



# TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

## Course Syllabus

**MISS 0782**

**GOSPEL, CHURCH AND CULTURE:  
PREPARING MISSIONAL LEADERS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Winter 2014**

February 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday 6:30pm- 9:30pm),  
February 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> (Friday/Saturday 8:30am-4:30pm)  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday 6:30pm- 9:30pm),  
March 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> (Friday/Saturday 8:30am- 4:30pm)

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To access your course material, please go to <http://mytyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Preparing missional leaders requires careful examination of the ideologies and cultural milieu of contemporary society. This course examines the main features of postmodern culture, the meaning of faithfulness to the gospel, the good news of God's salvation and the nature and mission of the Church. The Church's witness and service to the world is studied not as one of the functions of the church but as its essential nature. Missional leadership takes seriously the calling of all God's people to minister in every sphere of life as faithful witnesses to the gospel of salvation.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will gain a deeper understanding of the Gospel, develop a capacity for appreciating, evaluating and critiquing major currents of our culture, and be able to

integrate these insights into ministry. More specifically, at the end of the course, student should be able to:

- understand the uniqueness of culture as a context for ministry.
- develop a theological understanding of Gospel, Kingdom and Church that implicates mission and ministry.
- develop and understanding of the uniqueness of Canadian Culture as a context for mission.
- challenge the construct of our own cultures and reflect on how they implicate our ideas of ministry and mission.
- allow participants to reflect theologically, missiologically and strategically.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS (LISTED IN ORDER OF ASSIGNED READING)

Hasting, Ross. *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West [Paperback]*, InterVarsity Press, . 2012

Nelson, Gary. *Borderland Church: A Congregation's Introduction to Missional Living*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2009.

#### B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Pre-Class Reflection Paper:** Due on Thursday February 6th; 20% of final grade.

Write a 2 page personal reflection paper on the attached 3 articles focusing on the implications for the mission of the church in the Canadian Context. What impact and relevance do these reflections point toward? What do you disagree with? Do **not** merely summarize the articles– interact creatively with it.

2. **Involvement:** 10% of final grade.

Attendance in class, participation in class/small group discussions and completion of assigned readings is expected. Because this is an intensive course over two weekends class attendance is required and missing any portion of the class is non-negotiable. (Student participation will be graded on a scale of 1 to 4: 1 (or D): present, not disruptive; 2 (or C): responds when called on but does not offer much; infrequent involvement; adequate preparation, but no evidence of interpretation of analysis; 3 (or B): offers straightforward information; contributes moderately when called upon; 4 (or A) good preparation, offers interpretation and analysis, contributes well to discussion in on-going fashion.)

- 3. Congregational and Community Analysis Presentation:** Due on Thursday March 6th, 30% of final grade.

Develop a presentation of 7 minutes outlining a cultural and demographic analysis of your church and the community that it is situated in. A standard format is provided to guide you (see page 11).

- 4. Final Assignment:** Due on April 1<sup>st</sup> ; 40% of final grade.

Choose one of the following:

- **Reflection Paper** linking biblical and theological ecclesiology with an effective methodology, articulate a biblically based mission of the church and illustrate your conclusions using a visual model for ministry that takes into account the position of the church in today's culture (10-12 pages).
- **Create a Video/Flash Media Presentation of the gospel**  
Create two media presentations which visually present the engagement of gospel and culture through the missional church. This presentation should show an amount of creativity which portrays sensitivity and understanding of the challenges of communication to a secular culture with little if any "Christian Memory."  
Length: 3-5 minutes each

### **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

More specific guidance about these written assignments will be provided in class.

Strict adherence to the page limits and due dates is required. Anything over the page limit doesn't get marked and anything late is automatically docked for every day late. (See Seminary policy attached.)

Use standard margins, double-spaced, typed, 12 point type.

Use gender-inclusive language in your papers. For example, use "We are made in the image of God" rather than "Men are made in the image of God."

