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# IS 501 Kingdom, Church, and World

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# IS501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World

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Fall 2002

Office Hours: Crandall 10-11 W, Th 2:30-3:30; Reese T 10-11; Th 2:30-3:30

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## Introduction

What is the mission of the church? Behind this question is a cluster of related questions, the most important focused on the nature of God's creative and redemptive purpose, its ongoing expression in the world, and its consummation in the eschaton. Participants in this course will explore how the church might discern, embrace, and participate in God's own mission.

## Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate their understanding of the biblical metanarrative that comes to focus for us best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God;
2. Identify the particular contribution of the Wesleyan tradition to our understanding of this metanarrative;
3. Draw out major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative, especially as these are related to the nature and mission of the people of God;
4. Evaluate cultural products (e.g., literature, television, movies, advertisements, print media, music) in light of major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
5. Exercise criticism with respect to one's own cultural context and discernment with respect to the context of others vis-à-vis major theological, moral, and philosophical implications of this metanarrative;
6. Articulate the ecclesial and missional implications of this metanarrative – specifically for one's own context and generally for our shared global context; and
7. Exhibit a heightened sense of commitment to serving the kingdom of God in mission in the world.

## Required Reading:

Clapp, Rodney. *A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Postchristian Society*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996.

McLaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Snyder, Howard. *Kingdom, Church, and World*. Wipf and Stock, 2001.

Willimon, William. *Shaped by the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

## Recommended Reading:

Hart, Trevor. *Faith Thinking*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1995.

Newbigin, Leslie. *The Open Secret*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Middleton & Walsh. *Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1995.

**Evaluation:**

- Active and Substantive Participation in Witness Groups (10 points)  
The small group will meet every Thursday from 1:25 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for reflection and discussion. Each person in the group is expected to lead the group's work twice during the semester.
- Active and Substantive Participation in On-Line Conferences (10 points)  
In order to participate in the On-Line Conferences it is IMPERATIVE to have full access and basic knowledge of Asbury's First Class e-mail system (the On-Line Conferences will be conducted using this system). All students will have an IS501 icon in their First Class e-mail, and each small group (same as above) will have an icon for their On-Line Conferences where you will find questions and other items for discussion and group interaction posted by the professors.
- Kingdom Project and Presentation (10 points)  
Each student in each group is required to spend 12 hours of personal work/involvement in a "Kingdom Project." This project is a group project that must be completed together. In order to facilitate this project, a list of local ministries and resources will provided. However, groups are also encouraged to find other suitable (in consultation with professor) churches, para-church organizations, social service agencies, and community related organizations where they may complete the Kingdom Project. After completion of Kingdom Project, each group will share its experience with the class.
- Kingdom Project reflection (written): (10 points)  
Each member of each group will write a personal reflection of his/her experience in the project in the light of class readings and lectures. The goal of this paper is to integrate your experience of doing the kingdom project with the theological reading and work done in class. Please write no less than 3 (three) and no more than 5 (five) pages and the reflection must be typed or printed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Any paper receiving less than 5 points can be rewritten as instructed by the professor.
- Mid-Term (30 points)  
Take-home, open-book exam;
- Final-Exam (30 points)  
In class exam including objective and short essay questions.

**Grading:** Work for IS501 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level. The grading scale is as follows

A = 94-100	Exceptional Work
A- = 90-93	
B+ = 87-89	
B = 83-86	Good Work
B- = 80-82	
C+ = 77-79	
C = 73-76	Acceptable Work
C- = 70-72	
D+ = 67-69	
D = 63-66	Marginal Work
D- = 60-62	

F = 59 and below      Failing Work

**Incomplete Work:** “A grade of ‘I’ denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an *unavoidable emergency*, which does not include delinquency or attending to regular church work or other employment. If the work of the course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as ‘F.’ ” From ATS 2001-03 Catalog, page 29 (emphasis added).

