



THE **wesleyan** CHURCH

Education & Clergy Development

Updated: 8/7/2017

Course: Sociology

ONLINE – Zoom

Thursdays 6-10PM EST

March 8, 15, 22, April 5, 12, 19

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Syllabus Overview

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Course Description

This course helps pastors-in-training to address the question, “Who is my neighbor?” through heightened sociological consciousness and application of practical tools. It covers three content areas:

1. Introduction to basic principles of sociology
2. Practice with social research methods for studying church and community
3. Consideration of multiple viewpoints on various social concerns, particularly race.

The majority of instruction and homework emphasizes the skillful collection and interpretation of church and community data. This distinctly practical focus should not only equip pastors to lead their churches in appropriate ministry within diverse communities today. It should also prepare them to respond to ongoing demographic change, to offer a peacemaking presence during public crises, and to serve with nimble effectiveness throughout the geographic moves of their careers.

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, learners will be able to

- Define border crossing and explain its spiritual, personal, and missional importance
- Explain basic principles of sociology and why they are important to church ministry
- Articulate a biblical basis for crossing sociological borders
- Describe the sociocultural embeddedness of personal development
- Recommend areas of sensitivity regarding generational and ethnic divides
- Employ online tools to develop a demographic profile of a community
- Employ ethnographic methods (interview, observation) to deepen understanding of local contexts
- Synthesize course principles and assignments in a final personal reflection

Required Textbooks

Students are responsible for ordering their textbooks and may choose where to purchase them. Some students purchase their textbooks from Wesleyan Publishing House at www.wphonline.com (as available) and from Amazon.com.

- Anderson, David, & Zuercher, Brent. (2001). *Letters across the divide: Two friends explore racism, friendship, and faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Tweedell, C. (ed.). (2010). *Sociology: A Christian approach for changing the world*. Marion, IN: Triangle.

Live Class

Students are required to attend all live class sessions.

1. **Due start of Class 1:** Tweedel reading
 - a. Read Tweedel chapters 1-5, 7, 17-18.
 - b. Then account for your reading by sending me a message that you have completed it. Simply state, “I pledge that I have read ____ percent (or ____ pages) of today’s assigned reading.”
 - c. Finally, skim over the remaining chapters so that you can choose one to study in greater depth later in Week 5.

2. Due start of Class 2: Demographic study.
Following the instructions in the attachment, "Sociology Week 2 Who Is My Neighbor," complete online research to understand the ethnic, economic, age, gender, family status, religious, and other characteristics of the community surrounding your church, using the zip code(s) from which your church could attract newcomers. Then compare this information with the characteristics of the people who currently attend the church. To what extent does the church reflect the makeup of the community? For this assignment, you should present your findings to your classmates in the form of a chart or table.
3. Due start of Class 3: Ethnographic Observation.
Following the instructions in the attachment, "Sociology Week 3 Flesh in the Neighborhood," drive around the area with a partner from the church and take notes of what you observe. Write 1-2 pages about your discoveries.
4. Due start of Class 4. Interview.
Follow the instructions in the attachment, "Sociology Week 4 Local Listening." Meet with someone who can broaden your perspective about the community—especially about groups that are unfamiliar to you. Ideally, your interview should be a semi cross-cultural experience for you. Try to speak with someone who is a member of a group differing from your own (economically or ethnically, for example). What are his/her hopes for the community? Your questions should be open-ended and non-threatening. Write a 1-2 page report.
5. Due start of Class 5. Presentation of chosen Tweedel chapter(s).
In Week 1, you chose one or two of the remaining chapters from Tweedel (selected from Chapters 6, 9-16). This week, you should present that chapter's topic to your classmates. Supplement the chapter with any additional materials you think would be helpful to others.
6. Due start of class Week 6: Letters Across the Divide reading report.
Read this short book in its entirety, preferably with a partner from a differing sociological background (i.e., most likely someone from another ethnic group, ideally one with which your own group tends to experience tension from time to time). Reading with a partner from another ethnic group can be a profoundly rewarding experience, even though it may seem frightening at first.
 - a. Sharing one copy of the book can be cumbersome, and your partner is contributing time and emotional investment on your behalf—so please consider purchasing two copies.
 - b. Write a 1-2 page reflection on the experience and on insights you have gained.
 - i. How did the reading and the partner experience enrich and/or challenge you? Would you recommend the book and reading with a partner to others? Why or why not? We will discuss this book and the reading-partner experience in class, so bring your notes.

- ii. Include insights from your reading partner. How does s/he experience life in this community differently than you do? How does s/he see the dynamics in the book evidenced in your community?
- iii. Finally, consider ways that this knowledge could inform or shape the ministry of your church.

Post-Course Assignment

Due October 31. Write a 2-page reflection on what you have learned in this course. Refer to course principles, and describe how you believe this course will influence how you minister to the people in your community.

