



15800 Calvary Road
Kansas City, MO 64147-1341

Syllabus

Course: PS637-E&EN The Local Church and the Great Commission
Credit: 3 Semester Hours
Semester: Summer 2025 (Session 1, May 12–Jun 27)
Time: 6:00 – 9:00 pm, Thursdays
Instructor: Dr. Michel L. Dodds, (816) 322-5152 ext. 1348, mike.dodds@calvary.edu, (913) 638-3291 (cell)

**About This Course:* This course is offered in two formats: in-person and online. Students registered for in-person attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. For both in-person and online students, assignments and interaction outside of the class period are done in the learning management system.

**About Disabilities:* Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinate (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.

**About Assistance for All Course Assignments:* The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu) is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all Calvary University students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams, and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

**About Changes to this Syllabus:* The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time during the course, but any changes made will only be done after clearly communicating the need for the change and the specific change to be made via in-class announcement and Canvas announcement.

I. DESCRIPTION

This course is a biblical and practical study of the Lord's command to "make disciples of all the nations." The student will do biblical study of the elements of local church ministry necessary for fulfilling that command (i.e., evangelism, discipleship, and missions), will do research of contemporary models for fulfilling that command, and will apply the results of that study and research to the development of a practical strategy the student could employ in a church he may serve. [ILO- #1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

II. OBJECTIVES

A. General competencies to be achieved. You will be able to . . .

1. Identify the Biblical texts which define and direct ministry in the world (i.e., evangelism, discipleship, missions). (PLO- #2) (A- A, C, & E)
2. Describe the necessary ministry elements of evangelism, discipleship, and mission. (PLO- #3 & 4) (A- A, B, C, & E)

Our Mission: "...to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview."

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3. Evaluate contemporary ministries and the strategies being used to fulfill the Great Commission. (PLO- #2 & 3) (A- C, D, & F)

B. Specific competencies to be achieved. You will be able to . . .

1. Articulate and defend a biblical understanding of Christ's Great Commission given to every ministry. (PLO- #2, 3, & 4) (A- A, B, C, E)
2. Biblically define evangelism, discipleship, and mission. (PLO- #2, 3, & 4) (A- A, B, C, E)
3. Develop an overall Great Commission strategy for a specific ministry setting. (PLO- #2, 3, & 4) (A- C, D, E,
4. Critically evaluate contemporary strategies and models for fulfilling the Great Commission. (PLO- #2, 3, & 4) (A- C & F)

III. REQUIREMENTS

***Note:** Specific instructions for each assignment are posted in Canvas.

A. Read textbooks.

1. Read the **4** course textbooks in their entirety according to the schedule.
2. These textbooks are selected for their pertinent observations for the course assignments as well as for future practical ministry strategy.
3. While reading each book, **write a paper** (i.e., a total of 4 papers) listing the following from each volume:
 - a. **20 significant observations** relevant to the development and implementation of a Great Commission ministry plan.
 - b. **5 significant questions** relevant to the development and implementation of a Great Commission ministry plan.

B. Personally share the Gospel.

1. Engage in a minimum of **5** "redemptive conversations" over the weeks of the course.
2. Following the completion of all conversations, submit **one (1)** final summary written report of at least **3 pages** that includes the following:
 - a. Significant observations relevant to personal evangelism.
 - b. Relevant insights for church leaders overseeing and encouraging evangelism in a local church.
 - c. Suggestions for ways in which a local church can support personal evangelism amongst its members as well as within its ministries.

C. Write a research paper on one aspect of the course and make presentations.

1. Select one aspect of the course (e.g., evangelism, discipleship, missions) and do focused research concerning contemporary local church methods, materials, and thinking concerning this aspect of the Great Commission. (**Notes:** Contact the instructor for approval of the topic and methods of research before beginning this assignment.)

