



**UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHWESTERN**  
ST. PAUL

OFFICE OF ADULT  
& GRADUATE STUDIES

# **MIN5710**

## **Religious Heritage and Church Polity**

**SUMMER 2023**

**SYLLABUS**

Version: OL v1:02/23

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# MIN5710 Religious Heritage and Church Polity

University of Northwestern – St. Paul

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the relationship between the mission of the church, religious heritage, and church polity. Students investigate ecclesial traditions with which they are closely affiliated in order to understand the influence of theological distinctives and ecclesial structure on contemporary church practice

**Credits: 2**

**Prerequisites:** None

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Please see “Contacting the Instructor” on the course site.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, a successful student will be able to

- CO-1. Evaluate theological influences on church mission.
- CO-2. Analyze the social, cultural, and religious contexts in which major ecclesial structures were born.
- CO-3. Appraise the religious heritage and ecclesiastical structure of a particular denomination or group of churches.
- CO-4. Analyze contemporary social and cultural problems and their influence on church governance and mission.

## MATERIALS

### Required Textbooks and Materials

Cowan, Steven B., ed., *Who Runs the Church?: 4 Views on Church Government*. Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Year 2004. 978-0310246077

DeYoung, Kevin, and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*. Publisher: Wheaton, IL: Crossway, Year: 2011. ISBN: 978-1-4335-2690-9.

Sweeney, Douglas A. *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement*. Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Year: 2005. ISBN: 978-0801026584.

## Required Tools

For this course, students will need access to Microsoft Office (available at no cost to students through the University of Northwestern-St. Paul), a PDF reader, and a standard internet browser. Please refer to the Tech Requirements found in the Technology Help section at the top of the course site for the full requirements.

## GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Course Grade Explanation

| Assignments   | Grade Weight |
|---|--------------|
| Discussion Forums (4 total @ 8% each)                           | 32%          |
| <i>Who Runs the Church?</i> Paper                               | 12%          |
| Denominational Polity Presentation                              | 11%          |
| <i>What Is the Mission of the Church?</i> Paper                 | 12%          |
| <i>The American Evangelical Story</i> Paper                     | 11%          |
| Denominational Presentation                                     | 11%          |
| Contemporary Social and Cultural Problem Paper and Presentation | 11%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100%</b>  |

### Grading Scale Percentages

|    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| A  | ≥ 93 | B  | ≥ 83 | C  | ≥ 73 | D  | ≥ 63 |
| A- | ≥ 90 | B- | ≥ 80 | C- | ≥ 70 | D- | ≥ 60 |
| B+ | ≥ 87 | C+ | ≥ 77 | D+ | ≥ 67 | F  | < 60 |

### Late Work

All assignments are due as described in the course syllabus. Students are responsible for meeting assignment deadlines. Late assignments will be deducted one full letter grade (e.g., A to B) per day; late assignments will not be accepted for a grade beyond 3 calendar days past the original deadline. Forum discussion activities must be completed on time; late forum posts will not receive any credit. Students should contact the instructor via e-mail if an extenuating circumstance exists.

### Feedback Expectations

Students should expect feedback for their submitted assignments within 5 days of the assignment due date or the time of their submission, whichever is later.

## INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SERVICES

### Guidelines and Information

Students are responsible for policies and procedures found in the Office of Adult & Graduate Studies Catalog located on theROCK. These policies include the following:

- Deadlines for dropping or withdrawing
- Attendance
- Class cancellations

- Plagiarism and cheating
- Grading System
- Complaints, exceptions, and appeals

Instructors may have course-related expectations that further detail the policies and procedures outlined in the catalog. Any such expectations must be provided to students in writing (e.g., handout, course site posting) prior to or at the beginning of the class.

Traditional undergraduate students enrolled in A&GS courses are subject to the traditional undergraduate student handbook for all non-course-specific policies and procedures.

## **Academic Integrity**

Members of the Northwestern community mutually commit to personal integrity and honesty. Students submitting work are expected to convey their own thoughts unless the source is cited appropriately. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty violate ethical and intellectual principles.

In every course, students are required to view the Understanding Plagiarism video and complete the Understanding Plagiarism Quiz prior to completing any of the course content. These items are part of the course orientation.

## **Academic Achievement Statement**

UNW students requesting academic accommodations in association with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are directed to notify [Disability Services](#) to begin the application process. Academic Achievement also provides the following: [Writing Tutoring](#), [Subject Tutoring](#), advocating, transitional skill building, [Academic Coaching](#) (organization, time management, test taking, etc.).

