



CENTER FOR  
**DISTANCE EDUCATION**  
IN BIBLE AND MINISTRY  
AT HARDING UNIVERSITY

**BMIN 3090.OL (3 hrs)**  
**Congregational Ministry**  
**J.L. Nesmith, Jr., D.Min.**

**Instructor Information**

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Preferred method of contact: Feel free to email any questions or concerns. As a secondary measure, you may phone or text me at the number above. Leave a detailed message and I will return your call within 24 hours.

**Harding University's Mission**

The mission of Harding University is to provide a quality education that will lead to an understanding and philosophy of life consistent with Christian ideals.

**University Level Student Learning Outcomes (ULOs)**

Harding University has ten student learning outcomes that are expectations of learning across the liberal arts curriculum. This class has three primary learning focal points which are assessed in view of the college level student learning outcomes listed below (COBAM/SLOs):

1. **Biblical Knowledge and Application ULO 1:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of biblical content and interpretation and their applications in ethical decision-making.
2. **Critical Thinking ULO 3:** Students will examine issues, ideas, artifacts, and/or events in order to formulate or assess an opinion or conclusion.
3. **Global Citizenship ULO 4:** Students will exhibit cultural knowledge, communicative and interpersonal skills, and other-centered dispositions necessary for responsible interaction with cultures different from their own.

**College of Bible and Ministry Mission Statement**

The College of Bible and Ministry of Harding University seeks to lead all students to know, live, and share God's Word and to understand, love, and serve God's world through and beyond their chosen vocation.

### **Catalog Course Description and Rationale**

This course will provide a comprehensive look at how congregations grow and develop in terms of leadership, edification, and outreach. Particular emphasis is placed on visioning, kingdom involvement, evangelistic strategies, and community engagement and service.

### **College of Bible and Ministry Level Student Learning Outcomes (COBAM/SLOs)**

The student learning outcomes for the College of Bible and Ministry are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the content and contexts of Scripture.
2. Students will express appreciation for the values of Jesus as reflected in Christian Scripture.
3. Students will demonstrate skills in sharing God's Word.
4. Students will analyze major challenges facing a diverse world from a Christian perspective.
5. Students will exhibit skills for holistic ministry which contribute to the mission of God's Spirit in the world
6. Students will serve in ways that reflect Christian values and demonstrate skills for competent church ministry and/or for graduate study in related fields.

### **Course Level Student Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

The learning outcomes for this course tie into the College and University SLOs, as indicated in parentheses. By the time they conclude this course, students will:

1. Clarify their calling and competency as a congregational leader (COBAM/SLO 2)
2. Develop a biblical and theological lens to think through regarding congregational ministry (COBAM/SLO 1)
3. Increase their familiarity with development, dynamics and resources in congregational ministry (COBAM/SLO 4)
4. Engage issues, challenges, and obstacles toward faithful and effective congregational ministry (COBAM/SLO 5, 6)
5. Be better prepared to engage in the practice of biblically-based and theologically driven congregational ministry (COBAM/SLO 2, 5)

### **Course Materials**

Heuser, Roger and Shawchuck, Norman, *Leading the Congregation– Caring for Yourself While Serving the People*(Revised edition). Nashville: Abingdon, 2010. ISBN 978-1-4267-1139-8

Rainer, Thom S. and Geiger, Eric, *Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for Making Disciples*,Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011. ISBN 978-0-8054-4799-6

Students may purchase textbooks at the HU bookstore or the following link: <http://hubookstore.harding.edu/SelectTermDept.aspx>. Students should have access to online purchasing of course resources through Pipeline. The textbooks may be purchased through the Harding Bookstore or other vendors as long as they are the same books as the ones listed in this syllabus. Electronic books are permitted.

*Remember:* It is **the student’s responsibility** to know, study, and be prepared for tests and quizzes overall books and any online material.