#### **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 College & Seminary takes

seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should 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. The Academic Calendar is posted at [www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar](http://www.tyndale.ca/seminary/calendar).

#### D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

Pre-Class Reflection Paper	20%
Involvement	10%
Congregational and Community Analysis Presentation	30%
Final Assignment	40%
Total Grade	100%

#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT, AND REQUIRED READINGS

**Pre-Course Work:** complete the Pre-Class Reflection Paper.

This should be completed ***before the first evening of class*** (February 6th 2013).

Read the articles attached and complete the Pre-Class Reflection Paper.

**First Weekend of Classes** (February 6th evening, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> all day)

**Reading:** Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West*. InterVarsity Press, 2012.

Topics to be discussed:

- Challenging the ways we think and do church?
- Understanding the Culture at work in all of us?
- Crossing Over: the church living in the borderlands
- Canada and its Present Cultural Crossover
- What is Gospel? Leaning into the Culture with Good News

**Second Weekend** (March 6th evening, March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> all day)

**Reading:** Gary Nelson, *Borderland Church: A Congregation's Introduction to Missional Living*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 2009; assigned articles.

Topics to be discussed

- Presentations of Context and Challenge; NOTE: These presentation assignments will be presented on the evening of March 4<sup>th</sup>. (See below for the parameters of the assignment)
- The Nature and Mission of the Church
- Context and Neighbourhood as the focus of Mission
- Implementing a Journey toward *Missio Dei*
- The Reality of Global Discipleship

## **Congregational and Community Analysis**

**Presentation Date- March 6th, (evening class)**

1. You have 5-8 minutes. Be precise. It is hard work to be brief and focused. Work at it.
2. Give us a glimpse of your community? Where is it located? What are the cultural, sociological and economic themes that shape this community? What are the demographics? What issues does the community feel are paramount to their community life?
3. How does the community mirror the church or does it? What is the demographic of the church? How does it view the community? What methods are used to engage the community in meaningful ministry and dialogue?
4. What is the operative image used by the church to portray the community around them and those scattered communities of workplace and relationships that their people live in?
5. What things that you have learned in this analysis keep you awake at night with excitement? With fear?

## **How Canada and U.S. diverged on religion**

<http://metronews.ca/news/canada/663691/how-canada-and-u-s-diverged-on-religion/>

WASHINGTON – Canada and the United States are not just two of the world’s closest neighbours in terms of commerce, trade and culture, but the former British colonies also shared many of the same fundamental beliefs and ideals as they forged their respective nations.

How, then, did religion come to play such a significant and enduring role in public policy in the United States compared to its neighbour to the north?

Just over 67 per cent of those who participated in the 2011 National Household Survey — Statistics Canada’s voluntary replacement for the cancelled mandatory long-form census — reported being “affiliated with a Christian religion,” the agency reported Wednesday.

But among new Canadian immigrants, the number of Christians has dropped to 47.5 per cent from 78 per cent in 1971, while nearly one-quarter of the Canadian population reported having no religious affiliation at all, compared with 16 per cent in 2001.

In the U.S., meanwhile, the vast majority of Americans still consider themselves religious — many of them devoutly so.

A recent Gallup survey found that throughout the U.S. in 2012, 40 per cent of Americans considered themselves to be “very religious.” Twenty-nine per cent described themselves as moderately religious, while 31 per cent said they were not religious.

Because Canadians tend to be more socially liberal than their southern neighbours, organized religion pays a greater price for those perceptions in Canada than in the U.S., experts say.

South of the border, by way of contrast, abortion — to name just one pet cause of the religious right — remains a hot-button issue as a host of state legislatures pass increasingly restrictive anti-abortion laws. Any prospect of that debate being reopened in Canada has been snuffed out by Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

There are myriad reasons for the divergent religious makeup of the U.S. and Canada, academics say.

They run the gamut from demographic and immigration trends to the religious beliefs of the founding fathers of both nations and each country’s response to the profound social and cultural shifts of the 1960s.