ALL POST-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE April 27, 2018

Grades

Week 1 Tweedel Reading pledge	50 points
Week 2 Demographic Study	125 points
Week 3 Ethnographic Study	125 points
Week 4 Interview	125 points
Week 5 Tweedel Presentation	125 points
Week 6 Letters Across the Divide	150 points
Post-course Reflection	100 points

	800 points total

Policies & Requirements

Attendance

Students are required to attend all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% (16 hours) of the minimum required seat time (20 hours) will result in automatic failure of the course. Any and all absences within that 20% window must be approved by the professor prior to the course in writing (e.g. email). Do not ask for permission to be excused during the class or after the absence has already occurred.

Grading Scale

- 100-97 A
- 96-94 A-
- 93-91 B+
- 90-88 B
- 87-85 B-
- 84-81 C+
- 80-76 C
- 75-71 C-
- 70-68 D
- 67 or below F

Students must get a “C” or above to pass the course and receive credit for ordination.

Books

Students are responsible for ordering their textbooks and may choose where to purchase them. Some students purchase their textbooks from Wesleyan Publishing House at www.wphonline.com (as available) and from Amazon.com.

Due Date

All assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus or verbally communicated by the instructor. Professors are required to submit grades to Education and Clergy Development at a maximum of 12 weeks after the last day of class. Assignments may not be submitted to the professor any later than 8 weeks after the last day of class. Assignments not submitted by the due date will result in an automatic “0” for the assignment.

Extensions

Extensions may be (but are not guaranteed) granted for sickness, serious injury, or death in the student’s immediate family or for similar extenuating circumstances. *When in doubt, please contact the professor.* Also, no assigned work will be accepted after the final due date, unless an extension has been granted in writing (e.g. email) from the professor. Communication is the key! Professors may reduce a student’s grade by 20% for each week past the due date (even in the event of approved extensions). Education and Clergy Development reserves the right to refuse extension and override the professor as it deems necessary.

Papers

All written papers must be typed. Papers should be double spaced on 8.5x11 paper using 12 point font in a normal, easy to read type style (Arial, Cambria, Times New Roman, etc.). Margins should be 1” on all sides. Each paper should include at least: student’s full name, course title, and date. It is advisable to include your name on each page of the paper.

Ordination Deadline

If the student is a candidate for ordination in a given year, coursework must be completed as follows: the final grade submission deadline (12 weeks after the last day of class) must be at least 40 days before the student’s district conference. Professors are not required to fulfill any requests for grade submission prior to this deadline.

Plagiarism

Ministerial students in The Wesleyan Church are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity in their personal, professional and academic life and work. As Christians, we are called to a high standard of honesty. As such, students in our ministerial training courses are required to adhere to strict academic guidelines.

The following is borrowed from a college catalog.

Plagiarism — This is defined as offering the work of another as one's own. It is an attempt to deceive by implying that one has done work that was actually done by another. Faculty and students are honor bound to show that ideas and words match with the sources used and thus demonstrate that honest research has been done.

Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Copying all or part of a theme, examination, paper, library reading report, or other written work from another person's production
2. Submitting as one's own work that which was wholly or partially done by another so as to appear to one's professor to be more accurate or skilled in one's work than one actually is
3. Quoting material from any source without proper documentation
4. Summarizing or paraphrasing from any source without proper documentation
5. Misrepresentation of documentation or resources
6. Using in collateral reports or book reviews the opinion of a professional literary critic or of a campus friend as though it were one's own original thought
7. Submitting workbook answers copied from another person or working in a group and submitting an identical set of answers for each member of the group without explicit permission from the professor

Cheating — Examples of cheating include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Use of unauthorized prepared materials (cheat sheets) for answering test questions
2. Giving aid to another student during a test or quiz
3. Gaining answers to test questions from others during testing periods
4. Signing another person's name to the attendance record
5. Claiming to have done laboratory work or outside reading that was not done
6. Submitting the same work for more than one course without the prior approval of the professors involved

Education and Clergy Development policy for all students receiving credit through non-accredited ministry training programs (e.g. FLAME, FLAMA, Correspondence Courses, Cross Training, District Extension Classes, Equipping for Ministry, etc.):

- 1) Any instance of plagiarism (whether intentional or not) will result in an automatic "F" for the particular assignment and may also result in an automatic failing of the course.
- 2) A repeat offense will result in an automatic failing of the course.
- 3) A third offense will result in an automatic withdrawal from a credentialing track in The Wesleyan Church.

Other Course Documents

Three assignment instruction sheets should accompany this syllabus:

- Sociology Week 2 Who Is My Neighbor
- Sociology Week 3 Flesh in the Neighborhood
- Sociology Week 4 Local Listening