### **Assessment**

Online chapter/forum (30%)

Congregational ministry project (20%)

Weekly “Ministry Takeaway” and application exercises (20%)

Mid-term exam (15%)

Final exam (15%)

### **Assignments**

Due to the nature of online learning, students are expected to replace classroom time with reading, writing, and online class participation. Please review the requirements below carefully. **All assignments are expected to be completed on time.** If you foresee difficulty, please contact the instructor immediately and we will work toward a resolution.

Online chapter forums (30%, due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursdays) (CLOs 3, 4)

The chapter forums are designed to help you engage other students and compare/contrast insights, experiences, perspectives, and learnings. You are encouraged to participate fully in these conversations/exchanges. To earn full credit for the discussions, you must:

1. Comment on both discussion questions posted for each module.
2. In both discussion questions, respond to one comment posted by a classmate.
3. Write your submissions in a professional and thoughtful manner. Credit will not be given for posts containing excessive grammatical errors, ones that do not reflect the objective of the assignment, or any that are too short to be of value to the group learning process.

Congregational Ministry Assignment (20%, due by 11:59 p.m) (CLOs 2, 4, 5)

Students will identify a problem/challenge within his/her congregation. Questions to be considered are (1) what is the problem/challenge and when did it begin? (2) Who is involved and what has been the impact on individuals and/or the church? (3) What biblical attributes/attitudes of congregational leadership/health are missing? (4) Based on Scripture, class discussion, and readings, what steps would you take to address and resolve the problem/challenge? What is your plan of correction?

You should take care to **address each of these questions** as you complete your assignment. Your paper should be at least 5 but no more than 10 pages long and emailed to me as a Word document no later than 11:59 p.m. on Feb 9, 2020.

You may want to meet with the leadership of your congregation to apprise them of your project. Other persons who may be able to provide guidance/direction could also be consulted. This is a cumulative assignment. That is, adequate appropriation of the information presented during the weekly modules is essential to earning your best grade.

Weekly “Ministry Takeaway” and Ministry application assignment (10%, due on Sundays by 11:59 p.m.) (CLOs 1, 3)

*Ministry Takeaway* – We will discuss and engage the material during the week as we learn about various elements of congregational ministry. But it’s not enough to know what. We must also ask, “So what?” As you engage the week’s material, what is a key learning for you? Why?

*Ministry application assignment* – How would you implement that learning in a congregational ministry setting?

Exams (40%) (CLOs 2, 3, 4)

*Exam 1* (mid-term, 20%)

This is an open book exam covering the first three modules. You will find the exam under “Quizzes,” and you will have 90 minutes to complete 50 questions. Please note that you will have only one attempt to complete the exam. As such, be certain you are ready to begin before opening it.

Exam 1 is due by 11:59 p.m. Exams must be completed when due. A late exam (if accepted) will result in a reduced grade. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from taking the exam, please contact me. We will work toward a resolution together.

*Exam 2* (final, 20%)

This is an open book exam covering the last three modules. You will find the exam under “Quizzes,” and you will have 90 minutes to complete 50 questions. Please note that you will have only one attempt to complete the exam. As such, be certain you are ready to begin before opening it.

Your final exam, Exam 2 is due by 11:59 p.m. Again, exams must be completed when due. A late exam (if accepted) will result in a reduced grade. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from taking the exam, please contact me. We will work toward a resolution together.

### **Class Participation**

Participation in class comprises the heart of online learning. All students are expected to participate in the discussions in addition to the quizzes and exams. When students refrain from contributing to the class discussion, they not only learn less, but their grade also reflects their absence. Make sure you budget enough time this semester to join in the discussions and group activities.

*In alignment with face-to-face attendance policies, any student who misses more than 20% of class discussions and/or quizzes (equal to three weeks/modules) will be dropped from the course with a WF (withdraw-fail). WFs appear on student transcripts, which becomes a permanent part of the student records. If a student falls behind, it would be better to drop the course than to receive a WF.*

Also, for us to have a pleasant learning experience, we must have a certain culture in our discussions. Please read over the online etiquette. We must commit to respectful treatment of each post, remembering that although the course is online, the person submitting the post has flesh and blood and real feelings. Additionally, keep in mind that your posts become part of the history of this course. I would refrain from saying anything that you would not want to be held against you in the future.

