EL4535: New Media in Faith Education
Fall 2014 / fully online at MyLutherNet
Mary Hess

September 2nd - December 10th

This course explores emerging media as environments in which people "create, share and believe." Particular attention is given to new cultures of learning, and digital storytelling as a constructive form of faith formation. Students explore the role of church leaders in supporting digital media literacy, participate in media production in faith contexts, and develop theological rationales for participating in emerging media spaces.

Course learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to define and support faith formation and religious education.

- Students will be able to articulate a vision for educational leadership in a community of faith or related setting.

- Students will have a basic grasp of the ways in which the dynamics of authority, authenticity and agency in community are shifting as digital tools become ubiquitous.

- Students will be able to articulate the basic principles of digital media literacy and explain how they function within the context of faith formation.

- Students will be able to use at least two digital tools to support the "create/share/belief" circle of faith formation.

- Students will be able to articulate a theological rationale for engaging – or discouraging – a community of faith's approach to digital media.

Sample connections to program learning outcomes in the new curriculum:

- MDIV: A(2) Students will recognize with urgency the Holy Spirit's new opportunities for mission here in ever more diverse North American contexts.

- MDIV: A(8) Students will seek out opportunities for encounters and shared projects with neighbors that surround their faith communities.

- MDIV: C(7) Students will learn ways to foster in the people they serve an ability to speak meaningfully about their faith.

- MDIV: D(7) Students will be familiar with ways to help people in their communities of faith speak about how their own callings—rooted in Baptism—are ways of loving God and their neighbors and about how those callings generate meaning in a post-Christian, multi-religious age.

If there are other specific program outcomes you wish to engage and which you believe fit into this class (especially MA degree program outcomes), please do not hesitate to be in conversation with me about how best to do so.

Required texts

[page numbers in brackets] {price as of June 2014 on amazon.com}

Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* (Jossey-Bass, 2001) [228p] {11.20}

Dorothy Bass, ed. *Practicing Our Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 2010) [304p] {15.80}

Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet if you [heart] Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation* (Morehouse Publishing, 2011) [190p] {14.96}

Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known* (HarperOne, 1993) [130p] {11.55}

Frank Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti* (Pilgrim Press, 2011) [212p] {21.60}

Total pages: 1064
Total price: 75.11

Recommended texts

Elizabeth Drescher and Keith Anderson, *Click2Save: Digital Ministry Bible* (Morehouse Publishing, 2012). [192p] {13.98} (This book is a great primer to social media for anyone who has no experience with facebook and other tools. It also holds very useful advice for pastoral leaders.)

John Roberto, *Faith Formation 2020* (Lifelong Faith Associates, 2012) [293p] {20.00} (This book can be read via its website, and we will be focusing on one particular chapter which will be available via e-reserve.)

Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations* (Penguin Press, 2008) [352p] {11.16} (We will be reading one chapter of this book in class, but the rest of it is pertinent and full of easy to read stories.)

Total additional pages: 837
Total additional price: 45.14

Additional useful texts (research bibliography)

Yochai Benkler, *The Penguin and the Leviathan* (Crown Business, 2011) [272p]

danah boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens* (Yale University Press, 2014) [296p]

Lynn Schofield Clark, *The Parent App: Understanding Families in the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2013) [320p]

Henry Jenkins, et. al., *Spreadable Media* (NYU Press, 2013) [352p]

Mary Hess, *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) [200p]

John McClure, *Mashup Religion* (Baylor University Press, 2011) [256p]

Jolyon Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) [348p]

Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, *Networked* (MIT Press, 2014) [376p]

Howard Rheingold, *NetSmart: How To Thrive Online* (MIT Press, 2012) [336p]

John SeelyBrown and Douglas Thomas, *A New Culture of Learning* (CreateSpace, 2011) [140p]

Course Schedule (please note: this is just a basic outline, primary assignments and links to resources live at the course site in MyLutherNet)

(1) September 2nd

Who are we? What is this course about? What is faith education? what is faith formation? What is religious education?

Initial faith bio (each student will share in their small group, and create a brief one via tackk.com to share with the rest of the class). (More details for each week are available at MyLutherNet under Weekly Assignments.)

(2) September 8th

How does the rapid change engendered by new media impact faith education? a first glance

Read: Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet if you [heart] Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation*

(3) September 15th

A deeper dive into knowing and faith

Read: Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*

(4) September 22nd

What does it mean to "give access" when we are increasingly diverse, multi-faith, and denominations are crumbling?

Skim: Roberto book (or Faith2020 website: http://www.faithformation2020.net/)

Draft essay due on definition of faith formation and vision for educational leadership

(5) September 29th

Storying people, storying God: part 1

Read: Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*

Begin writing your storyboard (instructions online)

(6) October 6th

Storying people, storying God: part 2

Read: Dorothy Bass, ed. *Practicing Our Faith*

Continue storyboard

October 13th (reading week)

(7) October 20th

Storying people, storying God: part 3

Read: Frank Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*

Continue storyboard

(8) October 27th

The "create, share, believe" circle

Read: Hess essays on e-reserve

Begin research for your learning unit

(9) November 3rd

Learning new tools for digital creativity

Continue research for learning unit

(10) November 10th

Justice, access and other difficult challenges

Continue research for learning unit

(11) November 17th

Overflow and extra issues which arise

Review initial definition of faith formation and vision for leadership

November 24th (Thanksgiving break)

(12) December 1st

Sharing final projects

(13) December 8th

Sharing final projects

Learning unit due

Assignments

There are several assignments which you will complete on your own, as evidence of your personal learning, and then there is work which you will do collaboratively in small groups.

