Proactive Ministry in Media Cultures

Fall Term | EL4548 | Online

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The most up-to-date information and details for this course will be available in the moodle course site. Please use this printed syllabus only as a basic reference.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores myriad challenges raised by media cultures for communities of faith. Questions of digital presence, communicative practices in digital cultures, constructive theological approaches to digital divides and other issues of justice, and positive use of diverse media in worship and mission are engaged. *Full course (1.0)*

Learning Objectives:

The following learning objectives have been arrived at through the research and work of scholars involved in developing a digital literacies toolkit for nurturing culturally competent communication and leadership in ministry. You can access their work here: https://www.digitalliteracytoolkit.org

Through the semester we will work to ensure that students learn how to:

- navigate hybrid and digital cultures,
- convene hybrid and digital community,
- maintain a posture of experimentation,
- cultivate a spiritually wise habitus,
- present authentically and pastorally online,
- connect theology and media theory, and,
- create and curate faith-based media artifacts.

Specific Luther Seminary Program Objectives which this course supports include the following:

- MDIV: Graduates will testify to their baptismal callings that nurture the ongoing life of faith, hope, and love

- MA in LIM: Graduates will demonstrate the development of their own gifts for leadership in particular ministry contexts and within a critical understanding of leadership
- MA in CYF: Graduates will demonstrate the development of their own gifts for leadership   in particular ministry contexts and within a critical understanding of leadership
- MA in CM: Graduates, within a diversity of contexts, will confess the character, identity, and work   of the Triune God in the world
- MA Academic: Graduates will clearly communicate faithful and constructive insights on biblical, historical, and theological topics to diverse audiences
- MA in Lutheran ministries: Graduates will reflect critically and constructively on the relationship of Lutheran theology to community life, worship and public witness

Content to prepare ahead of class (required):

Books:

K. Anderson and E. Drescher, *Click2Save Reboot: Digital Ministry Bible* (Church Publishing, 2018)

R. Hobbs, *Create to Learn: Introduction to Digital Literacy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017) [Note: there is an excellent free online study guide to this book for students, including videos, slide introductions to chapters, and much more – found here: https://createtolearn.online/for-student/)

ODB Project, *Digital Defense Playbook: Community Power Tools for Reclaiming Data* (https://www.odbproject.org/tools/). [You need to order this online from their website]

Assorted articles:

Aleabouni, M. "You Might Be a Lutheran If Your VBS Snack is Tostadas": Mediated Nostalgia and Counter-Aesthetics in #DecolonizeLutheranism" (found at moodle).

Anderson, H. and Foley, E. *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* (Jossey-Bass, 2001) (excerpt at moodle).

Campbell, H. "Understanding the relationship between religion online and offline in a networked society," in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion, pp. 1–30 doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfr074 (found at moodle)

Hess, M. "And the Word went viral: Finding God at the intersection of Scripture and popular media," America Magazine, July 21-28, 2014 (found at moodle).

Hess, M. "Embodied pedagogies: Engaging racism in theological education and digital cultures," in *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) (found at moodle).

Hess, M. "Freeing culture: Copyright and teaching in digital media," in *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) (found at moodle).

Hess, M. "Rich treasures in jars of clay: Theological education in changing times," in *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) (found at moodle).

Koebler, J. and Cox, J. "The impossible job: Inside Facebook's struggle to moderate two billion people" (found online:

https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/xwk9zd/how-facebook-content-moderation-works)

Oliver, K. "Form and function of church websites: Mini-lecture" (found online: https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/xwk9zd/how-facebook-content-moderation-works)

Oliver, K. "Toward digital literacies as markers of professional competency for public-facing religious leadership in the new media age," paper delivered to the International Society for Media, Religion and Culture (August 2018) (found online: bit.ly/ISMRC_KMO)

Pew Report on Activism in the Social Media Age, July 2018 (found online: http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/07/11095520/PI_2018.07.11_social-activism_FINAL.pdf)

Ripley, A. "Complicating the narratives" (found online: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/complicating-the-narratives-b91ea06ddf63)