### **Time Management Expectations**

Typically for on-ground classes, for every one hour a student spends in the classroom, he/she will spend two clock hours outside of class preparing. This preparation includes reading, interviewing, organizing notes and so forth. As an online student in this six-week congregational ministry class, you should expect to spend roughly 22-23 hours per week on this class.

### **Grievance Procedures**

If a student has a grievance, discuss this with the instructor. If that discussion proves unsatisfactory, contact Tim Westbrook at the Center for Distance Education in Bible and Ministry at (501) 279-5290.

### **Grading**

Grades will be assigned by percentage as follows:

90+	A
80+	B
70+	C

60+                    D  
59 and below    F

## **Required Technology**

See [Center for Distance Education in Bible & Ministry: Technical Requirements](#)

### *Minimum Technical Skills*

Enrolled students should be able to use the Canvas learning management system; electronic email with file attachments; Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint or similar software; be skilled at downloading and installing software; and be familiar with Internet search engines such as Google.

### *Canvas, Internet or Technology Outage Policy:*

As an online learner, you must be able to manage technical difficulties, as power outages, connection problems, and other technical issues are always a possibility. Technology will sometimes fail; for this reason, it is advisable to complete your assigned work prior to the due date.

Canvas privacy link: <https://www.canvaslms.com/policies/privacy>

### **Instructor**

If your instructor experiences a power outage, Internet service outage, LMS (Canvas) or other technical issues that significantly affects the timing of online assignments, grading assignments or significantly interferes with the instructor/student communication channel, adjustments to due dates will be made.

### **Student**

Students may contact the Canvas Help Desk M - F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 501-279-4938 or via email at [elarning@harding.edu](mailto:elarning@harding.edu).

If you experience a power outage, Internet service outage, LMS (Canvas) or other technical issues, you are held responsible for completing your assigned work in a timely manner. Harding University is not responsible for the student's access to a working computer or reliable Internet service. An Internet outage or computer issue is not an excuse for late work. A backup plan for reliable Internet service and a working computer is prudent. Should you experience any such issues, communicate with your instructor in a timely manner.

### **Drop/Add Dates**

Please see Pipeline or contact the Registrar's office ([registrar@harding.edu](mailto:registrar@harding.edu)) for the drop/add refund schedule.

### **Student Support**

The academic support team is available to help students with a variety of services such as advising, study help, multicultural services, and career services. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Pursuant to federal and state law, it is the policy for Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disabilities Office at the beginning of each semester. (If the diagnosis of the disability occurs during the academic year, the student must self-identify with the Disabilities Director as soon as possible in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the semester.) The Disabilities Office is located in Room 205 of the Student Center, telephone (501) 279-4019.

### **Accessibility**

This course will be facilitated using Canvas, the Learning Management System used by Harding University. [Canvas ADA Compliance Information](#)

### **Academic Integrity**

A key component of online education is the integrity of the students. Harding University and the instructor assume the students will not engage in dishonest activity while taking this course. Copying another person's work and claiming it as your own is cheating and unethical; this includes recycling old papers or rewording online articles. The student must answer all written responses **with his or her own words**. Quotations from other sources must be documented appropriately and kept at a minimum. Below you will find Harding University's official academic integrity statement.

“Honesty and integrity are characteristics that should describe each one of us as servants of Jesus Christ. As your instructor, I pledge that I will strive for honesty and integrity in how I handle the content of this course and in how I interact with each of you. I ask that you join me in pledging to do the same.

“Academic dishonesty will result in penalties up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade and will be reported to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. All instances of dishonesty will be handled according to the procedures delineated in the Harding University catalog.”

