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CS 637 Rural Community and Moral Concerns

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Rural Community and Moral Concerns (CS637)

Asbury Theological Seminary

Summer 2005

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

August 24 – September 1

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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:

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.

Logsdon, Gene, The Contrary Farmer White River Junction VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1994.

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:

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 have comments;
only a grade will be given.*

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> |

Response Papers:

#1 Write a theology of Christian care/concern. Include the basis for and limits to social service and political action by churches. Include reference to caring for non-human entities (animals, the “land,” etc.) 4-5 pages. Students should have researched subject and composed at least a solid draft prior to class. DUE FIRST DAY OF CLASS IN CLASS

#2 Using tobacco, whiskey production, thoroughbred rearing, and/or the use of genetically-modified crops, discuss how the farmer, the worker, and the owner can or cannot be immoral by virtue of the product being produced. 4-5 pages. DUE SEPTEMBER 10, 2005 at 9 am (non-Asbury students may send the paper electronically; use Word compatible format)

OR

Research a real example of cross-cultural interaction from a rural perspective. This could be rural/urban or rural/suburban cooperation on a social problem, a discussion of class differences, or ethnic differences. What are the strengths and weaknesses of responses to the moral concern in this example (be specific)? How would you improve the situation? 4-5 pages. DUE SEPTEMBER 10, 2005 at 9 am (non-Asbury students may send the paper electronically; use Word compatible format)

Final Examination: The final will be an objective question, oral examination. No notes or books are permitted. The exam is not to be discussed during or after taking the final.

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Since the course is an intensive, full attendance is required. Each student will have a brief oral examination over the basic material.

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12-point type, one-inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision. For more information on this topic see ‘Suggestions for Using Inclusive Language’.

READ THE REQUIRED BOOKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

Day 1 – Wednesday 24 August

8:45 *Meet in Wilmore, Kentucky outside Beeson Manor, Asbury Theological Seminary*
9:00 *Leave for Ohio*
Pre-Colonial agriculture & society: Serpent Mound (Adena or Fort Ancient
Indigenous Americans), Peebles, Ohio
Meal at Amish home & discussion on rural America

Day 2 – Thursday 25 August

Morning *Visit to Amish farm in Holmes County (David Kline) to discuss on-going non-industrial models of farming*
Lunch *****

DRAFT MARCH 2005Afternoon *Visit Malabar Farm*Supper *Cookout*Evening *Forum with local pastors and community residents (5) about rural ministry (7pm)*

Day 3– Friday 26 August

Morning *Visit farm using GMOs or intensive agricultural technologies*Lunch *Amish restaurant (Mt. Hope, Ohio)*Afternoon *Agricultural auction in Mennonite/Amish region (Mt. Hope, Ohio)**Behalt Mennonite museum (4:30; private tour at 5pm)**Supper on your own in Berlin*Evening *Open*

Day 4 – Saturday 27 August

8:00 *Leave Holmes County**“Good Works” in Athens, Ohio (center for the rural homeless)**Season Championships at Florence Speedway Dirt track for automobile race**Back in Wilmore about midnight.*

Day 5 – Sunday 28 August

10:30 *Worship at Mt. Zion Church with oral history activities & potluck at Thobaben’s Farm,**Wilmore, Kentucky**(may visit another rural church with approval; must attend afternoon activities)*

Day 6 – Monday 29 August

10:00 *Open pit mine or gravel pit**Visit to tobacco farm**Conversation with B. Poage & discussion in Wilmore*

Day – Tuesday 30 August

10:00 *Visit to Ashford Stud thoroughbred farm**Visit to Woodford Reserve whiskey production facility;*

Day -- Wednesday 31 August

Student exams (scheduled through day)

Day 9 – Thursday 1 September

10:00 *Closing theoretical discussion*Afternoon *The “popular” & “high” culture of rural America: the case of Berea, Kentucky*Evening *“Open stage night” at the J.D. Crowe Bluegrass Festival, Wilmore Kentucky.****Some Points About Travel***

During the field trips, housing will be provided by host families except in Wilmore. Though there will be no charge, a token of appreciation in the form of gift will be offered. Students may participate in the gift-giving, though as part of the group not as individuals. Students from institutions besides ATS will be housed at Beeson Manor (when possible).

Students should bring their own toiletries.

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Students will be responsible for their own meals, except when provided by host families or at potlucks. Costs for meals in rural Ohio and Kentucky are significantly less (about \$6 for a breakfast or lunch prior to tip) than in many urban areas, though one dinner scheduled at an Amish restaurant may cost \$10 - \$12.

All participants must have some form of health insurance. Information about that insurance must be provided to the professor prior to the first day of class, preferably at the time of registration for non-Asbury students.

Students from other institutions must act in a manner compatible with the ATS Ethos Statement while traveling with the class. This means no alcohol may be consumed, and no one may "sleep" with a person who is not his/her spouse. If one disagrees with these expectations, adherence is still expected. It may be understood as respect for another sub-culture rather than agreement. Or, it can be interpreted as a good introduction to what is demanded of most rural pastors in America.

Berry, Wendell, The Art of the Commonplace: Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry Washington DC: Counterpoint, 2002

Jackson, Wes, Becoming Native to This Place Washington DC: Counterpoint, 1996