

FE602: Understanding Context and Change (1 credit)
Wednesdays, 10:40 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Spring, 2010

Faculty Information:

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Key Questions

1. What specific steps must a pastor take to launch a successful ministry?
2. Why do new seminary grads have such a difficult time in first calls/appointments and why particularly in oral/traditional culture settings?
3. How can a new pastor begin to comprehend the “cultural context” of a congregation?
4. What is at stake during a “crisis” in the life of the church?
5. What variables are involved in fostering significant change?

Overview/Course Description:

This course will help you identify and understand the unique culture (“context”) of a congregation in order to launch and maintain a successful ministry. We will explore the importance of pastors developing “cultural capital” as a key dynamic in helping churches learn to adapt (“change”).

Prerequisites: approved SPM setting and completion of the first seminary year.

Course Objectives:

1. To help you gain analytical tools that you can use to become a student of the culture in which you serve.
2. To increase your awareness of some of the dynamics that influence the way that congregations behave.
3. To teach you about the concept of “cultural capital” and its significance for effective ministry.
4. To encourage reflection on your current and past experiences in ministry in order to improve as a minister in your *next* setting.

M.Div. Curricular Objectives

The following M.Div. curriculum goals (*ref. UDTS Catalog 2007-2009*) are addressed by this course:

1. Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
2. Engage contemporary theological and ethical issues with insight and humility.
3. Evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity.
4. Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

Required Text

Thompson, George B.; *How to Get Along with Your Church*, Pilgrim Press, 2001

Assessment

1. Course Requirements
 - a. Regular attendance (no more than 2 absences)
 - b. Class participation
 - c. Completion of weekly reading and written assignments (please see “Respond” section on syllabus). **Please submit written assignments on the Monday *before* class.** Written assignments are to be a well-crafted paragraph; you may write as much as you want, but only a paragraph is required. A **MAXIMUM** of two written assignments may be “skipped,” and you **MAY NOT** skip the final assignment. Written assignments may be emailed to hmurry@dbq.edu
 - d. Timely completion of SPM reports and forms (if currently in SPM).
2. Grading: Pass/Fail. Students will be evaluated based on the requirements listed above.