



SYLLABUS

Strategic Church Development through Christian Education

CEAM8305

A Professional Doctoral Seminar

March 9-11, 2026

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Division of Discipleship & Ministry Leadership

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course focuses on the delivery of Christian education in a local church context to foster strategic church development. Both traditional and contemporary Christian education methods for all age groups will be studied. Specific attention will be given to both Sunday School and small groups as agents of Christian education.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Demonstrate a comprehension of the theological rationale and foundation for the practice of Christian education in a local church or ministry setting.
2. Analyze current trends in Christian education and compare them to the student's current ministry situation.
3. Identify strengths and weaknesses of current models for the practice of Christian education.
4. Value the role and practice of Christian education as it relates to accomplishing the mission and purpose of the local church.
5. Prepare an abbreviated strategic plan for the implementation of Christian education and church development in the student's current ministry situation.

Required Readings

The following text and resources are required reading for class discussions and are to be read in their entirety unless otherwise specified. Assigned texts should be read prior to the first day of class.

Read each of the following *textbooks*:

Estep, James R., and Mark Maddix. *Practicing Christian Education: An Introduction for Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2017. (ISBN 978-0801030963)

Anthony, Michael, and Warren S. Benson. *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003 (printed 2011). (ISBN 978-1610977326)

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013. (ISBN 978-0801014550)

One of the following *practitioner resources* will be assigned to be reviewed.

Boren, M. Scott. *Making Cell Groups Work*, Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources, 2002.

Braddy, Ken. *Breakthrough: Creating a New Scorecard for Group Ministry Success*. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2022.

_____. *Breathing Life into Sunday School: 12 Essentials to Revive Your Most Important Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2019.

Donahue, Bill, and Russ G Robinson. *Building a Life-Changing Small Group Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

English, J.T. *Deep Discipleship*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2020.

Osborne, Larry. *Sticky Church*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Parr, Steve. *Sunday School that Really Works: A Strategy for Connecting Congregations to Communities*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publishers, 2010.

Surratt, Chris. *Leading Small Groups: How to Gather, Launch, Lead, and Multiply Your Small Group*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019.

Taylor, Allan. *Sunday School in HD* Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009.

Wilson, Darryl. *Disciple-Making Encounters: Revolutionary Sunday School*. Abbotsford, WI: Aneko Press, 2017.

Recommended *strategy planning resources*: In addition to the Malphurs' text above, the following texts may be considered in the development of a strategic plan. (Note: These are not required textbooks.)

Hawkins, Greg, and Cally Parkinson. *Reveal: Where Are You?* Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Association, 2007

Mims, Gene. *The Kingdom Focused Church*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003.

Yount, William. *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008.

Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

The following learning activities and assessments are to be completed as described below by the scheduled dates. All written assignments will be submitted through Blackboard.

Course Assignments

Before the Seminar

1. **Church Ministry Analysis:** Each student will analyze either his/her current church or a prior church in which he/she is/was active with regard to the church's practice of Christian education. Specific attention is to be given to the church's development and implementation of the theological rationale for the educational ministry (including Sunday School, small groups, discipleship groups, age group gatherings, mission organizations, or other education programs.) Assessment of the Christian education model followed by the church/ministry and its ministry is to be provided. The educational ministry of the church is also to be evaluated with regard to: 1) biblical integrity, 2) theological soundness, 3) implementation of the four functions of the church, 4) budget allocation, and 5) value to the church. The analysis should be a total of eight complete pages. Be prepared to present your analysis to the class and answer questions from the class during the seminar. **Submit through Canvas no later than March 8, 2026.**
2. **Ten Questions from Textbook Readings:** Students will read the assigned textbooks prior to class and be prepared to present and defend stated approaches to church assessment and strategies for growth and/or health during class discussion. Prior to the seminar, using the textbook readings, each student will write a definition of Christian Education and explain the relationship of Christian Education to discipleship and spiritual formation (at least two paragraphs describing the relationship with no more than one page). Students will also generate a list of 10 questions from the reading assignments. Proposed questions should reflect significant concepts addressed in the texts and the implications for various ministry contexts. Submit both the definition of Christian education and the

ten questions. Students will present and defend their definition of Christian Education to the class. **Submit through Canvas no later than March 8, 2026.**

3. **Book Summary:** Each student will complete a four-page summary and review of a specific assigned textbook (one of the practitioner resources) using a **template** supplied by the professor. Copies will be provided to all seminar participants via Canvas. Students will be expected to lead a class discussion regarding the contents of the assigned text. Assignments will be made by February 1, 2026.

