

Introduction to Christian Discipleship – BTS 1030/3

Canadian Mennonite University - Outtatown Discipleship School Course Syllabus, Fall 2011

Director: Cameron Priebe (M.A.)

Course description:

Within the context of a mentoring environment students will be encouraged to explore the nature of Christian discipleship and an understanding of Christian faith. Lectures will introduce students to related Biblical stories/texts, the character of God, the nature of discipleship in the early church and historic Christianity, Christian ethics, the practice of spiritual disciplines and corporate worship, and current attempts to interpret Christian faith in a post modern, western world. Selected readings have been chosen to represent some of the current attempts to interpret Christian faith in our time. Within Christian community, students will be encouraged to wrestle with difficult theological questions with their mentor or during group discussion.

Throughout this study, the students will be encouraged to consider the express mission of the Outtatown discipleship program, which is “to inspire and nurture students in their life of discipleship with Jesus Christ... in a journey towards: knowing God - in truth and relationship; knowing yourself - in personality and character, in abilities and gifts; and, knowing the world - in its beauty, diversity and pain. As a result, the community conversation will often centre on the intersection of the larger story of Christian faith and one’s own life story, in an attempt to discover effective ways of living as a faithful Christian in the post-modern world.

This course will be given a pass/fail evaluation and may be used to fulfill one of the first year introductory requirements in Biblical and Theological Studies (3 credits).

Learning Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of Christian discipleship, Christian community, and the call of Jesus to “follow me” in a life of discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. To develop a basic knowledge of the major themes of the Bible and how these help to form one biblical story (meta-narrative) that has compelling personal connections and implications.
3. To learn, and to practice spiritual disciplines that will enable the continued development of strong Christian character.
4. To explore the themes and moments in the early church, one’s own spiritual heritage, and implications for making “your faith your own” within a defined Christian community.
5. To encounter a number of diverse faith communities, both Christian and Muslim, experiencing these expressions of spirituality and gaining understandings of the connection/disconnection these may have with one’s own understandings of Christian faith and practice.
6. To participate in worship and community with Churches in Winnipeg, Montreal, Paris and Burkina Faso in order to experience the incarnational nature of Christian faith.
7. To evaluate Christian faith and commitments in relation to calling and direction in life.

Instructional methodology and course lectures:

Instructional units will be given throughout the program (Winnipeg, Quebec, Paris, and Burkina Faso). Within each cultural context students will receive a set of lectures, educational tours, visit key religious sites, participate in times of worship and engage in interactive discussions with Christians who embody the Church in that milieu. Instructors will often travel or live on site with the students leading to considerable additional time for reflection and discussion. At times, students will live with families who are attempting to interpret Christian faith for their own life and culture situation. Further study and discussion will take place under the direction of the site leaders and within the various interactive group settings (such as guided small group discussions, and Peer Mentoring Groups, PMGs). Through a written response to a set of questions for each lecture series, as well as through journaling, and group discussion, students will indicate their grasp of the material under discussion.

French Africa Instructors 2011:

All site leaders who direct the student learning and assist in the evaluation have completed an undergraduate degree, extensive training, and in some cases a masters degree or other advanced training, certificates and degrees. They function as a guide to learning throughout the semester. Visiting instructors will generally be French/English bilingual, have appropriate academic credentials and exceptional field experience.

Relevant resource materials and assigned readings:

Students will read, study and memorize select Biblical passages on Christian discipleship. A number of required reading assignments will be selected by Site Leaders as well as instructors. Group discussion in peer mentoring groups (PMGs), or in Small Groups, along with a written reflective response to assigned questions, will allow students to integrate what they have read with what they are experiencing. Various instructors will introduce additional readings and recommended resources during their sessions. This current list will be revised dramatically throughout the year to include resources in the French language, and the resources that are well known in various cultural settings. Each team travels with a Site Library, which will include the following, as well as additional French/English resources on recommendation from our ministry partners.

- Arnett, Jeffery Jensen. *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Augsburg, David W. *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God, and Love of Neighbor*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.
- Bell, Rob. *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005
- Claiborne, Shane. *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. "Article 17: Discipleship" (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1995), 65-68.
- Halter, Hugh and Matt Smay. *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Communities*. Jossey-Bass: 2008 (a Leadership Network Publication).
- Parks, Sharon Daloz *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.
- Smith, Christian with Patricia Snell. *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Snyder, C. Arnold. *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.

