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CS 637 Rural Community and Moral Concerns

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Thobaben, James R., "CS 637 Rural Community and Moral Concerns" (2006). *Syllabi*. Book 651.
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Rural Community and Moral Concerns (CS637)

Asbury Theological Seminary

Summer 2006

James R. Thobaben, Ph.D., M.P.H.

August 14 – 23

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Course Description:

Though the U.S. population has “urbanized” over the past century, substantial portions remain in rural areas. Many seminary graduates will take positions in such settings upon graduation. To properly serve, students should gain knowledge about the economic and social structure of rural communities. CS637 introduces students to appropriate secular literature and resources and provides Christian models for responding to various moral problems and conflicts. Particular ethical foci for the course are the cultural interpretations of n/Nature, land, work, stewardship, and Christian service.

The course is to be offered in conjunction with AMERC.

The course is to be taught as an Asbury Theological Seminary course that satisfies the “Understanding the World” core elective requirements for that institution. The course objectives, as designated on the syllabus, are:

Shared Learning Objectives for Understanding the World

Students will be:

- Able to demonstrate a basic awareness of the cultural dimensions of effective ministry.
- Able to utilize selected tools from anthropological, socio-economic and political analysis for interpreting and addressing issues.
- Able to describe examples of cross-cultural ministry and service.
- Able to explain how individual Christians and Christian communities can respond to the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in the world and in the church.

Learning Objectives Specific to the Course

Students will be:

- Able to describe the Christian tradition of social care & action [evaluated in course discussions].
- Able to provide a theological underpinning for a moral position (for or against) Christian social/political action [evaluated in course discussions].
- Familiar, at an introductory level, with approaches to social analysis for social action (both quantitative & qualitative) [evaluated in integrative paper assignments].
- Familiar with several practical models for addressing social problems as a Christian worker and/or as a local church leader, specifically within rural communities [evaluated in course discussions and exam].
- Familiar with introductory literature on the social and economic structure of rural America [evaluated through maintenance of reading record].
- Able to analyze current significant moral problems in rural America (e.g., employment, vertical economic integration of agriculture, use of genetically-modified organisms in farming) [analytical ability evaluated with integrative paper assignments and exam].
- Familiar with various forms of rural employment [evaluated through participation in discussions during course].

- Able to access Church and secular organizations in order to respond to the needs of individuals and groups in rural America (special consideration is given to the actual techniques used for such responses) [evaluated in integrated paper assignments].
- Able to recognize barriers that exclude persons from full participation in the Church and how church leaders can assist some such persons into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ [evaluated through participation in discussions during course].

Required Texts (MUST BE READ BEFORE FIRST SESSION)

Caudill, Harry M., Night Comes to the Cumberlands Ashland, KY: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001 (re-publication)

Conley, Kevin, Stud New York NY: Bloomsbury, 2002.

Covington, Dennis, Salvation on Sand Mountain New York NY: Penguin Books, 1995

Evans, Vos & Wright (ed), Biblical Holism and Agriculture Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 2003.

Jones, Loyal, Faith and Meaning in the Southern Uplands Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

DELETE: Logsdon, Gene, The Contrary Farmer White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1994. [*This book never arrived*]

Kline, David, Great Possessions: An Amish Farmer's Journal Wooster OH: Wooster Book Company, 2001/1990.

Poage, Ben The Tobacco Church II: A Manual for Congregational Leaders Richmond, KY: Kentucky Appalachian Ministries, 1995.

Wirzba, Norman, The Essential Agrarian Reader Lexington KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2003.

Websites:

TO BE QUICKLY SCANNED, NOT READ IN DEPTH.

General:

USDA Introduction to Rural America
[<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/resources/backgrnd/understd.htm>]

Appalachian Geographic Information Systems
[<http://www.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/gis/index.html>]

University of Kentucky: Appalachian Center
[<http://www.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/>]

USDA: Defining Rural [<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/faqs/ruralfaq.htm>]

Bibliography on role of women in Appalachia
[<http://www.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/wombib.htm>]

Ethnicity (Gary Gorham: North Dakota State University)
[<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/rsse/html/ethnicgp.html>]

Governance:

Appalachian Regional Commission [<http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=1>]

Columbus Dispatch article on corruption
[<http://www.dispatch.com/news/special/APPALACHIA/THURSDAY/TEXT/looking.html>]

Non-agricultural economics (e.g. extraction [coal, gravel], timber, chemical):

Tennessee Tech Appalachia Page [<http://www2.tntech.edu/sociology/app/>] ... look at economic section

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition [<http://www.ohvec.org/>]

Kentucky Coal Council [<http://www.coaleducation.org/default.htm>] ... from this site goes into pictorial on Modern Mining Techniques

Mennonite overview of Appalachia [<http://www.mcc.org/greatlakes/appalachia/resources/Friends.htm>]

Agriculture:

Mary K. Muth, Dominic Mancini, and Catherine Viator “US Food Manufacturer Assessment of and Responses to Bioengineered Foods” AgBioForum 5:3 [<http://www.agbioforum.org/v5n3/v5n3a03-muth.htm>]

Sergio H. Lence & Dermot J. Hayes “Impact of Biotech Grains on Market Structure and Societal Welfare” AgBioForum 5:3 [<http://www.agbioforum.org/v5n3/v5n3a02-lence.htm>]

Community Farm Alliance [<http://www.communityfarmalliance.com/>]

Rural Ministry

Religion in Appalachia, Appalachian State University: [<http://www.les.appstate.edu/courses/appalachia/religion/>]

Center for Rural Church Ministry [http://www.seorf.ohiou.edu/~xx042/r_ctr/crlc_art.html]

Evaluation:

35% Each Response Paper (2 total for 70%)

30% Final Examination

Debit: For inadequate class participation and/or late or incomplete reading

Work turned in late, if accepted, will not

Grade Range: Work for CS637 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

<i>A (93-100)</i>	=	<i>Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.</i>
<i>A- (90-92)</i>	=	
<i>B+ (87-89)</i>	=	
<i>B (83-86)</i>	=	<i>Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives</i>
<i>B- (80-82)</i>	=	
<i>C+ (77-79)</i>	=	
<i>C (73-76)</i>	=	<i>Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives</i>
<i>C- (70-72)</i>	=	
<i>D+ (67-69)</i>	=	
<i>D (63-66)</i>	=	<i>Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives</i>
<i>D- (60-62)</i>	=	
<i>F (> 60)</i>	=	<i>Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives</i>