



# AMBROSE

## SEMINARY • TORONTO

### Contemporary Religious Movements (WM633-E) Syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Mark Chapman

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**Place:** 30 Carrier Drive, Suite 204

Toronto, ON M9W 5T7

**Date:** October 11-13, November 8-10, 2007

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#### Course Description

Presenting the gospel to adherents of various contemporary religious groups is a significant task of the church. This course undertakes a study of various contemporary religious movements in order to develop an understanding of their actions and attitudes. Of particular interest are the historical, sociological and theological factors that shape and underpin these movements. This course takes a missional approach to understanding these groups. Leaving the course you will have a better understanding of why these groups do what they do that will aid you in your efforts to proclaim the gospel.

## Course Objectives

1. Personal and Spiritual Formation
  - a. To develop an understanding of one's own attitude and heart for people outside of Christianity
  - b. To be able to integrate a biblical approach to non-Christian religious movements into one's own ministry
2. Practical Ministry Experience
  - a. To be able to make theological and sociologically informed judgments about religious movements
  - b. To be able to apply course insights to specific ministry situations
3. In-depth Biblical and Theological Study
  - a. To gain a working knowledge of the historical, theological and sociological history of new religious movements and the worldview assumptions which underlie their beliefs and actions
  - b. To understand the role of the church in its cultural context

## Class Schedule

### In Class:

October 11-13, November 8-10, 2007

Thursday 7-10 pm, Friday 7-10 pm, Saturday 9am-4pm.

### Outside Class Discussion:

Six hours of course discussion to be scheduled among students outside of classroom time. This may include both face-to-face interaction with the professor and online discussion.

### Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and six hours of discussion in their entirety

## Textbooks

### A. To support class material

Dawson, Lorne L. 1998. *Comprehending Cults: The Sociology of New Religious Movements*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Hexham, Irving, Stephen Rost, John Morehead, and John W. Morehead II. 2004. *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Kregel Publications.

### B. Supplementary

Berger, Peter L. 1969. *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

Peterson, Eugene H. 2005. *Christ plays in ten thousand places : a conversation in spiritual theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans.

## Course Outline

Date	Topic(s)	Reading(s)
<b>Introduction</b>		
Oct. 11	Administration How do we study new religious movements? What are new religious movements?	Dawson 1-40 Hexham et al 17-22
Oct. 12	Sociological Context	Dawson 41-71 Barker 1995a
	Historical Context Theological Context	Dawson 41-71 Hexham et al 25-111
<b>Body</b>		
Oct. 13 AM	Conversion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who joins new religious movements?</li> <li>• Why do people join new religious movements?</li> </ul>	Dawson 72-101 Hexham et al 113-156
	Unification Church (i.e., Moonies)	Barker 1995b <a href="http://www.unification.org">www.unification.org</a>
Oct. 13 PM	Brainwashing and Commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can conversion be coerced?</li> <li>• Why do people stay in new religious movements?</li> </ul>	Dawson 102-126
	International Society for Krishna Consciousness	Rochford <a href="http://www.iskcon.com">www.iskcon.com</a>
Nov. 8	Conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What causes religious violence?</li> <li>• Societal reaction: the anti-cult movement</li> </ul> <b>Essay Due</b>	Dawson 128-157 Melton <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/waco/">www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/waco/</a>
Nov. 9	Leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who leads new religious movements?</li> <li>• How do new religious movements develop?</li> </ul>	Palmer
	Scientology	Bednarowski <a href="http://www.scientology.com">www.scientology.com</a>
Nov. 10 AM	Ministering to New religious movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we reach them?</li> </ul>	Hexham et al 159-278
<b>Conclusion</b>		
Nov. 10 PM	The Significance of New Religious Movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact do new religious movements have on mission?</li> <li>• What is the future of new religious movements?</li> </ul>	Dawson 158-180 Hexham et al 279-304