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2. The purposes for this assignment are to increase the depth of understanding of a specific aspect of this course and also to influence a specific local church concerning this aspect of ministry in that church. (**Note:** If involved with a specific ministry, the aspect chosen should be one which needs clarified thinking and direction/redirection in that ministry setting.)
3. Included in the research for this paper must be **personal interviews** with ministry leaders and lay people concerning this aspect. (Note: At least **3 people** with different expertise and perspectives toward the topic should be interviewed, and these interviews should be listed as sources for the paper.)
4. After completing the research, summarize research findings, conclusions, recommended sources, and recommendations for further study in a **12 page** paper.
5. Next, prepare a **presentation** (i.e., power-slides, handouts, and outline of comments) for briefing the church leaders (e.g., the Church Board or Ministry Board in the envisioned future ministry context) in order to influence them to consider appropriate changes to this aspect of their overall ministry strategy.

D. Conduct SWOT analyses of ministry contexts.

1. Using the materials presented in the handouts in the assignment link in Canvas, conduct **3** SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses of **one of each** of the following types of local church ministry contexts (**Note:** If currently serving in ministry in a local church, one of the SWOT analyses should be of that church):
 - a. Ministry stages: church plant, growing, plateaued, conflicted, split & discouraged, dying.
 - b. Ministry types: rural, urban, suburban, small city/town, inner-city, etc.
 - c. Ministry size: less than 75; 76–200; 201–400; 401–800; 801+

*Note: These categories may not fit certain ministry settings; therefore, contact the course instructor for determining categories more appropriate to that ministry setting.
2. Each analysis will be presented in a **1-page** chart format with an additional **1-page** summary analysis for each of the 3 analyses (i.e., 2 pages for each SWOT analysis).

E. Study Strategic Plans and Planning in the Bible.

1. Study each of the following individuals in the Bible as to the listed categories of their strategic planning process:
 - a. Individuals & Objective:
 - i. Joshua & conquest of the Promised Land.
 - ii. Nehemiah & the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.
 - iii. Jesus & his plans for the ministry of the 12 apostles at the beginning of His ministry on earth.
 - iv. Paul & his personal ministry plan.

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- b. Planning Categories to Study for each of the above individuals:
 - i. Plan's objective.
 - ii. Plan's vision.
 - iii. Plan's strategy.
 - iv. Plan's goals.
 - v. Planning process.
2. Observations and conclusions of each individual's plan and planning process will be presented in a **chart format** (i.e., 1 chart for each individual in "a" using the categories in "b" in the chart).

F. Develop a Great Commission strategic plan for a local church.

1. **General:** Develop a strategy for a specific ministry to fulfill the Great Commission. If currently involved in a specific ministry, you are encouraged to consider developing this strategy for that ministry but are free to develop a "generic" plan that would be adapted to any ministry setting.
2. **Preparation:** Part of the preparation for writing the plan is to interview ministry leaders concerning their planning, their plans, and their perspectives toward each aspect of the plan. Specifically, interview **3** seasoned leaders, and then write a summary paper (of at least **3 pages**) concerning significant observations and lessons learned from all 5 interviews concerning each of the **three (3)** aspects of the plan listed in "3" below (i.e. 1 part of the paper concerning comments about Evangelism, 1 about Discipleship, and 1 about Missions).
3. **Plan:** This strategic plan should include specifics for the following broad categories of ministry:
 - a. *Local evangelism:* presenting the Gospel to people who could be discipled in that ministry setting.
 - b. *Discipleship:* direct discipleship with people in that specific ministries.
 - c. *Missions:* the work of a specific ministry with people beyond the direct contact of the ministries of that ministry.

*Note: These categories may not fit certain ministry settings; therefore, contact the course instructor for determining categories more appropriate to that ministry setting.

4. **Paper:** This strategic plan should be **10 pages** in length. **Note:** Perhaps you would desire to present this plan in another format than that of a paper (i.e., in a PowerPoint and handout format for presentation to ministry leaders), but you must get instructor approval for doing this.

G. Answer In-Class Study Questions.

1. Each Class period (3-hour session), answer the study questions asked by the course instructor.
2. The purpose of these questions is to engage with the material presented as well as to interact with and learn from the insights of others in the course.

IV. METHODS

A. Presentation:

1. In-class methods: lecture, class discussions, and presentations.

***About Class Attendance:** Research consistently demonstrates that class attendance and active participation correlate to higher performance on course assessments.