**Attendance Policy:** One week of class (two class periods of either Tuesday or Thursday) may be missed without makeup. After one week, extra reading is required (50 pages per day missed: from the recommended reading list) and a one page single-spaced paper summarizing the extra reading. If three weeks are missed, a conversation with the professors is needed and there will be a reduction of grade. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the attendance sheet is marked prior to leaving class. The professors will not change the record after the class has been marked as missed. Any questions arising should be addressed to one of the professors immediately and should not be left until the end of the semester.

### **Small Groups:**

In the first week of class you will be assigned to a small group. This group will be an essential part of the class. With these five people you will: (1) share in a “Wesley-type” accountability group, (2) discuss reading and class material, and (3) work together on a Kingdom project.

The purpose of small groups in KCW is to provide formation in the Wesleyan tradition of nurture and accountability and to be a place where academic discussion and growth in spiritual disciplines mutually inform each other and contribute to how we manifest a Kingdom witness in the church and in the world.

### **Guidelines for Group Meetings**

1. Because Christian living and witness are important aspects of this course, we have set aside 50 minutes of class time for you to meet. The group experience is built into our weekly class time so that no one has to find time for an additional meeting outside of class.
2. The purpose of this group is to hold each other accountable for growth in grace, to share insights from the weekly disciplines, and to encourage each other toward living faithfully as witnesses to the kingdom and the lordship of Christ in our lives.
3. One student in each group will take attendance and report it to the professors online. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
4. Each person should complete the assigned readings before coming to class.
5. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

### **Online Discussion Guidelines:**

1. Your small group will also participate in online discussion related to the course material. You will need to have a seminary e-mail address to access the class folder on First Class Client.
2. Each week your team will discuss the question as it is posted within the team folder.
3. This class feature calls for good “e-manners.” Please limit each posting to 50 words or less [unless instructed to do otherwise]. Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, so be careful how you put things in

writing. Especially be conscious of your use of bold, underlining, and italics. You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis.

4. Drs. Crandall and Reese will monitor and grade the team interaction and discussion assignments that occur via e-conference.

Some examples of evaluative criteria may include:

1. Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected your understanding of the course material and its relationship to the question posed?
2. Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?
3. Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?
4. How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?
5. How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?
6. Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?
7. Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to academic writing?

## **Course Schedule**

### **Introduction**

Week 1. Introduction and Organization of the Course

- Small Groups: Selection, Process, Leadership, and Expectations
- Conferences: Selection, Process and Expectations
- Intro to Modified ExL Systems Test
- Course Objectives
- Course Procedures

### **Module One: Kingdom – Living the Biblical Story**

Weeks 2-5

#### *Objectives*

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the importance of “story;”
2. Discern how cultural products participate in inviting us into certain stories;
3. Articulate the basis for the unity of Scripture in the overarching plan of God, from Creation to New Creation;
4. Articulate the hermeneutical importance of the kingdom and of the incarnation for understanding the biblical story;
5. Articulate how Wesley’s understanding of the way of salvation serves as a helpful guide for reading the biblical story;

#### *Small Groups*

- Meet 50 min/week within the course schedule and follow the small group guidelines.

#### *Conferences*

- Complete a Modified ExL Systems Test
- Discuss in teams the questions posted by professor(s) on the reading assignments.
- Examine (in teams) a cultural product for its storied character.

## **Module Two: Kingdom and Church**

Weeks 6-8

### *Objectives*

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Enumerate significant ways in which the ongoing life of the people of God participates in and extends the biblical story;
2. Articulate how kingdom-living relates to a community of believers;
3. Articulate an ecclesiology oriented around participation in the kingdom;
4. Articulate basic forms of ecclesial practice (e.g., hospitality, mission) that are a necessary outgrowth of an ecclesial commitment to living in the kingdom.

### *Small Groups*

- Meet 50 min/week within the course schedule and work through *Witness*

### *Conferences*

- Discuss in teams the questions posted by professor(s) on the reading assignments.
- Examine a cultural product for its narrative storied character.