In the event that cheating or plagiarism occurs, the instructor will be forced to initiate a misconduct report and implement one of the following sanctions (as per the university catalog):

### **Class A Sanctions (Course Level)**

1. Repeating of the assignment or completion of an additional assignment, with possibly less credit awarded in either case.
2. Lowering of the grade on the test or assignment, possibly to “F” or zero.
3. Lowering of the grade for the course, possibly to “F.”

4. Immediate removal from the course with either a “W” or an “F” placed on the transcript.

If the instructor discovers evidence of plagiarism or cheating, the guilty or suspected student will not need to provide a defense. The instructor will submit a misconduct report to Academic Affairs and notify the student. Each student has the right to appeal the report with Academic Affairs, but the instructor will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism at the course level. When filing the report, the instructor will decide which sanction to use based on the severity of the offense.

Note that there is a simple way to avoid all this: *do not cheat or plagiarize!* If you have questions in this regard, consult the catalog under "Ethical Standards" and/or "Academic Integrity Policy."

### **University Assessment Statement**

Harding University, since its charter in 1924, has been strongly committed to providing the best resources and environment for the teaching-learning process. The board, administration, faculty, and staff are wholeheartedly committed to full compliance with all criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. The university values continuous, rigorous assessment at every level for its potential to improve student learning and achievement and for its centrality in fulfilling the stated mission of Harding. Thus, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed that includes both the academic units and the Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units. Specifically, all academic units will be assessed in reference to the following Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose: The University provides programs that enable students to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their academic disciplines for successful careers, advanced studies, and servant leadership.

### **Course Outline**

Week 1: Looking at the Leader

Unit Student Learning Connections:

- Students will evaluate and assess the congregational leader considering biblical, theological, organizational and personal perspectives (CLOs 1, 2).
- Students will be able to apply this learning to an active congregational setting (CLO 5).

Week 2: The Value of Vision

Unit Student Learning Connections:

- Students will think about the imagination and implementation of a vision for congregational ministry. Included is consideration of select generational shifts and social changes as they relate to congregational ministry (CLO 3).

- Students will formulate, think through and contextualize mission priorities in a congregational setting (CLO 3).

### Week 3: Tackling Teams, Exam 1

#### Unit Student Learning Connections:

- Students will review components of team development and functioning within a congregational setting (CLOs 1, 3).
- Students will consider and effectively apply practices extracted from biblical examples of group conflict (CLOs 2, 4, 5).

### Week 4: Strategy and Systems

#### Unit Student Learning Connections:

- Students will review and evaluate the potential impact of “shrinking” ministry congregational ministry objectives (CLOs 3, 4).
- Students will engage a congregational leader regarding the concept of "shrinking" ministry in a church setting (CLO 4).

### Week 5: Congregational Ministry Assignment

#### Unit Learning Connections:

- Students will identify a problem/challenge within his/her congregation and formulate a plan of correction/resolution based on Scripture, class discussion and course readings (CLOs 2, 4, 5).

### Week 6: Considering Congregational Change, Exam 2

#### Unit Student Learning Connections:

- Students will review specific perspectives, actions, and attitudes that can contribute to effective congregational change (CLOs 3, 4, 1).

### Weekly Reading Schedule

This is a six-week course. It will follow a Monday-Sunday schedule in order to allow students the opportunity to optimize their weekends for studying should that need exist. Students are free

to create their own schedules for reading and posting but should note the posting deadlines listed in the “Assignments” section above.

Note the following reading schedule for the course.

- Week 1: Heuser and Shawchuck, 1-56, 85-103
- Week 2: Heuser and Shawchuck, 75-84; 104-116; 226-247; 248-269. Also online viewing of select videos and/or articles
- Week 3: Heuser and Shawchuck, 120-167
- Week 4: Rainer and Geiger, 3-81; 83-163; 165-241
- Week 5: congregational ministry project
- Week 6: Heuser and Shawchuck, 202-225; 270-304

