

Associated Canadian Theological Schools CHM 508 OL: Small Group Ministry

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Leadership and Practical Theology
Spring – 2020
3 credit hours

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Course Duration: Jan. 6 – April 4, 2020
Online Portion: Jan. 6 – Feb. 29, 2020

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Course Description

This course will look at issues related to leading a small group ministry. The issues to be considered will be: biblical perspective of small groups, definition of small groups, process of building relationships related to small group dynamics, roles and personalities of members of a small group, small group ministry development, leadership, group dynamics, organization of a small group ministry and leadership development.

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Objectives

This course will help students:

- Formulate a personal theology of community with special attention given to small groups
- Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of various approaches to small group ministry for their church context

- Strengthen skills for leading small groups and small group ministries
- Assess the effectiveness of their church's small group ministry and propose recommendations for making it stronger
- Design a training plan for small group leaders

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Course Textbooks

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. New York: HarperOne, 1954. 122 pages.

Boren, Scott M. *Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community that Makes a Difference in the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010. 186 pages.

Note: If you have read Boren's book for a previous class, please substitute it with:

Gladden, Steve. *Small Groups with Purpose: How to Create Healthy Communities*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013. 240 pages.

Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. *Making Small Groups Work: What Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003. 292 pages.

Egli, Jim and Dwight Marable. *Small Groups, Big Impact*. CCS Publishing. 2014. Approx. 105 pages

Frazee, Randy. *Connecting Church 2.0: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013. 256 pages.

Total pages = 961

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Course Instructional Content

You are required to watch, listen to, and/or read the course instructional content and interact about the content in the online forums. The full instructional script along with links to the videos and audio podcasts will be posted in the Moodle online classroom.

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Course Assignments

The assignments for this course are [pre-reading](#), [participating in the online forums](#), [formulating a theology of community](#), [participating in a small group](#), [small group ministry assessment](#), and completing the [course evaluation](#).

Assignments are due by midnight (your time) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in the Moodle online classroom accessible through MyCourses. When you go to the Moodle classroom, you will see assignment folders where you can submit assignments. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in the Moodle classroom where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book). Please note that I will deduct 10% of an assignment's total possible value for each day that it is late. Having said that, if you find that you are unable to complete an assignment on time, I will grant one extension of up to one week for one assignment during the course (without penalty) when you inform me of your need for an extension before the due date for that particular assignment. I will also consider extensions in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency (when a doctor's note accompanies the request). For the times when I allow a student to rewrite an assignment, I will generally take off 20% of the assignment's value before assigning a grade to the rewritten assignment.

Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of each one (you can click on the assignment links to go right to the description):

Overview of Assignments (click on link to go to description)

Week	Due Date	Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade	Cumulative Percentage
Week 1	Jan. 6	Pre-reading		
Week 1	Jan. 6-11	Online Forum #1 and Required Reading (<i>Small Groups Big Impact and Missional Small Groups</i>)	5%	5%
Week 3	Jan. 20-25	Online Forum #2 and Required Reading (<i>Connecting Church 2.0</i>)	5%	10%
Week 5	Feb. 3-8	Online Forum #3 and Required Reading (<i>Life Together and Making Small Groups Work</i>)	5%	15%
Week 6	February 15	Theology of Community	35%	50%
Week 7	Feb. 17-22	Online Forum #4	5%	55%
Week 8	February 29	Small Group Participation	10%	65%

Week 8	February 29	Small Group Ministry Assessment	35%	100%
Week 8	February 29	Course Evaluation		100%

Pre-reading

Due to the condensed nature of the online portion of the class, I would ask that you read at least two of the course textbooks by January 6 (we will discuss *Small Groups Big Impact* and *Missional Small Groups* during the first week in the online forum, so those would be good to read first).

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Online Forum Participation (20% of the final grade)

This course has four online forum weeks where you will have an opportunity to interact with others in the class around key questions, assignments, course readings, and/or additional lecture material. You should plan to invest approximately four hours into each forum week. Each forum is worth 5% of your final grade. Please make sure that you do the prescribed reading and watch the instructional videos (or access the instructional content in other ways) for each forum week, so that you can participate fully in the forum discussions.