African-Americans, making up 12 per cent of the U.S. population, are avid churchgoers. A 2009 Pew Research study found they surpass other Americans on a host of faith fronts, including praying more often and attending church more frequently.

Hispanics, the fastest growing demographic in the country and now more numerous than African-Americans at 15 per cent of the population, are also more religious than most Americans, although they're growing less so.

And unlike Canada, there remains a large swath of the United States — the South — that is staunchly religious as well as politically powerful. Only pockets of similarly devout believers are scattered throughout Canada, making it harder for them to shape public policy.

The Gallup study found that eight out of 10 of the most religious states in the union are in the South, with Alabama and Mississippi in the Top 3. Utah, with its substantial Mormon population, is No. 2.

Southerners evidently still agree with the founding fathers of the United States, who not only enshrined religious freedom in the Constitution, but also, critically, protected the public exercising of religion.

“Religion has always had a significant role in American public policy, right from Day 1,” said Thomas Farr, former director of the U.S. State Department’s religious freedom office.

The U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment was “the first major sign of the religious nature of our founders and the nature of the country,” said Farr, who’s now the director of the Religious Freedom Project at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs in Washington.

“We wanted to protect the exercise of religion; not just religious beliefs, but the actual exercise of religion. Why? It was because they wanted it in public policy. Exercise is an active thing. They intended it to be more than just freedom of religion, they wanted people to be actively religious. That’s why they wanted it protected and accommodated.”

That wasn’t the case in Canada, where the fathers of Confederation had to gingerly negotiate the often bitter religious animosities between the “two solitudes” — Protestant English Canada and Catholic French Canada. There was little appetite to allow religion to play a major role in determining public policy, no matter the personal religiosity of the Canadian founders.

“There was never the same impulse in Canada, understandably,” Farr said.

Stuart Macdonald, a professor of church and society at Knox College at the University of Toronto, agreed.

“In Canada, you had to make peace between Catholics and Protestants,” he said.

But Macdonald disputes the notion that Canada and the U.S. have always been vastly different in terms of religion and its impact on public policy, arguing the contrast is relatively recent and only truly took hold in the 1970s.

He points to a surprising figure as someone who galvanized the religious right at a time when Canada began to become secular — former U.S. president Jimmy Carter.

“In Canada, we were very close to the U.S. in terms of religion well into the early 1960s, and even after that our trends were very similar, so this is an awfully recent phenomenon,” he said.

After the sexual and civil rights revolutions of the 1960s, citizens of both countries changed in terms of their religiosity, Macdonald said — but then came Carter, whose election in 1976 marked a milestone for evangelical Christians.

“There was this major culture shift, but then there was a rebound of religion in the United States around the time of the Carter presidency,” he said.

“He ran as an evangelical Christian and he put religion right back in the spotlight in the U.S., whereas in Canada, Trudeau remained quiet about religion, even though he was personally religious.”

The swiftness of the change in religious attitudes in Canada is paid short shrift, Macdonald adds, and doesn’t necessarily suggest that the new normal will be a permanent state of affairs.

“In 1967, centennial year celebrations began with an all-Christian worship service, which we can’t even imagine now,” Macdonald said. “The Jewish representative wasn’t even allowed to read anything. And that wasn’t a very long time ago.”

And does religion truly play less of a role in public policy in Canada than it does in the United States?

Don Hutchinson of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada isn’t so sure.

There’s a long tradition in Canada of co-operation between the church and state in areas like education, health care and social welfare, he points out.

Hutchinson, the director of the organization's Centre for Faith and Public Life, says Canada's religious groups are more careful — indeed, more Canadian — about the language they use while attempting to influence public policy.

"In the U.S., there's still an openness to quoting the Bible as a stand-alone, reliable source as the position being taken on some issues," he said.