Each summary should include a brief summary of the book, key ideas and principles, strengths and weaknesses of the author's position, points of agreement and disagreement. The application insert should be related to the student's personal ministry context and should identify at least five potential application points. Headlines and bullet points should be cited on the reverse side with adequate space for notes by class members. Summaries should be available online but be prepared to distribute copies to other participants in the seminar. **Submit through Canvas no later than March 8, 2026.**

4. **Resource Review:** Examine resources linked to Baptist state conventions, Lifeway, and other Christian education sites that you may discover. Identify at least five tools, training venues, or planning manuals that are available and that you would consider using for your church or ministry. Summarize these resources on a one- or two-page list and submit through Canvas. Students will discuss their findings and provide a rationale for use and a recommendation to others in the class. Chapter (s) assignments will be made by February 1, 2026. **Submit through Canvas no later than March 8, 2026.**

During the Seminar

5. **Textbook Presentation and Discussion:** Each student will present the key ideas, theological framework, and practical applications addressed in an assigned textbook chapter(s). Students will make their chapter(s) summary available through Canvas and be expected to lead a class discussion regarding the contents of the assigned material. The professor will send individual assignments via email before class.
6. **Seminar Participation:** Students are expected to be active participants in all sessions of the seminar. Note: The seminar actually begins with the receipt of the syllabus and continues until all assignments are completed and submitted. The seminar does not consist only of the class time component.

Following the seminar

7. **Theological Rationale Paper:** Each student will prepare a four-page paper presenting a theological rationale for Christian education. The purpose of the paper is for the student

to demonstrate the theological rationale and foundation for the practice of Christian education in a local church or ministry setting. (For a guide, reference Chapter 3 in Practicing Christian Education). **Due through CANVAS on April 27, 2026.**

8. **Annotated Bibliography:** Create an annotated bibliography of sources that inform the philosophy and strategy for Christian Education in your church or ministry. Each entry should be a 4-6 sentence single-spaced paragraph. A minimum of twelve (12) sources including course textbooks should be cited. Each annotated bibliographic entry should contain the correct format Turabian format. Each annotation that follows should contain your appraisal and considerations of the text, not just a synopsis of the text. **Due through CANVAS on April 27, 2026.**
9. **Abbreviated Strategic Ministry Plan:** Each student will prepare an abbreviated strategic ministry plan for his/her church or ministry situation. Instructions will be provided during the on-campus portion of the seminar with regard to the scope and length of the report. It is anticipated that the paper will follow a format created from a synthesis of the presented material. **Due through CANVAS on May 11, 2026.**

Seminar Evaluation

Church Ministry Analysis	10%
Ten Questions & Definition	10%
Book Summary & Presentation	10%
Resource Review	5%
Seminar Participation	10%
Theological Paper	15%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Strategic Ministry Plan	<u>25%</u>
	100%

Use Turabian (current edition) for all writing assignments for this seminar. Papers will be graded based on 70% content and 30 % form, spelling and grammar. **All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. Late assignments will incur a late penalty for the grade.**

Directed Study:

Students who choose to take this course as a Directed Study are expected to complete all the class assignments as detailed. Students are also required to complete three additional assignments to compensate for the “lost” seat time. All are due by the end of the trimester. 1. Choose one book from the required and write a summary and reaction paper 5-7 pages in length. 2. Select an additional book from the assigned area and produce a second summary. 3. Expand assignment #2 to include a brief paragraph on each of the questions you identified.

Explain why you selected the question and how you might answer the question now that you have completed the reading.

Assignment Formatting

- Unless otherwise noted, type all assignments according to Turabian format.
- All papers must be written in the third person.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Use the same number of references as assigned pages.
- Use correct spelling and grammar.
- Use proper pagination.
- Include your name on the *Cover Page* (Formal Turabian)
- Write the *full* assignment.