**Due Dates**

<b>Week/Module</b>	<b>Points and Pages</b>	<b>Exams and Assignments</b>
<b>Module 1</b> “Looking at the Leader” Heuser and Shawchuck	“Dangers of Leading” (1-14) “Attitudes of the Leader” (19-56) “Spiritual Effect of the Leader” (85-103)	<i>Online chapter forum</i> (posts due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.)  <i>Weekly ministry takeaway and application assignment</i> (posts due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.)
<b>Module 2</b> “The Value of Vision” Heuser and Shawchuck	“Vision and Mission” (75-84) “Leadership Priorities and Choices” (104-116) “Clarifying Mission” (226-247) “Sharing Vision” (248-269)	<i>Online chapter forum</i> (posts due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.)  <i>Weekly ministry takeaway and application assignment</i> (posts due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.)

	Read/View online resources	
<b>Module 3</b> “Tackling Teams” Heuser and Shawchuck	“Ethos and the Team” (120-131) “Formation of the Team” (132-144) “Conflict and the Team” (145-167) “Conflict and the Early Church” (Acts 6:1-7; 15:1-31)	<i>Online chapter forum</i> (posts due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.)  <i>Weekly ministry takeaway and application assignment</i> (posts due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.)  <b>Exam 1</b> due by 11:59 p.m.
<b>Module 4</b> “Streamlining Congregational Systems” Rainer and Geiger	“Seeing Simplicity” (3-81) “Reviewing Simplicity” (83-105) “Adopting Simplicity” (109-196) “Successful Simplicity” (197-241)	<i>Online chapter forum</i> (posts due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.)  <i>Weekly ministry takeaway and application assignment</i> (posts due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.)
<b>Module 5</b>	Students will complete congregational ministry assignment  Read online resource	Assignment due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday,
<b>Module 6</b> “Leadership and Moving Toward Change” Heuser and Shawchuck	“Congregational Spirituality and Change” (206-225)	<i>Online chapter forum</i> (posts due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.)  <i>Weekly ministry takeaway and application assignment</i> (posts due Friday by 11:59 p.m.)  Exam 2 is due by 11:59 p.m.

### Funtime Online

The objective of this class is exploration and enhanced proficiency in congregational ministry. But another objective is to enjoy our educational journey together. Observe carefully the information contained in this syllabus. Then relax and expect a wonderful six

weeks of connection, discovery and kingdom service as we move forward in Christ's vineyard.

## Netiquette

1. **Remember your place.** A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your instructor and your fellow students with respect.
2. **Brevity is best.** Be as concise as possible when contributing to a discussion. Web-based courses require a lot of reading, and your points might be missed if hidden in a flood of text. If you have several points that you want to make, it might be a good idea to post them individually, in several more focused messages, rather than as a single, lengthy, all-encompassing message.
3. **Stick to the point.** Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others time by going off on irrelevant tangents.
4. **Read first, write later.** Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to do so. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.
5. **Post correctly.** Make sure your postings are located in the correct thread.
6. **Netspeak.** DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS OR USE EXCLAMATION MARKS!!!!!! :-)) This is regarded as shouting and is out of place in a classroom. Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language. If you feel particularly strong about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then review it, before posting, in order to remove any strong language.
7. **The recorder is on.** Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Also, although the grammar and spelling of a message typically are not graded, they do reflect on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them. However, unless grammar and spelling are graded components of the course do not obsess. **Never criticize or comment on others grammatical or spelling errors, unless doing so is part of your assignment.**
8. **Test for clarity.** Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to

read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.

9. **Keep a straight face.** Humor is important in an online course as it can add to the enjoyment and the personality of the course. However, avoid humor and sarcasm directed toward others. These frequently depend either on facial or tone of voice cues which are absent in text communication. Keep your humor directed either at yourself or at no one in particular. Also, remember this is a Christian environment and our humor should reflect our respect for each other and Christ. If you have a good clean joke to share, feel free. Humor gives us a glimpse into your personality.
10. **Be forgiving.** If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the instructor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion may be new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the instructor.

Many of these netiquette tips were taken from the University of Wisconsin's *Online Etiquette* at <https://kb.wisc.edu/ei/resources/page.php?id=50548>