each Other” (http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/wcc-webinar-2-evangelizing-each-other)

February 16 (Week 3)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (2/17–2/20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith-Sharing • What is the Gospel? • Place of Evangelism within the Mission of the Church • Conversion Stories (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox and Morris, <i>Faith-Sharing</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on the understandings of “Evangelism” in “Together Towards Life” and “Cape Town Commitment”

February 23 (Week 4)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (2/24–2/27)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biblical Foundations • Discussion of Bosch • Evangelism as “Holy Conversation” • Conversion Stories (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bosch, “Reflections on the NT as a Missionary Document” in <i>Transforming Mission</i> • Peace, <i>Holy Conversation</i> (Intro. & Chs. 1–3) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice of “Holy Conversation (1)”* (Peace, Chs. 4 & 5)

March 1 (Week 5)		
Classroom	Assignment	Online (3/2–3/5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical Perspective on Integral Evangelism: Being, Doing, and Telling Conversion Stories (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Book Review of Fleming, <i>Recovering the Full Mission of God</i> (2 pages, 1.5-spaced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCC Webinar #6, “Evangelism & the Context of Small Congregations” (http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/wcc6-evangelism-and-the-context-of-small-congregations)

March 8 (Week 6)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (3/9–3/12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest Speaker Rev. Heather H. Lear, Director of Evangelism ministries, General Board of Discipleship Ministries 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of “Holy Conversation (2)”* (Peace, Chs. 6 & 7)

March 15 (Week 7)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (3/16–3/19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theology and Practice of Evangelism in Mark and Matthew Student Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gospels of Mark and Matthew Senior and Stuhlmüller, Ch. 6 (Jesus), Ch. 9 (Mark) & Ch. 10 (Matthew) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Presentations

March 22 (Mid-Term Recess)			
March 29 (Holy Week Break)			

April 5 (Week 8)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (4/6–4/9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theology and Practice of Evangelism in Luke, John, and Acts Student Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gospels of Luke and John, and Acts Senior and Stuhlmüller, Ch. 11(Luke-Acts) & Ch. 12 (Johannine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Presentations

April 12 (Week 9)			
Classroom	Reading & Preparation	Assignment	Online (4/13–4/16)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theology and Practice of Evangelism in the Pauline Writings (1) Student Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pauline Writings Senior and Stuhlmüller, Ch. 7 (Paul) & Ch. 8 (Colossians & Ephesians) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Presentations

April 19 (Week 10)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (4/20–4/23)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theology and Practice of Evangelism in the Pauline Writings (2) and the rest of the NT Student Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pauline and non-Pauline Writings Senior and Stuhlmüller, Ch. 13 (non-Pauline) & Ch. 14 (Synthesis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Presentations

April 26 (Week 11)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (4/27–4/30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evangelism and Church Planting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Book Review of Murray, <i>Church Planting</i> (2 pages, 1.5-spaced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of “Holy Conversation (3)”* (Peace, Chs. 8 & 9)

May 3 (Week 12)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (5/4–5/7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unbinding the Gospel The Current State of the Mainline Church Evangelism and the Renewal of the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reese, <i>Unbinding the Gospel</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of “Holy Conversation (4)”* (Peace, Chs. 10 & 11)

May 10 (Week 13)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (5/11–5/14)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective Sharing of “Holy Conversation” Conclusion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Paper on “Holy Conversation” Graduating Seniors—Final Research Paper due by May 13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstract of the Research Paper (1-page, 1.5-spaced)

May 17 (Week 14)			
Classroom	Reading	Assignment	Online (5/18–5/21)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Research Paper due by May 16 	

***Online discussion** to be led by a student leader.

Selected Bibliography

- Abraham, William J. *The Logic of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Bolt, Peter, and Mark Thompson. eds. *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.
- Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1953
- Bueggeman, Walter A. *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storeyed Universe..* Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- Costas, Orlando E. *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Goheen, Michael W. *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
- Green, Michael. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. *Mission in the New Testament*. Trans. Frank Clarke. London: SCM, 1965.
- Hulltgren, Arland J. *Paul's Gospel and Mission*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Hunt, Stephen. *The Alpha Enterprise: Evangelism in a Post-Christian Era*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.
- Hybels, Bill and Mark Mittelberg. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Johnson, Ben Campbell. *Speaking of God: Evangelism as Initial Spiritual Guide*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.
- Jones, E. Stanley. *Conversion*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1957; rpt., 1992.
- Klaiber, Walter. *Call and Response: Biblical Foundations of a Theology of Evangelism*. Trans. Howard Perry-Trauthig and James A. Dwyer. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.
- Köstenberger, Andreas, J. *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Murray, Stuart. *Church after Christendom*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2005.
- Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium*. New York: Image, 2014.
- Pope John Paul II. *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate: Redemptoris Missio*. Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1990.
- Richardson, Rick. *Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Good News and Good Works*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Verkuyl, Johannes. *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Wesley, John. "Salvation by Faith (Sermon 1–1738); "Original Sin (Sermon 44–1759); and "The New Birth (Sermon 45–1760).
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.