Contact Academic Achievement for more information: [AcademicAchievement@unwsp.edu](mailto:AcademicAchievement@unwsp.edu) | 651-628-3316 | N4012 (Revised 07/22).

## **Support Services**

Links to support services are available found in the Student Services section at the top of the course site.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

### **Email and Announcements**

Students are responsible to regularly check their Northwestern student email and the announcements in the course site in order to receive updates and information.

### **Attendance**

Due to the accelerated nature of the online curricula, students are expected to participate in all course activities. Students must contact the faculty member in advance or as soon as possible if unable to participate in all or part of the course activities for a given week because of a medical (which includes having to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 exposure or confirmed illness), family, or work-related emergency. Students should refer to their course syllabus and/or faculty member for specific requirements. Students who do not participate in course activities and fail to withdraw from the course will receive a failing “F” grade.

## **Submission Standards**

All assignments, unless otherwise stated, must be submitted on the course site in Microsoft Word document format (.doc or .docx). For all assignments, use a standard readable font, double-spaced, etc.

## **Critical Response to Alternate Viewpoints**

When students are reading or viewing course materials, they may encounter viewpoints, words, or images that their instructors would not use or endorse. Students should know that materials are chosen for their value in learning to read, write, and view critically, not because the materials are necessarily Christian.

## **Scholarly Research**

Quality participation in this course requires contribution of scholarly research to class interactions. Students can engage in external research via the Berntsen Library website by performing a search of the 60+ databases available to students. Also available on the library site are multiple tutorials to educate learners in effective search techniques. Other credible journals/articles are options as well.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

See the course site for complete details on the assignments.

## **Discussion Forums**

Online discussions represent tremendous learning opportunities because classmates can share viewpoints and other ways of expressing complicated concepts that enable others with diverse learning and cognitive styles to better grasp and master ideas. Approach discussions as learning opportunities where you learn from others and they learn from you. You are not just writing for the instructor to read and grade; you are also writing to converse and help others and yourself better learn and understand at a deeper level.

## ***Who Runs the Church? Paper***

Read *Who Runs the Church?* Then, write a 5-page critical analysis covering each view given in the book. For each view summarize the author's arguments and the main points of disagreement by the other authors in one page for each chapter (3/4 page for the main contributor and ¼ page for the counter arguments). In the final page critique the overall question being addressed by sharing your position with biblical and theological arguments.

## **Denominational Polity Presentation**

Investigate a denomination/movement of your choice and its polity. You must contact the organization as well as research its polity. Summarize your findings on an 8-10 minute VoiceThread.

You will be evaluated according to the following:

- Show that you had a significant contact with the organization.
- Reveal Biblical and social/cultural influences on their polity.
- Compare the organization's polity with your own.

## ***What Is the Mission of the Church? Paper***

Read *What Is the Mission of the Church?* Then, write a 4-page analysis of the book. In the final page critique the overall question being addressed by sharing your position with biblical and theological arguments

## ***The American Evangelical Story Paper***

Read *The American Evangelical Story* by Douglas Sweeney. Then, write a 4-page paper based on *The American Evangelical Story*. The first half of the paper should summarize the history of Evangelicalism based on *The American Evangelical Story* excluding chapters 5 and 6.

The second half should discuss the contributions of the black church and the Pentecostal church reported in chapters 5 and 6 of *The American Evangelical Story* along with what you have experienced with these movements within evangelicalism.

## **Denominational Presentation**

Visit a church from a different evangelical denomination and observe how they “do” church. Visit their website for more information and speak to an official representative of that church (i.e. pastor, deacon, librarian).

Present to the group your findings through VoiceThread including: 1. church values, vision and mission. 2. Practices including preaching, sacraments, symbols, prayers, music, ministry, etc. 3. Doctrinal statement. 4. Church polity. 5. Church history. Presentation should be 10 minutes and include multimedia. Creativity is encouraged. Respond to two other posts.

## **Contemporary Social and Cultural Problem Paper and Presentation**

Choose one of the following books and analyze the social justice topic’s influence on church governance and mission. You must get professor approval before beginning to work on assignment (Professor will make sure each topic is covered before duplicating). Write a 5-page paper using three sources in addition to the book you choose. You will also be required to present a summary through VoiceThread and respond to the posts of two others.