Sanders, S. "NPR One Minute: Interview with Nadine Strossen: (found online: https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=616085863)

Tripodi, F. "Searching for alternative facts: Analyzing scriptural inference in conservative news practices," in Data&Society (found online: https://datasociety.net/output/searching-for-alternative-facts/)

Videos [note: if you can't access one of these, we will find alternatives]

"The Great Hack," documentary available via Netflix

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This course uses a combination of experiential engagement, cognitive study, and creative production assignments to support students in meeting the learning goals. It is offered in the fall of 2019 as an online course. Each week there will be a variety of content presentation, production exercises, and opportunities to participate in either asynchronous or synchronous conversation. We will record any synchronous sessions so that time zone differences and professional commitments will not unduly exclude students.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

Reading guide quizzes

There are two short, multiple-choice, computer-graded reading quizzes to support your work with the AndersonDrescher and Hobbs books we are reading. These quizzes must be completed by the deadlines specified, but can be taken at a time you choose up until that deadline, and with whatever resources open in front of you that you wish to use. They function primarily as a way to "check" that you are comprehending this content.

Production assignments

Early in the semester students will create a blog and learn how to use a newsreader to read their colleagues' blogs. Each student's blog will then become a container for the rest of their production assignments. During the semester students will: (1) use flipgrid to introduce themselves, (2) set up a news reader, (3) create a blog, (4) do a photo reflection exercise, (5) create an infographic suitable for inclusion in a church publication or a meme for social media, (6) create a short animoto video, (7) produce a short audio piece, and (8) produce a short vlog or other form of digital video story.

Final evaluation of work will consider the overall blog (with links within it to all of the specific production assignments) as a whole.

There will be tutorials available for the production assignments, and additional assistance may be sought from qualified friends and other professionals.

GRADING

Overall grade for the course will be determined using the following percentages:

Online short reading quizzes	10%
Participation in tutorials and course conversation	40%
Short production assignments (eight, each one counts for 5%)	40%
Final curated blog	10%

I will use the following general rubric for assessing specific work in the course, and you will see these numbers on assignments I return to you.

Marginal/Passing - 4 (C-)
A good general understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes, and skills, plus the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is some evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The student fulfills all of the requirements of the lesson.

Passing - 5 (C+)
A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight. The student produces work of consistent quality and works independently.

High Passing - 6 (B)
A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates insight, produces work of quality, meets the expectations of the lesson at a high level, and shows some evidence of originality.

Superior work - 7 (A)

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality. The student is able to teach necessary skills to another student. The student works beyond the expectations of the lesson, and uses original ideas and concepts.

COURSE SCHEDULE

A word about scheduling:

The calendar below notes the basic themes of the course for each week, and specifies which assignments are due at which times. I have framed these units with the idea that new content is made available on Monday, and all assignments will be due no later than Friday at midnight central time. There will be a synchronous discussion group held each Friday morning via zoom at 8 am central time. There will also be an asynchronous online forum if you prefer that modality for discussion. **You must participate in one or the other each week.**

Please note that since our zoom session is early on Friday morning, we will be meeting on October 25 (just prior to an intensive session), and there will be an extensive break for Thanksgiving in late November, with new content on November 18th but no new content after that until December 2.

September 9		*Intensives*
September 16		*intensives*
September 23		**Introductions and orientation**
		During this week students need to agree to a shared covenant for engagement in the course, as well as sign a waiver that makes clear they will be using public social media as part of course content. Assignment: Introduce yourself at the Flipgrid site (1) (see our moodle course site for instructions). Watch the Michael Wesch videos and begin to formulate your own key questions. Participate in either the online forum or the zoom precept. Read the Oliver paper available online: bit.ly/ISMRC_KMO
September 30		**Navigating hybrid and digital cultures**
		How do we define "culture" and what does it mean to attend to "hybrid" and "digital" cultures? What is your own social situatedness, and how is that reflected in the various digital media you already participate in? Assignments: Read *Click2Save* and take the reading quiz on that book. Create a social media map for yourself (cf. template at moodle) and do the power flower exercise.
October 7		**Convening hybrid and digital community** (part one)