"In our culture, we have come to the conclusion that the language of public policy development is a language that we have to learn how to communicate .... In Canada, religious organizations have effectively engaged in public policy by identifying the principles we have found in our religious beliefs, assessing them and proposing sound public policy based on these beliefs by using a common language."

It's not that Canadian religious organizations are more clever than those in the U.S., he added with a laugh.

"We have different cultures, so we are politically attuned to communicating in our unique, polite Canadian environment."

By Lee-Anne Goodman The Canadian Press

### **Religious Divide Between U.S. & Canada**

<http://atheism.about.com/b/2009/04/05/religious-divide-between-us-canada.htm>

There are, obviously, a lot of differences between the United States and Canada and one of the biggest is religion. For so many Americans, religion is treated as a necessary part of public and political life; not so for Canadians. Americans could probably learn a lot from Canada about how to reinforce secular institutions and promote more secular attitudes in society.

According to Canadian pollster Michael Adams, the divide between America and Canada is large and growing larger, with fewer and fewer Canadians expressing interest in defining their society along religious lines:

...Adams used a recent Canada-U.S. poll to demonstrate the divide. The poll shows 58 per cent of Americans saying that it is necessary to believe in God in order to be a moral person, while only 30 per cent of Canadians agree to this.

And while 45 per cent of Americans now say they go to church every week, only 20 per cent (down from 85 per cent in the 1950s) of Canadians can say the same thing.

"In the United States, I guess you can say that there is one category of person who cannot be elected, and that's an atheist. And in Canada, there's a category of person who can't be elected and of course that is a person who is an ostentatious religious person," said Adams. ... He noted that former Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day

suffered at the polls in the 2000 federal election after it was revealed that he questioned evolution because of his Christian fundamentalist beliefs.

As well, he showed that 69 per cent of Canadians believe in heaven but only about 43 per cent believe in hell and the devil. Meanwhile, in the U.S., 81 per cent believe in heaven and 70 per cent in hell and the devil.

Source: Couchiching

In America, a fundamentalist Christian who reveals that they question evolution would probably get more votes in an election, not fewer and certainly wouldn't lose because of that. I don't think that it's coincidence that there is also less support in Canada for traditionally patriarchal attitudes:

Adams also told the conference that while Canadians and Americans identify with people who put their family above everything else, there is a growing gap when it comes to believing that the father of the family must be master of his own house.

While the percentage has grown from 42 per cent to 49 per cent in the U.S. between 1992 and 2000 in support of a father-first household, the number has gone the other way in Canada, from 26 per cent to 18 per cent during the same period. ...

The pollster ended his presentation with a chart comparing the results of polls performed on patriarchy, church attendance and gun ownership. For instance, he showed polling results that 49 per cent of Americans saying they own a gun compared with only 22 per cent of the residents north of the Canada-U.S. border saying the same thing. "I have a picture of Sunday morning (in the U.S.), dad getting up, pulling out his .357 Magnum, saying OK kids we're going to church," he said.

Canada, it seems, has gone much farther in terms of fostering a secular attitude among its citizens. Is it possible that Canada has improved while America has declined because Canadians are reacting to America's bad example? I also wonder to what extent these developments are a natural evolution of Canadian society and to what extent it's due to active leadership from Canada's political, social, and cultural leaders. Such information would be helpful in making a difference in America, don't you think?

American institutions may be generally secular, but a great many people don't entirely respect that and would even like to reverse the trend that has been going in the secular direction for the past couple of centuries. Although few are willing to use the term, many Christians actively support the introduction of increasingly theocratic elements to American society. This is a danger for everyone, especially if people believe that these theocratic elements are at all compatible with genuine liberty or democracy.

**Canadians and Americans are more similar than assumed**

<http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2011/07/07/canadians-and-americans-are-more-similar-than-assumed/>

By Basil Waugh

For many Canadians, comparing Canada and the U.S. is a national pastime, right up there with hockey and complaining about the weather.