Here are the topics and books:

- Race relations
  - *Under Our Skin* by Ben Watson
  - *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith
  - *Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility* by George Yancey
- Abortion/Homosexuality/Gender Issues
  - *Love Thy Body* by Nancy Pearcey
  - *We Cannot Be Silent* by Albert Mohler
- Religious Liberty
  - *Hostile Environment* by George Yancey
  - *The Gospel and Religious Liberty* by Russell Moore and Andrew Walker
- Sex Trafficking
  - *Vulnerable: Rethinking Human Trafficking* by Ralph Sadler
  - *Justice Awakening* by Eddie Byun
  - *In Our Backyard* by Nita Belles
- Ministry to the Poor
  - *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
  - *The Poverty of Nations* by Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Format

This course is delivered in an online format that provides all learning activities online. The day the course starts is considered Day 1 of Week 1 for the course. For example, if a course begins on a Monday, then Day 1 is Monday, Day 4 is Thursday, and Day 7 is the following Sunday.

This course is an accelerated course. As a rule of thumb, students should expect to spend on average 17.5 hours on course work each week.

### Due Dates

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be submitted on the course site 11:59 p.m. CT on Day 7 of each week. Please see the following schedule for details on when an assignment is due.

For any questions regarding these assignments, contact the instructor.

### Orientation

- Read the Getting Started Page
- Participate in the Introductions Forum
- View and Complete Understanding Plagiarism Presentation and Quiz
- Complete Student Responsibilities Exercise

### Week 1: Church Polity: Its History and Cultural Influences

- Read the Weekly Overview
- Read *Who Runs the Church?*
- Read 1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-7; Php 1:1; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Acts 6; Eph 4:11-16.
- Watch Week 1 Video (43:07).

#### Due Day 7

- Submit Original Post for Week 1 Discussion: Investigate a Denomination or Movement (Voicethread).
- Submit *Who Runs the Church?* Paper.

### Week 2: The Mission of the Church: Biblical and Cultural Influences

- Read the Weekly Overview
- Read *What Is the Mission of the Church?*
- Read Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:14-20; Lk 4:16-21, 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2 Co 5:17-21.
- Watch Week 2 Video (1:10:22).

#### Due Day 4

- Submit Replies for Week 1 Discussion: Investigate a Denomination or Movement (Voicethread) (from Week 1).
- Submit Original Post for Week 2 Discussion A: Views on Mission.
- Submit Original Post for Week 2 Discussion B: The Kingdom of God.

#### Due Day 7

- Submit Replies for Week 2 Discussion A: Views on Mission.
- Submit Replies for Week 2 Discussion B: The Kingdom of God.
- Submit *What Is the Mission of the Church?* Paper.

### **Week 3: Religious Heritage and Unity in the Body of Christ**

- Read the Weekly Overview
- Read *The American Evangelical Story*.
- Watch Week 3 Video (45:44).

#### **Due Day 4**

- Submit Original Post for Week 3 Discussion A: Visit a Church (VoiceThread).
- Submit Original Post for Week 3 Discussion B: Evangelical Unity.

#### **Due Day 7**

- Submit Replies for Week 3 Discussion A: Visit a Church (VoiceThread).
- Submit Replies for Week 3 Discussion B: Evangelical Unity.
- Submit *The American Evangelical Story* Paper.

### **Week 4: Contemporary Social and Cultural Problems and Their Influence**

- Read the Weekly Overview
- Read the following passages that relate to current discussions over contemporary issues. Think about how the passages relate to the issues.
  - Race/slavery: Philemon; Rev 5:8-10; 7:9; Rom 13
  - Gender/Homosexuality: Gen 2:18-25; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11
  - Abortion: Ps 139:13-16; 127:3-5
  - Politics/Economy: Rom 13; Prov 13:11; 14:23, 34; 28:12; 31:8-9; Lev 19:9-10, 33-34; Jn 6:15; 18:36
  - Poor: Prov 14:21, 31; 19:17; 20:13; 22:2, 22; 28:3, 6, 27; 29:7; 31:8-9; Gal 2:10; 2 Thess 3:10; Mk 14:7
- Watch Week 4 Video (13:44).

#### **Due Day 4**

- Submit Original Post for Week 4 Discussion A: The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy.
- Submit Contemporary Social and Cultural Problem Paper.
- Submit Original Post for Week 4 Discussion B: Contemporary Social and Cultural Problem Forum.

#### **Due Day 7**

- Submit Replies for Week 4 Discussion A: The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy.
- Submit Replies for Week 4 Discussion B: Contemporary Social and Cultural Problem Forum.