## Assignments

### A. Approaches to New religious movements

- a. Read Dawson and Hexham et. al.
- b. Compare and contrast a missiological with a social scientific approach to new religious movements
- c. Explain how their particular context contributed to their perspective
- d. Identify their contributions to contemporary ministry

### B. Response Papers

- a. Choose three (3) questions from the list of study questions at the end of each chapter of Hexham et. al. (one (1) from each of the three sections of the book)
- b. Answer them based on the lectures, course readings, and your own personal experience
- c. Demonstrate that you have understood the topic and integrated it with the different parts of the course.
- d. Explain how insights from this discussion could be valuable in a specific ministry situation.
- e. Exchange your paper with at least 2 other class members
- f. Discuss your conclusions with each other
- g. Revise your paper based on those discussions

### C. Research Paper

- a. Choose a Religious Movement that you interact with (or could interact with) on a regular basis
- b. Describe the history and development of this movement
- c. Describe their history and development in Canada
- d. Using at least ten (10) academic sources describe their worldview
- e. Using Mikel Neumann's model of incarnational ministry (or another ministry model of your choosing) explain how to minister to members of this movement.

## Evaluation

Assignment	Value	Max. Size	Due Date
A. Approaches	20%	7 pages	Nov. 8, 2007
B. Response Papers	30%	2 pages / each	Oct. 27, Nov. 8 & Nov. 24, 2007
C. Research	50%	12 pages	Dec. 22, 2007
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>		



## Submission/Return of Assignments

Students will submit completed assignments in hard copy form directly to the instructor at:

Ambrose Seminary – Toronto  
30 Carrier Drive, Suite 204  
Toronto, ON M9W 5T7

Students are responsible to retain both a disk backup and a paper copy of all their assignments in addition to the copies sent to the instructor. Mail can be unpredictable. Backup copies protect all parties. I will return all assignments after grading to the Administrative Assistant for Ambrose - Toronto. They will be made available for pick up at the Ambrose - Toronto office six weeks after they are submitted. Assignments that are unclaimed and/or undeliverable will be held for one year from the due date, and then destroyed.

## Submission of Late Work:

The Ambrose - Toronto policy is that of no extensions, save for serious medical problems or family tragedy. All coursework requirements and due dates are clearly stated in the course syllabus.

Coursework submitted after the due date, without prior approval by the Registrar and Academic Dean will receive a grade of "F." Requests for an extension will be considered only in the following circumstances:

- the quality of prior coursework has been satisfactory; AND
- circumstances beyond the student's control, such as an extended illness or death of a family member, make it impossible for the student to complete the coursework on time; AND
- the student submits a "Request for an Extension to coursework" application to the Registrar on or before December 14, 2006.

## Paper Format

Seminary papers are to follow the guidelines of a style manual. Examples include, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian (6<sup>th</sup> edition) and/or *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Fourth edition). The instructor will indicate where these guidelines may be waived or substituted. Students will identify, on the first or cover page of all assignments, the course name, the instructor's name and their own name (student ID numbers are optional).

Please note: Papers should be double-spaced with regular spacing between paragraphs, using 12 point text only (titles and headings may be larger). One inch margins should be used on all four edges.

If you have not yet done so I strongly recommend that you take our free seminar: *Researching and Writing Academic Papers*.

## Plagiarism and Academic Honesty Policy.

Ambrose-Toronto maintains a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

## Protection of Personal Information

Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@auc-nuc.ca](mailto:privacy@auc-nuc.ca).

## Registration and Financial Policies

- Registration and payment in full is due for this modular class by 7 pm on the first day of class, Thursday, October 11, 2007.
- Students may withdraw from this modular class and receive a full refund only prior to the second class session (i.e., before 7 pm on Friday, October 12, 2007). No tuition refund will be issued after this deadline
- Students may voluntarily withdraw or change their registration from credit to audit, without academic penalty, only prior to completing 70% of the course (i.e., before 7 pm on Friday, November 8, 2007). Students who withdraw from a course after this deadline will receive a grade of "F"

## Bibliography

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