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# CD 511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship

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Course Syllabus, Fall 2004

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**CD511**  
**THE PASTOR AND CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

\*\*\*\*\*The calendar of this syllabus will be updated prior to the first day of class. Also, any other aspect of this syllabus is subject to change prior to the first day of class.

**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Explores roles and responsibilities of the “pastor as teacher,” including foundational studies in teaching, program planning, and teacher development, with special focus on nurturing, facilitating, administering, and coordinating the church’s educational ministries.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Teaching Goals

1. To explore and evaluate the dynamics of Christian discipleship through the disciplines of Scripture/theology, history, philosophy, education, developmental psychology, and Christian spirituality.
2. To expand understanding of the dynamics of Christian discipleship in relationship to: one’s personal/individual Christian journey; the Christian community context; and the larger social context.
3. To define Christian discipleship, and identify the relationship between one’s definition of Christian discipleship, and the various approaches used in the educational ministry of the church.
4. To propose, explore, and deepen visions for Christian discipleship within the congregation, with special attention to discipleship from a Wesleyan perspective.
5. To reflect on the relationship between evangelism and educational ministry.
6. To enable articulation of a personal philosophy of pastoral discipleship leadership appropriate to the milieu in which the student plans to serve.

## Student Outcomes

When you have completed this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the historical, philosophical, educational, psychological, and spiritual issues that shape your understanding of Christian discipleship.
2. Identify the dynamics of Christian discipleship in your personal Christian journey, the Christian community context, and the larger social context.
3. Define Christian discipleship and name the approach/(es) used in the educational ministry of the church that correspond to your definition.
4. Articulate a vision and strategy for Christian discipleship in relationship to a specific church ministry context, including a personal philosophy of pastoral leadership, and integration of the course concepts, theories, and issues presented.

## PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In order for something to be called education, it must be truly educative. Transmitting bodies of information and rules or values collected in the past does not equal education. Education involves movement beyond limitations, and frees people to live life more fully as God intended. Education involves people in co-explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership in the learning experience.

The learning experience in this class will be based on a philosophy of education that calls for participatory, interactive, reflective, bilateral, and dialogical learning activities. For example, you will be asked to reflect on, and openly discuss, your personal experiences and understandings related to various topics. You may also be required to participate in reflective learning games or simulation projects in order to promote co-explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership. Your presence, openness to growth, and enthusiastic participation in all class activities will determine the value of your learning experience.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Active participation** in the class (10%):

Faithful attendance – your presence in every class is expected and required

Reflecting on assigned texts – you must demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the assigned readings in preparation for class discussions

Contributing to class – your willingness to actively participate in class discussions and activities is a crucial part of the course learning experience

Completing special assignments – at times you will be asked to reflect on specific questions or briefly interview others in preparation for the next class session. These mini assignments are a required aspect of class participation.

2. **Two short papers** reflecting on your Christian formation and formal methods of discipleship. These papers (4-5 pages each) are largely descriptive with some concluding analysis regarding the views of Christian discipleship reflected in the descriptions (Total 20%, each paper 10%).

The first paper, **DUE September 5**, is a description of your own spiritual-educational discipleship experience, including an overview and a few specific incidents to provide a clear picture. This paper must include an identification and analysis of the views of discipleship/Christian education/spiritual growth that shaped your experience – views of your nation, religious tradition/theology, ethnic culture, parents, teachers, peers, **pastors**, congregation, yourself, and/or others.

The second paper, **DUE September 19**, is a description of the spiritual-educational discipleship experience of your church community. This may be your present religious community or one of your past. Choose a community which will offer the most to your learning, e.g., one in which you now minister, one that you especially value, one that disturbs you, or one that you have some other reason to study. Along with a detailed description, this paper must include analysis of the discipleship themes, philosophy/theology, and methods employed in the congregation you choose to study.

The purpose of these two short paper assignments is to help you become more consciously aware of the dynamics involved in the discipleship process. As you identify and name these dynamics in relationship to your own personal journey and a specific church community context, it is intended that you will develop the ability to critically and constructively evaluate these dynamics. It is also

intended that your new insights and abilities will contribute toward the enrichment and facilitation of your vision for discipleship ministry.

**3. Reading & Research Reflection Papers** Reading reflection papers will be assigned for each of the required texts. The reading reflection will include several specific questions provided by the professor. You will also be required to acquire and analyze a formal discipleship method/strategy. Specific questions for the analysis will be provided by the professor, and will involve some in-class group discussion and comparison. See class schedule for specific due-dates (Total 20 %)

**4. Major Paper** (20 pages) in which you put forth a vision of discipleship in relationship to the educational ministry of a particular church/Christian community context. The vision for discipleship may apply to the entire congregation/Christian community, or to a particular group/s within the larger church community context. The vision must include a description of the context, a clearly articulated philosophy of discipleship, strategy, goals, methods, and specific activities. The relationship between the philosophy of discipleship and all other aspects of the vision **must** be demonstrated in this major paper. Also, the vision **must** reflect significant integration of course concepts from class discussions and required readings. This paper must also demonstrate significant integration of research sources (at least five) other than the required texts. The first draft of this paper is **DUE: October 31** (20%). Final paper **DUE: December 5** (30%).

