

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	BUILDING THE CHURCH THROUGH SMALL GROUPS PAST 0644 / SPIR 0644
Date and Time	JANUARY 4 – 8 MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9:00AM – 4:00PM
Instructor	DR. W. DEAN BURSEY, EdD & DR. URIAH POND, EdD Email: dbursey@tyndale.ca & upond@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed beginning at 9:00am each day. In addition to varied instructional activities, each day will include activities reflecting a small group experience.
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the basic principles for building and understanding the dynamics and problems of small groups. Specific attention will focus on leadership.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Examine the importance of small groups and of small group leaders to building community within the congregation, including how small groups align with one’s philosophy of ministry, in a reflective paper.

2. Assess the role of small groups and small group leaders on the following, through in-class discussions and reflection:
 - Biblical literacy,
 - Spiritual formation
 - Pastoral care, and
 - Integration of diverse ministries within a congregation
3. Identify and critique the creation and use of small groups, and the development of lay leadership in the local congregation, through readings and discussion.
4. Co-author one of the following:
 - An implementation plan for small groups within a congregation, including curriculum
 - A handbook for training small group leaders.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Bennett, Diana C. *Renewing your Church through Healthy Small Groups*. Lexington: LTI Publications, 2016.

Donahue, Bill and Russ Robinson. *Building a Life-Changing Small Group Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

Webb, Heather. *Small Group Leadership as Spiritual Direction: Practical Ways to Blend an Ancient Art into your Contemporary Community*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Book Review: 30%

Read the three required textbooks, and provide a one-page critique of each, focusing particularly on one critical issue as it relates to small groups. This assignment is related to Outcome #3.

Due: February 12, 2021

2. Reflective Paper: 20%

Write a 3-page paper on your philosophy of ministry and how small groups fit within your philosophy. This assignment is related to Outcome #1.

Due: February 26, 2021

3. Major Project: 50%

With a classmate, complete **one** of the following projects, reflecting careful thinking and the scholarly literature you have examined. Your project may be customized to a particular church context (such as an author's congregation), and written in such manner that it could be implemented within that context without further development. You are encouraged to be creative in the design and presentation of your project report. This assignment is related to Outcome #4.

- a. An implementation plan for small groups within a congregation, which includes:
 - Description of the congregation, e.g. size, demographic, urban vs. rural, etc.
 - Purpose of small group ministry within the congregation
 - Implementation strategy, including leader training, group formation, coaching and support, facilities, integration across the congregation, etc.
 - Curriculum, including the overall programmatic curriculum and samples of specific group curricula.
- b. A handbook for small group leaders, which includes:
 - Biblical and theological basis for small groups
 - The role of the small group leader as teacher, pastor, and spiritual director
 - Tools and skills to equip the leader in fulfilling his/her role as teacher, pastor, and spiritual director
 - Tools and skills for facilitating small group meetings

- The small group leader’s role in building community within the congregation.

Due: March 05, 2021

E. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Required Reading and Book Review	30 %
Reflective Paper	20 %
Major Project	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

H. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

The tentative course schedule is provided below. However, adjustments may be made to accommodate in-class discussions and activities.

Day 1

- Purpose of small groups, including their role in discipleship through Christian education, pastoral care, and building community
- Design and administration of a small group ministry within a congregation

Day 2

- Curriculum for small group ministry, including worship, prayer, teaching, pastoral care, and service

Day 3

- The nature of groups, including life-cycle, group dynamics, etc.
- Discipleship and evangelism through small groups

Day 4

- Facilitating small group meetings, including conflict resolution

Day 5

- Small group leader training
- Coaching

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Arnold, Jeffrey. *The Big Book on Small Groups*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. New York: HarperCollins, 1978.

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

Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

Donahue, Bill and Greg Bowman. *Coaching Life-Changing Small Group Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2012.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1991.

Gladen, Steve. *Leading Small Groups with Purpose: Everything You Need to Lead a Healthy Group*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012.

George, Carl F. *Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership*. Mansfield: Kingdom Publishing, 1997.

Illeris, Knud. *How We Learn: Learning and Non-learning in School and Beyond*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2017.

Oliver, Eddie, *Inspiring Connection: Small Groups where Everyone Matters*. Life-Giving Conversations Press, 2019.

Search, Bill. *The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders*. Carol Stream: Christianity Today, 2017.

Stone, Douglas, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. Toronto: Viking, 1999.

Webb, Heather. *Small Group Leadership as Spiritual Direction: Practical Ways to Blend an Ancient Art into your Contemporary Community*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

White, Allen. *Leading Healthy Groups: A Guide for Small Group Leaders*. Allen White Consulting, Inc, 2018.