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SP 501 Communication for Christian Leaders

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COMMUNICATION FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS
SP 501
Charles Killian

1. Course Description

This basic course in communication is designed to introduce the student to the art of communication. Combining both theory and skill development, the course will examine the classic canons of rhetoric, the principles of effective communication in today's culture, and establish an environment for effective praxis.

2. Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

- a. have an increased understanding of the essential features of classical rhetoric.
- b. establish a framework which will place theory in context, thus sharpening their understanding of the basic processes involved in effective communication.
- c. refine and enrich their skills for critical thinking, for organizing clear and coherent presentations, and for persuasive delivery.

3. Course Text

Duane Litfin, PUBLIC SPEAKING: A HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIANS, 2nd Edition, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1992

4. Course Assignments

This core course grew out of a concern that students were defective in developing effective presentations which were characterized as being haphazard in organization and poorly delivered. The basic conviction of this course is to make students aware of the basic skills in communication and to give them a context in which to examine the components in effective public speaking, vocal dynamics, and peer consultation with critique. This course would be preparatory for all Master of Divinity students and should be taken before any other required courses in the area.

In that this course is involved in the preparation, organization and delivery of sermons, it is directly related to the practice of ministry. The Church, for the most part, participates actively in the recruitment, call and placement of its ministers. The Seminary is a servant of the Church and serves as a conduit for its ministers. Therefore, any course that relates to the vital praxis of preaching the gospel, comes under the under the direction of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the Church. It is hoped that this part of the curricula will help prepare and send forth ministers who will be adept of ministering in the multi-layered contexts of contemporary culture. In our given theological perspective, the locus of any course dealing with communication, preaching, and persuasion will be in keeping with a vital Wesleyan emphasis. Wesley said, "I live for preaching." The Wesleyan movement has 'hearding the gospel' at its core. So, anything we do that enhances proclamation keeps faith with its heritage.

In keeping with the preamble above, the following assignments will be:

- a. Read Litfin. Outline each chapter in a way that best fits your style. At the end of each chapter there are questions and probes to be answered. Answer five of the following: Chapter 2, #3; Chapter 3, #4; Chapter 4, #1; Chapter 5, #4; Chapter 6, #4; Chapter 7, #3; Chapter 8, #4; and Chapter 9, #2
- b. You will give four oral presentations:
 - 1) an opening speech, a get-acquainted, non-graded presentation (5 mins.)
 - 2) A speech to inform (5-7 mins.)
 - 3) A speech to persuade (5-7 mins.)
 - 4) An oral summary of your final paper (5-7 mins.)
- c. A final exam
- d. A final paper, "Having had this course, so what?" (3-5 pages)
- e. You will critique five outside-the-class presentations.

5. Course Evaluation

Class attendance and participation	10%
Final paper	10%
Final exam	10%
Readings/critiques/Reflections	10%
Oral presentations	60%

6. A philosophy of teaching

Successful students exhibit a combination of successful attitudes and behaviors as well as intellectual capacity. Successful students...

...are responsible and active. Successful students get involved in their studies, accept responsibility for their own education, and are active participants in it!

...have educational goals. Successful students have legitimate goals and are motivated by what they represent in terms of career and life's desires.

...ask questions. Successful students ask questions to provide the quickest route between ignorance and knowledge.

...learn that a student and a professor make a team. Most instructors want exactly what you want: they would like for you to learn the material in their respective classes and earn a good grade.

...don't sit in the back. Successful students minimize classroom distractions that interfere with learning.