Here is a schedule of the forum weeks that shows the required readings for each week (please note that the forum weeks start on a Monday and end on a Saturday):

- Form #1 - Week 1 (January 6-11) – *Small Groups Big Impact* and *Missional Small Groups*
- Forum #2 - Week 3 (January 20-25) – *Connecting Church 2.0*
- Forum #3 - Week 5 – (February 3-8) – *Life Together* and *Making Small Groups Work*
- Forum #4 - Week 7 (February 17-22) – No required reading

Students are expected to contribute to the forum discussions by posting a minimum of four conversational (worth up to 10 points each) and three substantive contributions (worth up to 20 points each) per forum week. Please make sure that you spread out your contributions over at least three days during the designated forum weeks so that you engage in the forum conversations at different points.

By conversational contributions, I mean simply joining the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said). I'd encourage you to ask good coaching questions that invite others in the class to think more deeply or in different ways.

By substantive responses, I mean responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this usually takes 200-300 words). We have a tremendous opportunity to build on one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. At times, we will respectfully challenge each other. I anticipate that this will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to

take place, we must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. Disagreeing and challenging can be stimulating if done in an edifying manner.

Substantive participation may include (among other things):

- ❖ Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- ❖ Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- ❖ Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- ❖ Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- ❖ Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- ❖ Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

What Substantive Participation is NOT:

- ❖ Very basic comments such as “I agree” or “I disagree.”
- ❖ Restating what someone has said (*unless there is a direct purpose in doing so*).
- ❖ Disrespectfully disagreeing.
- ❖ Pat answers that are not thought-provoking.

Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others’ thinking:

- ❖ What would happen if...
- ❖ Other times it may be helpful to...
- ❖ It is my understanding...what is your experience with this?
- ❖ You might approach this from...
- ❖ Is it possible that...
- ❖ Would you consider...
- ❖ Maybe...
- ❖ Possibly...
- ❖ Sometimes...
- ❖ I'm wondering if...
- ❖ Do you think...

Have fun!

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class!

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Theology of Community (35% of the final grade)

Note: A key part of this assignment is to read all of the course textbooks.

For this assignment, develop a biblically-based theology of Christian community based on Scripture, all of the course texts and at least five other sources. What is Christian community? Why is it important?

What does it look like in the life of a local church? How does community fit with other key dimensions of church life such as discipleship, worship and outreach? Your theology of community forms an important framework for understanding how small groups can contribute to the building of community within a church. In your paper, devote special attention to the role of small groups in helping to build biblical community.

Maximum Length: 10 pages

Due Date: February 15

Before you submit your paper, make sure that you have included all of the following:

- ☒ A biblically-based definition of Christian community
- ☒ A defense for why biblical community is important
- ☒ A description of biblical community within the context of a local church
- ☒ The place of biblical community within the larger ministry of the church
- ☒ The role of small groups in building biblical community
- ☒ A rigorous integration of Scripture (minimum of 20 meaningful and explicit interactions with Scripture)
- ☒ Integration of ideas from all of the textbooks
- ☒ Integration of ideas from at least five additional sources on biblical community

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Small Group Participation (10% of the final grade)

What would a course on small group ministry be without participation in a small group? For this assignment, you will participate in at least three small group meetings (with at least three people in attendance at each meeting). For at least one of the meetings, you should be the one who leads/facilitates the discussion. These could be Bible studies, accountability group sessions, Alpha table group discussions, Freedom Session meetings, etc. After each session, take up to one page to journal your thoughts about the meeting. Using Scripture and the course texts as lenses for viewing the experience, answer the following questions (and others that you think would be more helpful):

1. How well did the group provide a sense of community during this session?
2. What worked well during this session?
3. What would you suggest to improve the functioning of this small group based on what you observed during this meeting?
4. Other questions

Maximum Length: 3 pages

Due Date: February 29

Submission Checklist

- ☒ Three one-page journal entries that answer the questions posed above
- ☒ Meaningful integration of ideas from the course resources and other sources
- ☒ Reflective integration of relevant Scriptures

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Small Group Ministry Assessment (35% of the final grade)

Now, that you are an expert on small group ministry 😊, this assignment will capitalize on your wisdom by giving you an opportunity to assess your church's small group ministry. This assignment has three parts:

Part 1 – Identifying Small Group Ministry Health Indicators (3 pages)

From the course instructional content, course readings, your theology of community paper, and other sources, come up with approximately 10 important indicators of the health of a small group ministry (e.g. a clear and compelling vision, leadership training). Provide a short rationale for and description of each health indicator (make sure these descriptions are grounded in the sources mentioned at the start of this paragraph).

Part 2 – Assessing the Health of the Small Group Ministry in Your Church (5 pages)

For this part, design and implement a process for evaluating the small group ministry in your church in the 10 areas you identified in part one. I would suggest using surveys, interviews, or a small group discussion for your assessment. Please include three elements in this section:

- A description of the assessment process (including the final version of your survey or list of interview/discussion questions as an appendix) – 1 page plus survey or interview questions
- A summary of the assessment results – 2 pages
- A discussion of how your church's small group ministry measures up to the health indicators you identified in part one. Which areas are commendable? Which areas need further attention? – 2 pages

Note: If your church does not have a small group ministry, part two would involve gathering information about whether people in your church believe that small groups are important and what they would want to see in a small group ministry.

Part 3 – Small Group Ministry Strategic Plan (2 pages)

Based on your assessment in part two, design a strategic plan in collaboration with key stakeholders in the small group ministry (e.g. small group leaders) for strengthening your church's small group ministry. The plan should have at least three major objectives and three SMART (specific, measurable, attainable,

relevant, time-bound) action steps for each objective. Include a short description about how you collaborated with the key stakeholders to design the plan.

Maximum Length: 10 pages

Due Date: February 29

Submission Checklist:

- ☒ List of approximately 10 important health indicators for small group ministries along with a rationale for and description of each one that is well-grounded in Scripture, the course resources and other sources (3 pages)
- ☒ Small group ministry assessment, which includes a description of the assessment process (1 page), survey or list of interview questions (as an appendix), a summary of the assessment results (2 pages), and a discussion of how your small group ministry measures up to the 10 health indicators (2 pages)
- ☒ A plan for strengthening your small group ministry that includes three objectives and three SMART action steps for each objective (2 pages)

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Course Evaluation

Because your feedback is very important to me (I will often change future offerings of a course based on the feedback I receive from students), I have made the course evaluation a required part of the course. You will find the course evaluation under the Week 8 tab in Moodle. Once you have completed it, you will be able to submit your final assignment.

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Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant

				examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision or references and resources not taken fully into account or examples are basic or not completely convincing or barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Note: This grading rubric is an adaptation of the one used in the MA in Leadership and MA in Educational Leadership programs at TWU.

Assignment Assessment

When I assess written assignments and presentations, I tend to look for the following:

- Appropriateness – The content matches the requirements of the assignments.
- Substantiveness – The content reveals deeper level thinking. This may take the form of critiquing existing ideas and proposing new ones. It may involve applying ideas from the readings and class discussions in deeply personal ways. It could also include a novel integration of ideas from various sources. As you think about substantiveness, I would also ask you to go beyond “left brain” thinking that focuses on systematic and logical thinking. Add “right brain” analysis that views concepts in intuitive and more holistic ways. This may involve viewing assignment topics from creative vantage points by using word pictures, analogies, metaphors, pictures, diagrams, drama, poetry, music, and other creative devices that can often enrich conceptual meaning and make it more personal. In order to get an A on an assignment, **you really need to present your ideas in an integrative and creative way.** Go beyond the stated expectations of an assignment (not in terms of length ☺). Surprise me with a novel combination and/or expression of ideas.
- Coherence – The content flows in a consistent and meaningful way.

- Engaging – The writing style does not distract from the content (e.g. grammatical mistakes), but rather engages the reader's attention.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to me by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Academic Director's Office.

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Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called "I forgot my password." When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University's campus closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University's website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <http://www.twu.ca/conditions> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at 11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (see the tutorial at <http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to "clean up" most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in EndNote the available formatting styles are those of

Turabian Bibliography, 8th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 6th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats –Bibliography and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Bibliography format, not Reference List. The university no longer subscribes to RefWorks.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian").

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the "student" side. CanIL students can locate this on the CanIL intranet, under the "student" side.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an important aspect of improving teaching outcomes and for students and faculty professional development. Therefore, completion of course evaluations are considered a course expectation. Professors will schedule time to fill out the online course evaluation (20-30 minutes) during their last scheduled class of the semester, for students to complete on their personal laptop or a collegium computer. Students who are absent or otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation in the last class, will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar). Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. Excellent resources describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke:

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)
<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.

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