		How do we define "community"? What can it look like in hybrid and digital spaces? What are its marks? How do you build and support it? Assignment: Read the Campbell article, the Koebler & Cox article (found online), the DigitalDefensePlaybook and the Oliver slides (found online). Engage the church website quest, and set up a newsreader using RSS (2).
October 14		**Convening hybrid and digital community** (part two)
		In what ways do we engage and/or construct "reality" in hybrid and digital community? Assignment: Read Hess on epistemology (at moodle), Hess on race and theology (at moodle), and the Tripodi article (online). Do the news curation exercise (instructions available at moodle).
October 21		**Maintaining a posture of experimentation**
		What does it mean to "create to learn"? Assignment: Read Part One from Hobbs (pp. 1-101), take the reading quiz, and create a blog (3) (unless you already have a blog that you are willing to use for this course).
October 28		*Intensives (break)*
November 4		**Cultivating a spiritually wise habitus** (part one)
		What does it mean to live through a "spiritually wise habitus"? Assignment: Read Hess on copyright (at moodle), Hess on "Word went viral," Hess on religious digital storytelling. Do the photo exercise explained at moodle (4), review the appropriate *Click2Save* and finish reading *CreateToLearn*. Watch the intellectual property/fair use videos and consider choosing a CC license for your blog.
November 11		**Cultivating a spiritually wise habitus** (part two)
		In what ways does a "spiritually wise habitus" require public conversation? Read the Ripley essay (available online: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/complicating-the-narratives-b91ea06ddf63), the Pew Report on Activism in a Social Media Age (found online: http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/07/11095520/PI_2018.07.11_social-activism_FINAL.pdf), and the Aleabouni essay (available at Moodle). Assignment: review your newsfeeds; produce an infographic for a bulletin, or a meme to share in social media in your most immediate context (5).
November 18		**Presenting authentically and pastorally online**
		How do we convey authenticity and build credibility in online spaces? Assignment: Review the reading thus far! Develop an animoto on a psalm you pray (details for this assignment live on moodle) (6).
November 23		*Thanksgiving break*
December 2		**Connecting media theory and theological reflection**

		In what ways does theology help our work here, and intersect/integrate with media theories? Assignments: Read the Anderson/Foley excerpt; do the theological reflection exercise, and then record a brief audio piece engaging these ideas (7) (instructions at moodle).
December 9		**Student showcase**
		This week we will be sharing/showcasing student work on your digital stories in a synchronous zoom session.
December 16		**Student showcase**
		On Monday of this week (during whatever our final exam scheduled time is) we will complete our student showcase of work in a synchronous zoom session.

POLICIES OF LUTHER SEMINARY

ADA Compliance Statement

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student with a disability who is registered with the Office of Student Affairs 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 Office of Student Affairs 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.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism is the dishonest act of presenting the words or thoughts of another writer as if they were your own.... If you quote from anything at all...you must put quotation marks around it, or

set it off from your text. If you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends.... In every instance you must formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material." [Quoted from James A. W. Heffernan and John E. Lincoln, Writing: A College Handbook (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p.457.]

Some examples of plagiarism could include:
- Copying from a source text (whether online or offline) without proper acknowledgment.
- Turning in another student's work with or without that student's knowledge.
- Copying materials word-for-word from a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing materials from a source text without appropriate documentation.
- Turning in a paper copied from a website.
- Recycling your own work from a previous assignment, without permission of the instructor or proper citation

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.

Title IX Statement

Luther Seminary is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and Luther policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking — is also prohibited at Luther.

Luther Seminary encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to talk to someone about what happened, so they can get the support they need and we can respond appropriately. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, want more information about filing a report, or have questions about school policies and procedures, please contact our Title IX Coordinator, Peter Susag, who can be found on our school's website.

Luther Seminary is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore it cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, but it will consider a request for confidentiality and respect it to the extent possible.

As a teacher, I am also required by Luther Seminary to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident.