

Houston Graduate School of Theology equips women and men to be ministers and messengers of God's mission of reconciliation through academic excellence, personal transformation, and leadership development

Course Description:

A study of characteristics of postmodern contexts and spiritual leadership within those contexts. The conversation between postmodern culture and Christian faith will be examined with a view to exploring new ways of living and sharing the text to reach postmodern contexts with the gospel.

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: (MAML 1, MAML 2, and MAML 3)

1. Explain key components of the postmodern context. (Assignments one, two, three, four, five, and six)
2. Explain the unique qualities of the millennial generation. (Assignment six)
3. Explain and apply key principles of leadership. (The final paper)
4. Discuss theology from a modern viewpoint and the resulting effects on a postmodern context. (The final paper)
5. Explain the key transitions of post-Christendom. (Assignment one)
6. Implement a missional strategy for impacting a postmodern and post-Christendom context. (The final paper)
7. Establish a leadership strategy appropriate for the postmodern context. (The final paper)

Required Texts:

Bass, Diana Butler. *Christianity after Religion*. New York: HarperOne, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-06-200373-7

Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. ISBN: 978-0-8028-0864-6

McLaren, Brian D. *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*. New York: Convergent Books, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-60142-791-5

Murray, Stuart. *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*. London: Paternoster Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-1-84227-261-9 or E book ISBN: 978-1-78078-400-7

Tickle, Phyllis. *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-8010-1313-3

Recommended Text:

Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. ISBN: 978-0-664-25769-9

Course Requirements:

1. Participation in class conversations monthly. **5% of the final grade.**
2. Write a **three- to four-page response paper** to the book *Post-Christendom* by Stuart Murray. With what did you resonate in the book? With what did you struggle? What stirred you? What are the significant things to take away from the book for you? This paper is due **January 30** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**
3. Complete a **four- to six-page expanded outline** of the book *A Primer on Postmodernism* by Stanley Grenz. The expanded outline should include key headings, key ideas/concepts, key individuals discussed, and significant pieces of learning. Students should format the paper so that each of these four components is easily identifiable. This paper is due **February 13** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**
4. Write a **four-page formal book review** of the book *The Great Emergence* by Phyllis Tickle. The book review is due on **February 27** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**

Book reviews should include cover page, bibliographic entry, author's purpose, summary of the contents, critical evaluation, and application section. Each part of the paper should be identified with a section heading. Book reviews should be four pages, not including the cover page. Third person writing should be used throughout. Special attention should be given to the critical evaluation and application sections. Think about the content of the book. Make certain that the professor has no doubt that you have read the book and absorbed the content. No footnotes are needed unless a source other than the book being reviewed is quoted.

5. Write a **three- to four-page response paper** to the book *Christianity after Religion* by Diana Butler Bass. With what did you resonate? With what did you struggle? What stirred you? What are the significant things to take away from the book for you? This paper is due **March 6** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**
6. Students will **research the millennial generation** and will write a **four-page paper** summarizing his/her findings. **Due March 20**, this paper comprises **10% of the final grade.**
7. Write a **three- to four-page response paper** to the book *The Great Spiritual Migration*. With what did you resonate? With what did you struggle? What stirred you? What are the significant things to take away from the book for you? This paper is due **April 3** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**
8. Students will **interview a key leader** of a congregation affiliated with Convergence (www.convergenceus.org). The student will solicit answers to at least the following five questions. What is different about this church experience? How does this group make disciples? Why do you participate in this group? What is different about your theology and or philosophy of ministry here? Why are you affiliated with Convergence? Students will write a four- to six-page report of their experience and their interview. This report is due on **April 17** and comprises **10% of the final grade.**

9. A **final paper** will describe and apply learning from the course, as indicated in the outline below. The wise student will begin writing this **15-page paper** near the beginning of the semester, as soon as the initial section of class is complete, and will continue adding integrative learning as the semester proceeds. Prior to turning in the project, the wise student will spend a substantial amount of time editing the project in its entirety, adding general conclusions and overall learning as the paper draws to a close. Papers written in anything but Times New Roman, 12-point type, will not be graded. Please do not double-space. Use citations as needed and third person writing throughout.

- Title – begin two inches from the top of the page
- Introduction – a good introduction will begin without a “label” or subhead. The 1-2 paragraphs will delineate the direction the writer will take in the paper and will provide a synopsis of the paper’s parts.
- Part 1 – Discuss the key components of a postmodern mindset.
- Part 2 – Compare & contrast the forming of theology from a modern perspective and from a postmodern perspective.
- Part 3 – Discuss the key components of Post-Christendom.
- Part 4 – Develop & describe a leadership strategy for transitioning an existing congregation toward ministry in a postmodern context.
- Part 5 – Develop & describe a missional strategy for ministry to people within the postmodern/Post-Christendom context.
- Conclusion – a good conclusion will begin with a subhead and will recap in summary fashion the contents of the paper in order to draw a substantive conclusion.

The project should provide evidence of a semester of thinking, discovery, and integration. **Due May 1, this project will comprise 25% of the final grade.**

Class Meeting Schedule:

January 23, 2017 – from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. – In Dr. Shuman’s office – (Introduction to the course.)

February 27, 2017 – from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. – In Dr. Shuman’s office – (PowerPoint presentations one and two.)

March 27, 2017 – from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. – In Dr. Shuman’s office (PowerPoint presentations three and four.)

April 24, 2017 – from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. – In Dr. Shuman’s office (PowerPoint presentations five, six and seven.)

Student Workload Expectations

Class time – 4 hours

Reading – 59 hours

Assignments – 60 hours

TOTAL = 123 hours

Grading Scale

A	96-100	C+	84-85
A-	94-95	C	80-83

B+	92-93	C-	78-79
B	88-91	D	70-77
B-	86-87	F	69 or below

VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and regular submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time. **Due to the nature of the directed study course, students are required to attend all on-campus sessions. One absence will result in a significant grade reduction and more than one absence may result in failure of the course.**
- B. Work is expected on the due date. Late papers will receive no less than a one-letter grade reduction.
- C. Turnitin.com
 - 1. All written assignments are subject to required submission to www.turnitin.com to check for originality and style. The assignments that are required for submission will be described in the syllabus.
 - 2. Students will create an account at www.turnitin.com. After doing so, the student will join the course page with the code and password supplied by the instructor. A list of assignments and due dates will be available on the course page.
 - 3. Students will submit assignments by the due date and time and will be required to submit the assignments in a hard copy format as well.
- D. *Please review the Academic Catalog for requirements regarding Incompletes and Plagiarism issues. For more information on Library Services, please download the Library Handbook from the HGST website.*

VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

All writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th Edition. This includes matters of style and format. The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation when more than one resource is cited. The student must number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers appear in the upper right hand corner, except on pages with major headings (titles). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings (titles) require a two-inch top margin.

All students shall utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The

instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly for academic-style assignments. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- Avoid first- or second-person references, both singular and plural (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.
- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e., The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck!
- Grammar check works as well!
- All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

The professor reserves the right to adjust classroom topics as the course develops.