This assignment will demonstrate your ability to develop and clearly articulate a vision for Christian discipleship in relationship to a specific church ministry context. This assignment should also demonstrate evidence of a thoughtful, integrated, and congruent philosophy and strategy for discipleship.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Basics of Christian Education by Karen B. Tye

The Younger Evangelicals by Robert Webber

John Wesley's Class Meeting: A model for making disciples by Michael Henderson

Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life by Henri Nouwen

The Big Little School: Two Hundred Years of The Sunday School by Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright  
Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices by Craig Dykstra  
\*On Reserve - Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving the People by Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser  
Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision by Thomas Groome

## GRADING POLICY

### Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1" margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLS format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Papers will be returned within one week of submission. Substantial feedback will be provided on all papers except reading reflections and mini assignments. Papers are expected to be submitted on their due date. Late papers must be approved by the instructor and may **not** be returned within one week and/or may **not** include feedback from the instructor. Late paper grade deductions will be made at the professor's discretion. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date, please see your professor BEFORE the assignment is due.

### Incomplete Policy

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

## GRADING CRITERIA

Professor's Assessment of Your Attendance & Participation 10%

Two Short Papers 10% each (total 20%)

Through the description and analysis in these two short papers, you will demonstrate some understanding of the dynamics of Christian discipleship in relationship to your personal Christian journey and the Christian community context.

Reading and Research Reflection Papers (20 %)

Reflection papers will demonstrate meaningful comprehension and engagement of texts and research data.

Major Paper 50 % total (20% first draft and 30% final draft)

Your grade will be determined according to the following criteria: organization, including appropriate form and style; thorough and insightful description of the specific ministry context; clear articulation of vision (strategy, goals, philosophy, methods, and specific activities); and integration of course concepts, ideas, issues, and theories.

Through this major paper, you will demonstrate your ability to identify the philosophical, psychological, educational, theological, and spiritual principles that shape your views of discipleship. Through this paper you will also demonstrate your ability to define discipleship and articulate a vision for discipleship in relationship to a particular church ministry context.

## GRADING PROCEDURES

The grade descriptions written in italics have been determined by the faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary and provide the guidelines for grading. The explanations that follow clarify the meaning of each grade designation.

*A (5) = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives*

Exceptional work is constituted by such things as: substantive reflection that reveals engagement of the “big ideas” of Scripture/theology or the “big ideas” represented in the existing body of knowledge from the social sciences in a particular area of study and represented via assigned texts and presentations; thorough and penetrating personal insight gained from consideration of one’s experience through the lifespan thus far; creativity in translating assignments into useful pedagogical presentations; and excellence in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

*B (4) = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives*

Good work is constituted by: solid reflection on the assigned readings and presentations in response to the given guidelines for a particular assignment; the capacity to utilize classroom discussions and readings to understand and critically engage one’s own story; accurate ability to name specific ministry implications from one’s processing of information; and carefulness in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

*C (3) = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives*

Acceptable work is constituted by: obvious acquaintance with the assigned readings and classroom discussions at a level that allows for theological and pedagogical thought in response to the guidelines for a particular

assignments; references to one's own story at a level that makes application of truth and would interest a congregational member in the insights being expounded; capacity to communicate grammatically and stylistically without detracting from the presentation.

*D (2) = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives*

Cursory reading of the texts that fail to represent the author's intent; a flat restatement of the author's work void of any personal appropriation of the material; grammatical or stylistic errors that frustrate the reader and detract from the thought of the paper; or other failures to fulfill reasonable expectations flowing from a seminary course of this nature.

*F (1) = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives*

Unacceptable work is usually willful, unexplained, or inexcusable lack of fulfillment of class assignments.

## KEY QUESTIONS

Throughout the course schedule you will find several "Key Questions". These questions are for your personal reflection in preparation for in-class discussions and activities. These questions are intended to enrich and focus the in-class learning experience.

## ALPHA CONFERENCE

On September 10 & 11, Asbury Seminary will be hosting the Alpha Conference. As described in the brochure, "Alpha is a simple, dynamic and effective way of presenting the message of Jesus in a clear and non-threatening manner to people from all walks of life – particularly to those with no faith and to those who do not attend services regularly." This conference coincides with the focus of our class, providing a terrific example of current discipleship practices. I strongly recommend that you attend. If you attend the conference, your absence from the class will be excused, however you will be expected to share your insights from the conference with the class.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Sept. 3        *Introduction*

Sept. 5        *The Dynamics of Christian Formation: understanding your personal faith journey*  
**DUE:** Short Paper #1  
Begin reading: Growing in the Life of Faith by Craig Dykstra

Sept. 10       *Why we educate in the Church* (Alpha Conference)



Key Question: What are we trying to accomplish through our educational efforts in the church? (Please note your thoughts in preparation for class discussion.)