Class Schedule

The seminar is scheduled to meet from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. (Central Time) on Monday, March 9, 2026, and on 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, March 10-11. All times are Central Time and include breaks and mealtimes.

A tentative schedule will be posted on Canvas approximately one week before the seminar.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. [Video Conferencing Help Desk](#) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Video Conferencing NOBTS classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Affairs. If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact Conner Hinton immediately at chinton@nobts.edu or 504-816-8246. Students must complete the Accommodation Request Form and provide documentation of their disability. The Assistant Dean of Students notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for special accommodations on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Selected Bibliography

Anderson, Philip and Phoebe Anderson. *The House Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.

Anthony, Michael J. and Warren S. Benson. *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century*. Eugene: Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003.

Arnold, Jeffrey. *Seven Tools for Building Effective Groups*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997.

_____. *The Big Book of Small Groups*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994.

Barrett, Lois. *Building the House Church*. Kitchener: Herald, 1986.

Coleman, Lyman. *Small Group Training Manual*. Littleton, CO: Serendipity, 1991.

Coleman, Robert Emerson. *The Great Commission Lifestyle: Conforming Your Life to Kingdom Priorities*. Grand Rapids: F.H. Revell, 1992.

Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002

Duewel, Wesley L. *Touch the World Through Prayer*. Grand Rapids: F. Asbury, 1986.

Edgemon, Roy T. & Steve Williams. *Leading Discipleship in a Church: 1997-98*. Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1996.

_____. *Leading Discipleship in a Church*. Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1997.

Easum, Bill. *The Complete Church Ministry Audit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006

Estep, James R., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison. *A Theology for Christian Education*. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2008

Galloway, Dale. *20/20 Vision: How to Create a Successful Church With Lay Pastors and Cell Groups*. Portland, OR: Foundations of Hope, 1986.

Getz, Gene A. and Charles R. Swindoll. *The Walk: Growing into the Fullness of Christ*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000.

Gorman, Julie A. *Community That is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups*. Wheaton: Victor, 1993.

Hadaway, C. Kirk, Stuart A. Wright, and Francis M. DuBose. *Home Cell Groups and House Churches*. Nashville: Broadman, 1987.

Hawkins, Greg, and Cally Parkinson. *Reveal: Where Are You?* Barrington, IL: Willow

Creek Association, 2007.

Hellelbein, Frances, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard, eds. *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.

Hemphill, Ken. *Revitalizing the Sunday Morning Dinosaur*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996.

_____ and Bill Taylor. *Ten Best Practices To Make Your Sunday School Work*. Nashville: LifeWay, 2001.

Hemphill, Ken, and R. Wayne Jones. *Growing an Evangelistic Sunday School*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1989.

Icenogle, Gareth Weldom. *Biblical Foundation for Small Group Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994.

Knight, George R. *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction to Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. Berrin Springs, MI: Andrew University Press, 2006.

Long, Jimmy. *Small Group Leaders' Handbook: The Next Generation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995.

Mack, Michael C. *The Synergy Church: A Strategy for Integrating Small Groups and Sunday School*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Mallory, Sue. *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

_____ and Brad Smith. *The Equipping Church Guidebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.

_____. *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Mancini, Will. *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008

McBride, Neal F. *How To Build A Small Groups Ministry*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995.

McIntosh, Gary. *Make Room for the Boom...or Bust: Six Models for Reaching Three Generations*. Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1997.

- Mims, Gene. *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth* (rev.). Nashville: LifeWay, 2001.
- Poling, Wayne, ed. *Sunday School Manual*. Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2009.
- Rhodes, David. *Cell Church or Traditional?: Reflections on the Church*. Cambridge: Grove, 1996.
- Stetzer, Ed and Thom Rainer. *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2010.
- Southern, Richard and Robert Norton. *Cracking Your Congregation's Code*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Stanley, Andy and Ed Young. *Can We Do That: 24 Innovative Practices that Will Change the Way You Do Church*. Howard Publishing, 2002.
- Taylor, Bill. *21 Truths, Traditions, and Trends*. Nashville: Convention, 1996.
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- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose-Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Welch, Bobby H. *Evangelism Through Sunday School: A Journey of Faith*. Nashville: LifeWay, 1997.
- White, James Emery. *Rethinking the Church: A Challenge to Creative Redesign in an Age of Transition*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.