Personal learning

10% (1) Definition of faith education/formation and vision for educational leadership (turned in first as a draft and then reviewed near the end of the semester) (1-2 pages) Due on September 22nd, and again on November 17th

30% (2) Learning unit for a specific context (must draw on the readings, your extended research, be creatively and pragmatically imagined, and be implemented using the template I'll share in class) (8-10 pages) Due on December 8th.

30% (3) Digital self introduction [who I am, why I care about faith formation, and what I think it looks like). This will be a very short digital piece – no more than 3 minutes long – which will introduce you as a person, explain why you care about faith formation, and share your vision for what faith formation is and can look like. This digital object will be "scaffolded" through three assignments – your first introduction, your definition/vision essay, and the storyboarding you do in your small groups. You may implement it using animoto, iMovie, or a similar tool. This assignment would be a good one to use in your overall degree portfolio.

Group learning

10% (1) Each small group will prepare two video prayer pieces to start our week's work together. These pieces will be done in your small group, using whatever tools your group finds most conducive (the easiest tool might be animoto.com, and I can give you a free educational license to make one that's longer than the 30 second videos available for free). These videos need to be available by Sunday evening at 9 pm of the week your prayer is scheduled.

20% (2) Ongoing small group work: each week there will be a question to discuss in your small group based on the week's topic and readings, and at certain points during the semester you will need to help each other with advice on your various projects. You must participate in each week's small group discussion in a credible way (not simply by throwing "verbal bouquets" of agreement to your colleagues).

Assessment strategy and criteria

I will be assessing essays, class participation, learning unit and digital projects using using rubrics available at MyLutherNet.

Instructional Methods

This course will proceed through a variety of experiences, weaving between work you do on your own (reading, watching my short video introductions to each week, preparing your own projects) and work you do with your colleagues (weekly discussion questions, working on preparing prayer for the class, offering feedback on each other's projects).

I have taken the following "course caveats" directly from the work of Dr. Stephen Brookfield:

> "As a student, I very much appreciate the chance to make informed decisions about the courses I take. I want to know who the educator is, what his or her assumptions are, and what he or she stands for before I make a commitment to spend my time, money, and energy attending the class. So let me tell you some things about me and how I work as an educator that will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether nor not you wish to be involved in this course.
>
> I have framed this course on the following assumptions:
>
> 1. That participating in discussion brings with it the following benefits:
>
> • It helps students explore a diversity of perspectives.
> • It increases students' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity.
> • It helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions.
> • It encourages attentive, respectful listening.
> • It develops new appreciation for continuing differences.
> • It increases intellectual agility.
> • It helps students become connected to a topic.
> • It shows respect for students' voices and experiences.
> • It helps students learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse.
> • It affirms students as cocreators of knowledge.
> • It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ideas and meaning.
> • It develops habits of collaborative learning.
> • It increases breadth and makes students more empathic.
> • It helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration.
> • It leads to transformation.
>
> 2. That students attending will have experiences that they can reflect on and analyze in discussion.
>
> 3. That the course will focus on the analysis of students' experiences and ideas as much as on the analysis of academic theories.
>
> 4. That the chief regular class activity will be a small group discussion of experiences and ideas.
>
> So please take note of the following "product warnings"!

If you don't feel comfortable talking with others about yourself and your experiences in small groups, you should probably drop this course.

If you don't feel comfortable with small group discussion and think it's a touchy-feely waste of valuable time, you should probably drop this course.

If you are not prepared to analyze your own and other people's experiences, you should probably drop this course."

(*Taken from Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms,* by Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc., 1999, pp. 60-61.)

Policies and Procedures

ADA Compliance Statement

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student with a disability who is registered with the Student Resource Center and requests needed accommodation. If you are a student with a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or accommodation in this class or any other class, please contact the Director of the Student Resource Center or contact your instructor directly.

Academic Honesty

Members of the Luther Seminary community are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and honestly in academic matters. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses against this expectation and are subject to disciplinary action.
If instances of cheating or plagiarism are detected, one of the disciplinary actions shall follow: either the instructor records a failure for the assignment or examination, or the instructor records a failure for the course. In either case, the instructor shall bring the matter to the Office of the Academic Dean and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the question whether further disciplinary action should be considered will be determined in consultation with the instructor, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of the Dean of Students. See the current Student Handbook for more details on this matter.

Course Workload

Throughout this full course students will be expected to engage in a total of 156 Student Learning Hours. In typical classes which meet on campus, this tends to break down into roughly 39 hours of Guided Learning (3 hours each week of lectures and precepts) and 117 hours of self-directed learning (reading, writing and other course work). That's 12 hours total each week of the class.

Given that this is a fully online course, I imagining that your time will break down *roughly* as follows:

Each week:

      20-30 minutes watching my video reflection
      60 minutes of your work with the discussion board (in small group)
      60 minutes of additional small group preparation (your video prayers, feedback on colleague projects, etc.)
      8 hours reading assigned texts, watching assigned videos and working on writing, research or digital development

It can be seductive to imagine that you will "fit" this class into the nooks and crannies of time of you have left over from other commitments. Please do not fall into that trap! You should schedule 12 hours of time each week during which you will work on this class – you might consider putting a sign on your door reading "in class, please do not disturb," or hiring a babysitter for specific times each week when you will go to a coffee shop or library to do your work. Remember that a good chunk of that time you will need to have access to the internet to participate.

Unlike some forms of class, there is no way to "lurk" in an online course. If you do not "show up" for the small group discussions by contributing, I do not know you are present and will only be able to assume that you are not.

Please also note that there are a minimum number of digital tools required for use in this class, these are the same basic tools required for all online courses at Luther. You can access a list of these tools here: http://www.luthersem.edu/technology/helpdocs.aspx?m=4612&rp=blog60&post=2833