Assignments and academic credit:

Much of the learning takes place in very informal settings. Furthermore, much of the learning is experiential in nature and depends on group interaction, which can further complicate educational outcomes and evaluation. However, the very nature of the mentoring process in this program ensures that every student has been evaluated thoroughly and accurately on an individual and personal level. Students can complete all written assignments in the language of their choice (English or French) to facilitate optimal articulation of what has been learned. Assignments are as follows:

- Three page journal responses to questions from lectures (6/7 sessions) – 30%
- Response and discussion on several reading assignments (three entries) – 30%
- Biblical readings, reflections, journal entries and mentoring sessions – 20%
- Journal reflections on issues of poverty/injustice from a Biblical perspective – 10%
- Personal faith story and reflection on home church community connections – 10%

French Africa – History, Religion, Culture and Hope – HIST/POLS/GEOG 1120/3 credit hours

Canadian Mennonite University - Outtatown Discipleship School Course Syllabus, Fall 2011

Director: Cam Priebe (M.A.)

Course description:

Students will receive a very diverse set of perspectives on the history, religion, and culture of Burkina Faso and West Africa in general. This will begin with the personal stories of those who have adopted Canada as their new home. Tours, lectures and personal conversations in Paris, France will place this story within the context of colonial history and the power, control, and independence issues that are faced even today. Further study and personal experiences with the people in Burkina Faso will round out the story and provide reasons for hope.

This course will be given a pass/fail evaluation and will meet the requirements for an elective or area course in History, Geography, or Political Studies.

Course Objectives:

The Outtatown French Africa program will introduce students to some remarkable contrasts and contradictions. For many reasons, Burkina Faso is well chosen as part of this journey. It is one of the poorest countries of the world, and the team will travel through Montreal and Paris, France on the way there and back. Burkina Faso has one of the lowest literacy rates (12.8%) and this is a university program. Initially it will be hard to escape the drama of contradiction in order to see beauty, diversity and the richness that exists in non-monetary forms. It will take very good leadership and a well directed program to accomplish some of the following educational goals and the course objective. However, with strong and eager partners in Burkina Faso, and the welcoming nature of the Burkinabe people and its cultures, there are reasons for hope that significant learning will take place.

- 1) To experience the beauty of the people and the cultures in Burkina Faso by living with the people in various community settings and relating to them within family settings.
- 2) To gain a basic understanding of the history, culture, geography and socio-political structures of West Africa generally and Burkina Faso in particular; through research, lectures, and a wide-array of guided experiences to significant historic and cultural locations within the country.
- 3) To begin to appreciate some of the complexity that is part of the overwhelming set of contrasts between wealth and poverty, and to gain new understandings of peace and justice issues which are both international and personal in nature.
- 4) To reflect on the nature of both Christianity and Islam within the context of Burkina Faso, in terms of their impact on family/culture/community, understandings of growth and proselytism, perspectives on their involvement in peace and justice issues or political systems.
- 5) To gain a sense of the change taking place in Burkina Faso, along with the issues of culture, history, politics, resources, opportunities and limitations, and discover reasons for hope.

Required Reading and Other Resources:

A number of very good materials are available and will be used in this course. This includes a number of movies, short films and documentaries which will be shown during the program. Some required reading will be assigned from the following resources, but additional materials will be made available in both French and English throughout the program by instructors and country partners.

- Baxter, Joan. *Dust from our eyes : an unblinkered look at Africa*. Hamilton, ON: Wolsak and Wynn, 2008.
- Brenner, Louis. ed. *Muslim identity and social change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Entz, Donna. "Incarnational Witness Among the Samoghos of Burkina Faso." In Krabill et al. 2005

- Gingras, Donald. *Window of hope . . . and Reconciliation*. Essence Publishing, 2009. (A story of coming to Canada as an orphan and growing up in Quebec. Good insights into French-English and Native relations, and comparative issues in sub-Saharan Africa. The author has been a speaker at Soar Montreal.)
- Hill, Lawrence. *The Book of Negros/Somebody Knows My Name* (Novel, 2009)
- Ishmael Beah, *Le Chemin Parcouru*; memoirs d'un enfant soldat

Academic Credit and Student Evaluation

The learning will take place in a variety of settings throughout the semester. There will be formal lectures, visits to sites which have significant cultural and historical importance, and the less formal but very informative experiences in conversations which come from living with families in Burkina Faso. Furthermore, much of the learning is experiential in nature and depends on group interaction. The guided discussions, journaling and the individual mentoring sessions in this program ensures that every student has been evaluated thoroughly and accurately on an individual and personal level. Students can complete all written assignments in the language of their choice (English or French) to facilitate optimal articulation of what has been learned.