**DUE:** Bring example of a formal (in print) discipleship method to class.

- Sept. 12 *Discipleship Strategy and Foundational Issues: Wesleyan Distinctives*  
**DUE:** Research Reflection Paper (Discipleship Methods Questionnaire)
- Sept. 17 *Discipleship Strategy and Foundational Issues: Basic World View, View of Scripture, Theology, and Truth*  
Key Questions: What is the role of Scripture in the life of faith?  
Is all truth found in the Bible?  
**DUE:** Reading Reflection – Growing in the Life of Faith
- Sept. 19 *Discipleship Strategy and Foundational Issues: View of Church and Education*  
Key Questions: What is the purpose of the church?  
What metaphor describes how you learn best?  
**DUE:** Short Paper #2
- Sept. 24 *Discipleship Strategy and Foundational Questions: integrating theory with practice*
- Sept. 26 *History – Formative Leaders: Augustine to Wesley*  
**Begin Reading:** The Big Little School by Robert Lynn
- Oct. 1 *History – Movements: Everybody ought to go to Sunday School?*  
Key Question: Are traditional Sunday School structures valid?  
**DUE:** Reading Reflection – The Big Little School
- Oct. 3 *The Dynamics of Christian Community and Culture*  
**Begin Reading:** John Wesley’s Class Meeting by Henderson
- Oct. 8 *The Dynamics of Christian Community and Culture Continued*
- Oct. 10 *Developmental Theory and Discipleship: life cycle development*  
  
Key Question: What is the relationship between growth in faith and our emotional, cognitive, and moral development?  
**DUE:** Reading Reflection - John Wesley’s Class Meeting

- Oct. 15      *Developmental Theory and Discipleship: Structural development – Cognitive & Moral*  
**Begin Reading:** The Church as a Learning Community by N. C. Everist
- Oct. 17      *Developmental Theory and Discipleship: Structural development - Faith*
- Oct. 22      *Developmental Theory and Discipleship: Relationship between developmental theory and Christian formation*
- Oct. 24      *Developmental Theory and Discipleship: Dialectical process and the transformation of faith*  
 Key Question: What are the pros and cons of modeling as a method of Christian discipleship?  
**Due:** Reading Reflection – The Church as a Learning Community
- Oct. 29      *Teaching for Transformation: the five components of shared praxis*  
Christian Religious Education by Thomas Groome, Chapt. 9& 10
- Oct. 31      *Teaching for Transformation: the five movements of shared praxis*  
**Due:** Major Paper, First Draft
- Nov. 5      *Learning Styles and Discipleship Practices*  
**Begin Reading:** Making All Things New by Henri Nouwen
- Nov. 7      No Class
- Nov. 12      *Discipleship and the Spiritual Life: creating space for God*  
 Key Question: What external and internal dynamics enable or encourage spiritual growth?  
**Due:** Reading Reflection – Making All Things New
- Nov. 14      *Discipleship and the Spiritual Life: ancient practices vs. contemporary disciplines*  
 Key Question: Are early church practices appropriate for spiritual growth today? What disciplines enrich your life of faith?
- Nov. 19      *Evangelism and the Educational Ministry of the Congregation*  
 Key Question: What is the purpose of church education, evangelism or nurture?
- Nov. 21      *Building Visions and Implementing Change*  
 Key Question: What are the steps for making visions reality?  
**Required Reading:**

On Reserve in Library – Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving the People by Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, Chapters 5, 10, & 12.

Nov. 26 Reading Week

Nov. 28 Reading Week

Dec. 3 *Building Visions and Implementing Change Continued*

Dec. 5 *A Vision to Envision*

**Due: Major Paper, Final Draft**

Dec. 8-12 Final Exam Week, No Class

CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship  
Asbury Theological Seminary, Fall 2003

**COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Name:**

ATS mail box #:

E-mail address:

1. What is your previous ministry experience?
2. What do you think this course is about?
3. Why are you at ATS?
4. What would you like to learn from this course?
5. What kinds of strengths or abilities do you bring to this course?
6. What are your learning biases (ex: Lectures are unspiritual) and how do you think you learn best?
7. What do you hope doesn't happen in this course?
8. Please write any additional comments that would help the instructor make the course most meaningful to you.

Asbury Theological Seminary  
Student Questions about the Nature of the Church

DEFINITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the needs that a church should address?
2. Are traditional Sunday School Structures valid?
3. How are our church structures reflections of our ecclesiology and view of persons?
4. How important is the local church?
5. Are clergy biblical?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How does church structure affect the method of education used?
2. What should be church involvement with secular social groups?
3. How effective is the church in fulfilling its purpose?

TECHNICAL/PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

1. How does a church evaluate the needs of the community?
2. Can we truly change the traditional church?
3. How do you encourage church renewal in a traditional church?
4. When should you start your own church?
5. How important are denominational ties?