But in a month with Canada Day and the Fourth of July, an expert on North American culture has news for anyone who takes our cultural stereotypes at face value. According to Ed Grabb, an award-winning author, teacher and researcher, Canadians and Americans are more similar than most people assume.

“Canadians and Americans are not identical, but they are much more alike than people think,” says Grabb, a professor and senior scholar in UBC’s Dept. of Sociology. “This is especially true if we look at their general populations, rather than each country’s elites, and especially if we focus on English Canada and the U.S. North.”

In his research, Grabb uses a variety of approaches to study Canadians and Americans, including analyzing the World Values Survey, the most comprehensive source for comparing attitudes and behaviours in countries around the world. Much of his work is summarized in the 2010 book *Regions Apart*.

“Research offers little evidence to support many of the stereotypes about cultural differences,” says Grabb, who is preparing a new course on Canadians and Americans for the upcoming academic year. “For most key measures, including attitudes about health care, religion, government, and individuality, we are surprisingly similar.”

Although people cite our different health care systems as proof of deeper differences, Grabb’s research shows that American support of national health insurance funded by tax dollars is actually quite close to that of Canadians. “This is an area where conservative politicians, right-wing media and lobby groups have succeeded in using misinformation and scare tactics to undermine the will of most Americans,” says Grabb, noting that the U.S. introduced social welfare programs before Canada during Roosevelt’s New Deal.

Grabb’s research also debunks the popular notion that the U.S. is a much more individualistic society that places greater value on personal freedoms. He finds that Canadians actually are similar to Americans on various measures of individualism and related values, including the acceptance of economic inequality if it is based on individual merit or effort.

Despite Americans’ reputation as fierce anti-government libertarians, Grabb’s research suggests that people in the U.S. exhibit more trust and respect towards their government and politicians than Canadians do.

While Canadians and Americans do differ on religion, Grabb’s findings suggest that the differences are shrinking as both societies become more secular. For example, in 1991, Americans were 16 per cent more likely than Canadians to go to religious services once a week or more, but by 2006 the difference had dropped to 11 per cent.

Faulty cultural stereotypes arise when people try to draw broad generalizations from specific personalities, such as George Bush Jr., Lady Gaga, or Don Cherry, Grabb says.

“The cultural elites of a nation – politicians, thinkers, artists, celebrities, athletes – often

stand out because they represent the extremes of a society,” he says. “But that also makes them poor stand-ins for the Average Joe on the street.”

Grabb says Canada and the U.S. are better understood as four distinct regional societies: the politically and culturally left-liberal Quebec, the conservative U.S. South, English Canada and the U.S. North. According to his research, each area is relatively distinct on a variety of topics, including levels of government spending and taxation, unionization rates, support for gay rights and interracial marriage, beliefs about the death penalty and criminal justice, and support for the military.

“English Canada and the U.S. North are very similar in their attitudes and behaviours,” says Grabb, who also studies social structures, political sociology, and inequality. “But then you have Quebec pulling the rest of Canada to the left and the South pulling the rest of the U.S. to the right. Both Quebec and the South are crucial for winning national elections. So, whenever we compare our two countries, it is important to account for these internal differences.”

According to Grabb, Canada and the U.S. go through regular periods of divergence and convergence on issues, depending on the historical period and the issue being considered. Examples include: the abolition of slavery (achieved in Canada first), participation in both World Wars (Canada entered first), the development of national social welfare policies (achieved in the U.S. first), and military involvement in Iraq (Canada joined the U.S. in the first war, but not the second).

Grabb says his fascination with Canadian-American relations began during his childhood in the 1960s, growing up in the small town of Chatham, Ontario, an hour’s drive from Detroit. “Like many Canadians, my early sense of the world was greatly influenced by American culture, music, sports, movies, television and radio,” he says. “The U.S. seemed so much more exciting than what was happening in my sleepy little town. So for the last 30 years, I have been working to advance our understanding of what makes these two countries tick.”