***About Classroom Use of Media:**

-**Computing devices** are permitted during the lecture and class discussion sessions for the sole purpose of taking notes. Use of these devices to access the Internet, make telephone calls or video calls, text messaging, updating social network services, etc. is not allowed, let alone very distracting to other students.

-**Cellphones / smartphones** may only be used in an emergency, and in those situations You may take the call but must leave the room and not return until the next break out of courtesy to fellow classmates.

***About Note Taking:** Students are expected to take notes during each class. Significant peer reviewed studies continue to demonstrate that notes taken by hand are understood better and remembered longer than those taken with a computer. Computer use which is a distraction to others (i.e., noise, blocking the screen, displaying non-class related material, etc.) is not allowed.

2. Out-of-class methods: reading, writing, research, and studying.

***About written assignments:** Unless directed otherwise, all written assignments must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.

B. Grading:

***About Late Assignments:** Assignments turned in late will be lowered **5% each day** it is late.

***About Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Most assignments at Calvary require the student to produce original work. Therefore, unless specifically permitted by the instructor, the use of AI-generated content is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. AI, however, may be utilized in cases where the instructor has explicitly permitted its use to accomplish specific tasks. It is only in these cases that AI-generated (or modified) content may be submitted by the student. If there are any questions as to the permissibility of AI use for an assignment, please ask your instructor for clarification. (Note: Turn-It-In.com will be used to verify assignment integrity.)

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***About course grade:** See the grading scale in the university catalog for specific grading scale that will be used for final course grade.

1. General grading criteria:

- A = completed assignment well beyond assignment criteria
- B = completed assignment as specified and very well done
- C = completed assignment with average work
- D = completed assignment but poorly
- F = did not complete assignment and/or unacceptable work

2. Possible points for each specific assignment:

***Note:** An assignment-specific rubric will be provided for each assignment.

- a. Textbook Observations & Questions (4 @ 15 ea.). . . = 60 points
- b. Gospel Presentations & Paper (5 @ 15 ea.; 1 @ 50). . . = 125 "
- c. Research Paper & Presentation (1 @ 250; 1 @ 50). . . = 300 "
- d. SWOT Analyses (3 @ 25 ea.). = 75 "
- e. Biblical Plans & Planning (4 @ 20 ea.). = 80 "
- f. Strategic Plan Interviews & Paper (1 @ 50) = 50 "
- g. "Great Commission" Strategic Plan (1 @ 250) = 250 "
- h. In-Class Study Questions (7 @ 10 ea) = 60 "

Total: 1000 points

V. MATERIALS

A. Required Textbooks

1. English Bible (NAS, NASB-U, NKJV, NET, ESV, or other by approval)

-The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

- 2. Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. 2nd ed. Revell, 2010. (ISBN: 9780800788087) [Retail: \$5.57] Pages: 166.
- 3. Moyer, Larry. *Free and Clear: Understanding & Communicating God's Offer of Eternal Life*. Kregel Publications, 2009. (ISBN: 9780825435720) [Retail: \$15.99] Pages: 288.
- 4. Newman, Randy. *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*. 2nd ed. Kregel Publications, 2017. (ISBN: 9780825444289) [Retail: \$17.99] Pages: 280.
- 5. Peters, George W. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Moody Publishers, 1984. (ISBN: 9780802407061) [Retail: \$22.99] Pages: 368.

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B. Selected Articles [Provided in Class by Course Instructor]:

VI. TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

[***Note:** An expanded schedule will be provided the first in-class session.]

<u>Week</u>	<u>Class Discussion</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
1	The Great Commission	--
2	Evangelism	Moyer Text Paper
3	Discipleship	Coleman & Newman Text Papers
4	Missions	Peters Text Paper
5	Contemporary Context	Research Papers & Presentations
6	Contemporary Strategies & Strategizing	Biblical Plans & Planning Papers & SWOT Analyses
7	Strategic Plans	Strategic Plans & Presentations
8	Post-Course Work	Personal Gospel Presentations Paper