

Theory and Theology of Learning...CHM 601
ACTS Seminars
3 Credits
Spring 2009
(ONLINE)

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Course Description:

The Church is never less than a school, but also much more than a school. It remains the most unique learning community in the world. Everything that occurs within her vision is about learning: whether worship, teaching, mentoring or serving. The former Catholic Pope, John Paul II wrote, “catechesis is the whole of the efforts within the church to make disciples.” The very mission of the church is to “make disciples by *Teaching them to obey* all that I commanded you”. Therefore, this course asks a fundamental question, “What does Christian learning look like; and, how do people of all ages learn about God?”

CHM 601 reviews historic patterns, recent trends and theological assumptions of what has been sometimes called “Christian education”. In essence, how do people of all ages learn about God and their own spiritual journey? Although required for all students in the ACTS MACS (church ministries), CHM 601 is also highly recommended for others who will serve the broad educational needs of the local church.

Educational Goals:

The student shall:

1. Discern the ebbs and flows of learning theory and philosophy, with attention to the Western and Asian settings.
2. Reflect upon the goal of Christian learning and spiritual formation and their contours in Believers’ Church history.
3. Assess the inherent philosophical assumptions that undergird formal educational movements as well as non-formal learning events, especially within the Church.
4. Foster a passion for developing a biblically rooted theology of learning within the community of the local church and its agencies.
5. Begin to practice, within ministry, integrative implementation of the learning theory and theological principals.

Course textbooks :

Yount, William R. (2008) The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Nashville, B and H).

Palmer, Parker 1998. Courage to Teach (Jossey Bass).

Wilhoit, James 2008. Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books).

Course Pak. There will be other papers and articles distributed in class or online, during the semester. Timing for reading will be noted in class.

NOTE: Weekly chapters for reading will be assigned at the first class.

Recommended:

See class discussions here for further readings.

www.commongroundjournal.org

www.talbot.edu/ce20/

Course plan:

This foundational course for CHM also provides essential understandings of the local church ministry for all seminary students. In order to facilitate access to the course, we offer it online. While the details of the delivery will be laid out more clearly during the coming month or so, we do offer here an outline of the themes to be addressed. Depending upon enrolment and accessibility, we may meet either through Skype or in person at least once during the semester.

Course outline:

Weeks one and two-	Developing a philosophical template for learning theory and a biblical theology of learning: Hebrew/Israelite and Greek/Pauline as well as Early Church.
Weeks three and four-	Greek and Roman approaches to learning and schooling. Augustinian Approaches.
Week five-	Medieval, Reformation and early Catholic models of learning and Education- e.g., Luther, Calvin, Ignatius, Spener.
Weeks six and seven-	Current movements: The three circles of learning: formal, non-formal and informal Religious Education:-Thomas Groome, Developmentalists and spirituality: Kohlberg, Fowler, etc.
Weeks eight and nine-	Education in non-Western Cultures- Theological reflection: Paulo Friere, Asian models. How adults learn spiritually.
Week ten-	How children learn- “From Sunday School to Promiseland.” Theology of Children
Week eleven-	History and current trends of Christian Higher and Theological Education, Canadian Christian educators.
Week twelve	The local church: Less than a school, equal to a school or more than a school?
Week thirteen-	Toward a theology of learning in the contemporary church: Mentoring, growth of the non-formal, paradigm shifts in Christian education, etc.

Course assignments:

1. A mid-term, on line exam shall assess the student’s understanding of the various philosophies of education as developed in the notes and materials (20%). Date to be determined.
2. The student shall read the assigned texts and other readings as spelled out in course outlines given to the class:

- a. With regard to Yount, submit a ten page (double-spaced) critique of the text. Since this is an intense read of theories, the student will reflect upon three to five practical applications that these concepts could have on his/her understanding of the learning process. (20%).
 - b. The Wilhoit text also will require a five page (double-spaced) response outlining, from personal experience and observations, the current learning environment of one local church and its worship setting. To what extent does that worship setting reinforce the principles in the text? Focus upon one age group may add clarity
 - c. The Palmer text would also require a five to ten page summary of insights gleaned as you reflect upon your own teaching experience. How has the text reinforced your understanding of the teacher's role? How has this text ideally changed your approach to teaching?
3. The student shall read two articles of their choosing from the journal "Christian Education Journal" or from the online journal www.commongroundjournal.org. The two articles (each no more than three pages) shall relate to the broad subject of learning, either noting a particular age group or historic person in this subject. The actual paper shall summarize the article and be available for the other participants in the course to read and respond. The paper shall offer both a theological reflection and potential practical application of this writer's approach to learning in the local church (25%).
- a. Assessment of the assumptions
 - b. Implications for evangelical educational practice and theory.

NOTE: In lieu of this presentation, the student can also attend any related conference that meaningfully addresses the issue of how people learn, either in the church or the broader culture and provide a review of the presentations in light of the concepts discussed in the class.

4. The student shall submit to the professor a personal philosophy of learning that offers a foundation for future educational work within the church. The paper shall reflect an awareness of historical trends as noted by the class resources. The paper shall not exceed fifteen pages and shall address, among other issues:
- a. What is truth?
 - b. How is truth learned?
 - c. What is the nature of humanity and how does this affect learning?
 - d. What role does the church play in helping people to learn?
 - e. What role does God play in helping people to learn?

The paper shall also offer a one or two sentence definition of Christian education that emerges from the discussion of these critical issues. As well, the student may choose to limit the paper to one aspect of Christian education- e.g. youth, adult, new believer orientation, children, Christian higher education and so on. (35%).

Grading process:

75-80-	C
80-83-	B
84-87-	B+
88-91	A-
92-96	A
97-100	A+

CAMPUS CLOSURE POLICY

In the event of deteriorating conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate the decision to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKBD (600 AM), CKSR (104.9 FM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m. and an announcement will also be placed on the university's switchboard and bulletin board (email). The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. This allows for the beginning of Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Tuesday, Thursday classes and work in the afternoon. If classes or work are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the university's switchboard, email bulletin board or at the security hut after 3:00 p.m.

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

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 overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

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 RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) 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 <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 7th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

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") or <http://www.sourceaid.com/citationbuilder/>

CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

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

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. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/> Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. 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 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

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.