## **Module Three: Kingdom, Church, and World**

Weeks 9-13

### *Objectives*

Having completed this module, students should be able to:

1. Articulate the significance of the kingdom in terms of its cosmological and eschatological significance (rather than in individual and subjective terms);
2. Demonstrate that they have begun the process of thinking theologically – i.e., situating life within the interpretive and critical horizons of a theological vision of the purpose of God for creation that comes into focus best in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom;
3. Draw out inferences of this view of the kingdom with respect to a range of social-ethical issues (e.g., money, justice, nationalism);
4. Demonstrate the importance of understanding one's world in performing the kingdom;

### *Small Groups*

- Meet 50 min/week within the course schedule and follow the small group guidelines.

### *Conferences*

- Discuss in teams the questions posted by professor(s) on the reading assignments.
- Examine (in teams) a cultural product for its storied character.

## **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

Week 1 – Sept 3 and 5

Introduction

Reading to be completed for Thursday Sept 5: Willimon, pp. 1-96

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Sept 10: Snyder, pp. 1-76

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Sept 12, read Wesley's *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist* and come prepared for discussion with your group.

## **Module One: Kingdom**

### Week 2 – Sept 10 and 12

Kingdom: Introduction to Postmodernism and Narrative

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Sept 17: Wright, pp. 1-95

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Sept 19, read Deut 5; Psalm 106; Acts 7; Hebrews 11 and come prepared for discussion with your group

### Week 3 – Sept 17 and 19

Kingdom: The Old Testament Narrative

Reading to be completed for September 24: Wright, pp. 96-149

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Sept 26, read Luke 4:1-3; Isaiah 61 and come prepared for discussion with your group

### Week 4 – Sept 24 and 26

Kingdom: The New Testament Narrative

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Oct 1: Wright, pp. 150-197.

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday Oct 3, read selections from Wesley's *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* and *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* and come prepared for discussion with your group.

### Week 5 – Oct 1 and 3

Kingdom: The Trinity and the Wesleyan Order of Salvation

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Oct 8: Clapp, pp. 1-75;

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Oct 10, read Exodus 19; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12 and come prepared for discussion with your group.

## **Module Two: Church**

### Week 6 – Oct 8 and 10

Church: Who are the People of God

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Oct 15: Clapp, pp. 76-139.

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Oct 17, read Clapp and come prepared for discussion with your group.

### Week 7 – Oct 15 and 17

Church: The People of God through History

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Oct 22: Clapp, pp. 140-211 & Snyder, pp. 79-120

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Oct 24, read Clapp and come prepared for discussion with your group.

### Week 8 – Oct 22 and 24

Church: The People of God in the Contemporary Context

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Oct 29: McLaren, pp. 1-45

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Oct 31, read Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-18; Acts 10-11 and come prepared for discussion with your group.

### **Module Three: World**

Week 9 – Oct 29 and 31

World: Listening to the World

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Nov 5: McLaren, pp. 46-102

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Nov 7, reread the last 8 pages of *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodist* and read Wesley's *Thoughts Upon Methodism* and come prepared for discussion with your group

Week 10 – Nov 5 and 7

World: Acting in the World – Justice

Reading: No Reading

Assignment: Work on Kingdom Project Presentations

Week 11 – Nov 12 and 14

World: Acting in the World,

Small Group Assignment: For Thursday, Nov 21, read Mathew 28:16-20; John 13; Acts 4 and Wesley's sermon *The General Spread of the Gospel* and come prepared for discussion with your group.

**Important Note: There will be no lecture on November 14th. This time has been set aside for your small group to complete your work on your Kingdom project presentation.**

Week 12 – Nov 19 and 21

World: Speaking to the World

Assignment: Kingdom Project and paper due on Nov 19; Presentations will be on the 19th and 21st: All groups should come prepared to present on the 19th.

Reading to be completed for Tuesday Dec 3: McLaren, pp. 103-165

Week off for Reading Week – Nov. 25-29

Week 13 – Dec 3 and 5

World: Speaking in the World–The Witness of the Worshipping Community

Reading: Prepare for Final Exam

Week 14 – Dec 9–13 – Finals Week – Final Exam