Media and Technology in Parish Education

Course description

Increasingly, technology affords new opportunities for teaching and learning. This course uses theories from media education, as well as contemporary Christian theologies, to support the development of learning communities in faith settings that engage digital cultures. Students will explore a variety of social media, including blogging and social networking, and will prepare a final project that takes seriously the context in which they will be leading.

Class meets on June 7th, 5:30 to 9:30 pm and June 8th, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (with a lunch break from noon to 1 pm) in NW232; pre-meeting and post-meeting assignments are required.

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Required Texts

Elizabeth Drescher and Keith Anderson, *Click2Save: A Digital Ministry Bible* (Morehouse, 2012)

Mary Hess, *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

Howard Rheingold, *NetSmart: How To Thrive Online* (MIT Press, 2012)

John SeelyBrown and Douglas Thomas, *A New Culture of Learning* (CreateSpace, 2011)

Assignments

Complete the readings *prior to our class weekend* (in other words, by June 6th at 5:30 pm).

If you have not already done so, set up a Facebook account for yourself and begin a weblog (we recommend that you use wordpress.com if you are new to blogging). The Drescher/Anderson reading contains information on how to do this.

Prior to June 6th you need to post *at least one blog reflection on each required reading*. Email me if you have any questions or concerns about this assignment.

Return to the learning portfolio you began in EL1515 (which is a prerequisite for this class), and choose one or two learning goals which you intend to work on during this class. Write one blog entry early on that describes these goals and why you've chosen them (this would be a good initial post) and write an entry at the end of the course that evaluates your learning. If you prefer not to make your learning goals and assessment public, then you can submit those entries to me "offline," but should make sure to include them in your portfolio.

You will need to write at least ten posts in your blog (including the four on the required readings) to achieve a passing grade (see notes below for details). Your blogging on the readings should be completed by June 6th, and the rest of the entries by July 10th.

Set up a news reader and subscribe to all of your classmates' blogs. Read them, and comment on at least one entry in each of their blogs by June 6th, and then another entry in each blog by July 10th.

Review where you are with the educational leadership competencies (in other words, revisit the work you did in your portfolio in EL1515). Reassess your current standing, and make specific suggestions for how you might pursue any remaining objectives as you continue into pastoral leadership. You can include suggestions of courses, continuing education, mentoring opportunities, and so on. This review and reassessment will involve updating sections two, three and four of your portfolio.

Develop a final project that incorporates the ideas and practices explored in this course into something you can use to support learning in a specific context. Such a final project can take many shapes, and could incorporate a web site, a lesson plan, a retreat plan, a liturgy, and so on. Some ideas for projects can be found in the notes below.

Hand in your portfolio (either electronically or in hard copy) by July 10th. (You can refresh your memory about the various elements of the EL portfolio via my website: http://www2.luthersem.edu/mhess/web/Portfolio.html). Section one of your portfolio should include a link to your blog. If you would prefer to answer the Section Five questions after receiving your grade, simply note that when you hand in your portfolio (http://www2.luthersem.edu/mhess/web/Portfolio_Five.html).

Grading

I will use a rubric to evaluate your work, which is available online: the portfolio rubric is here (http://www2.luthersem.edu/mhess/portfoliorubric.pdf), and the final project rubric is here (http://www2.luthersem.edu/mhess/RubricforAssessingProject.pdf).

Absences

Given the short time span and compressed nature of the in-person element of this class, a single unexcused absence from the June weekend will bring your grade to a marginal. Missing more than half of a day will mean a fail.

Special needs

If you have any special learning needs that I should accommodate, please let me know as early as possible.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is any act that represents someone else's work as your own. It is an offense against academic honesty, and as such, subject to disciplinary action. Various steps may be taken in response, and these are detailed in both the student handbook and the catalog. If you have any questions at all about how to handle a particular resource (including digital resources such as pictures or music), please ask me. I'm happy to help you ensure that your work has academic integrity.

Blogging notes

A typical blog post is around 500 words, and contains at least one active link to something else on the web (eg. a biography of the author of the book you're reflecting upon, someone who's blogging in contrast to the book, etc.). Make sure that if you are blogging on one of the required readings that you include the title, author and publication date of the reading in your post. Excellent entries will demonstrate that you not only understand the reading, but have chosen to integrate it with your own experience and insight. (I'm happy to be in conversation with you if you would like more help with this assignment.)

Final projects

Here are some examples of projects you could complete for your final project. Use them to spark your imagination, not to constrain it. Please feel invited to talk with me about other ideas you have. Final projects are due on July 10, 2011, and should be made available in a format your colleagues can engage (that is, published to vimeo.com, youtube.com, your blog, or some other publicly accessible space). In other words, what you will put in your portfolio and what you will send to me via email is a URL, a link, to your project, not the actual project itself.

• Pick a representative example of some genre of popular culture and pay careful attention to how it constructs religious experience and/or theological meaning. You could analyze a soap opera, for instance, or a sporting event, a kid's cartoon episode, or one hour of talk radio, and so on. Use some of the frames of analysis we have explored and/or invent your own, but be sure to provide theological/conceptual grounding for your analysis, and be sure to include examples of the genre you are exploring.

• Choose one television commercial and develop a unit for an education experience around that text, using resources and frames of analysis that we have discussed in class.

• Develop a web site for your own community (however defined) that lays out a conceptual framework for engaging mass mediated popular culture, and provides a rich set of resources (this could be done via links to other existing web resources).

• Develop a lesson plan that incorporates media literacy tools and analysis into some other regular subject matter that you teach.

• Using a text from the Sunday lectionary, pick a current film or television show episode and use it to explore the themes raised by the biblical text in a sermon. Once you've done this, develop a "meta-analysis" for how to go about using popular culture in preaching.

• Research the statements issued by your community of faith (either nationally, or globally) on issues related to media literacy or other forms of media awareness, and assess them using the frames of analysis we've used in this class. What do you think of these statements?

• Develop an online learning resource for your community on some issue of current concern, try it out, and reflect on what you learned in the process.