Assignments are as follows:

- Three page journal responses to questions from lectures (6/7 sessions) – 30%
- Written reflection and evaluation of assigned readings – 30%
- Participation and journal reflections from various family/life settings – 20%
- Discussions on the significance of various cultural/historic visits – 20%

Cross-cultural Service Learning PRAC-1000/3 credits

Canadian Mennonite University - Outatown Discipleship School Course Syllabus, Fall 2011

Director: Cameron Priebe (M.A.)

Course Description

Service Learning is a supervised, structured, experience-based learning opportunity that involves the student in action, reflection, and response on: teamwork, cooperation, leadership, cross-cultural communication and relationships, as well as the role that money, education and power dynamics can play in these situations. During their time in Canada, the students will serve in urban ministries in Winnipeg and Quebec, complete various work assignments with Christian retreat centers and participate in ministry with an indigenous people group. In France and Burkina Faso, students will serve by assisting with local construction projects, working with children in orphanages and schools and providing assistance in the various Churches and ministries we are associated with in that country.

This course will fulfill the requirements for a 3 credit practicum in most CMU programs except those with very specific practicum requirements such as music therapy and IDS.

Assignments:

Various studies have demonstrated that students' overall learning in a service assignment is enhanced if they have opportunity to reflect on and discuss their experiences and insights with others. After each of the major service assignments there will be an opportunity for group reflection and students will be asked to provide a reflective journal entry evaluating their experience and what they have learned.

Students on this program can expect to spend approximately 80 –100 hours in service assignments during their urban plunge programs, various Christian ministry programs and other service ministry. A full group discussion, journaling and further discussion in small groups or mentoring sessions will allow for the interpretive process to be realized.

Evaluation:

Journal entry for urban plunge projects (two events)	20%
Journal entry for service ministries in Canada	20%
Journal entries with international programs (6 events)	60%

Introduction to Islam: history, culture and practice in diverse Muslim communities HIST/RLGN 1020/3

Canadian Mennonite University - Outtatown Discipleship School Course Syllabus, Fall 2011

Director: Cameron Priebe (M.A.)

Course description (optional credit in the Outtatown French Africa Program):

Through lectures, conversations within Muslim communities and a series of visits to important religious sites, students will be introduced to Islam as it is understood and practiced in various communities. Beginning with the Canadian context, as well as in Paris and Burkina Faso, students will explore issues that have to do with the way religions, cultures and practice intersects in various geographical/political contexts.

This will be identified as a special topics course and will be given a graded evaluation. Additional reading, research and a summative written assignment will be required following the completion of the program. This course will fulfill a course requirement in History or the Religious Studies departments.

Learning Objectives:

This will be a very challenging part of the Outtatown French Africa program for a number of reasons. First of all there are the stereotypes that exist in the media and in most western perceptions of the “Muslim world”. Then there are the many layers of geo-political conflict which exist between various countries or cultural communities leading to safety concerns and the challenge of maintaining constructive dialogue that is balance and authentic. The most challenging, may be the struggle students will experience in evaluating issues of such “ultimate importance”, attempting to discern what is “true”, or “right” in relation to what they have understood in terms of historic Christian faith and what they experience in the context of personal relationships with people they meet.

These learning objectives have been written, knowing that much of the articulation and even the learning itself will take place subsequent to the program, suggesting that these should be somewhat general and modest in nature:

1. To gain a basic understanding of the historic origins of Islam (key figures and religious documents), general historical perspectives on the growth and development of this religion world-wide, and evidence the main stream expressions of Islam today.
2. To encounter various people who live in Muslim communities and to engage in conversation with them about how they experience daily life and family in relation to Islam.
3. To gain an awareness of western perspectives on the “Muslim world” in the news and in various forms of media messaging and to reflect on the accuracy of these understandings.
4. To experience and reflect on the diversity that exists in practice in the various Muslim communities as they give expression to Islam in diverse geo-political situations.
5. To begin to reflect on the theological issues and Biblical texts which are central to historic Christian faith and are germane to Christian perspectives on Islam.

Books, Articles, and other Resource Materials

Students will be asked to read select excerpts from the Koran, and some related Biblical passages. Some of the following resources, as well as a number of other articles which are cited by instructors and country partners will be referenced and selected readings will be assigned along the way. These may be in French or in English. A number of good movies, documentaries and short film clips will be included. The following resources will be available, and additional books and articles will be added throughout the semester:

- Brenner, Louis. ed. Muslim identity and social change in Sub-Saharan Africa. Bloomington : Indiana University Press, c1993.
- Charlick, R. B. "Islamism in West Africa: Niger" African Studies Review Special issue 47.2 (September 2004).

- Dunn, Ross E. *The adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim traveler of the fourteenth century* Rev. ed. with a new pref. Berkeley : University of California Press, 2004.
- Entz, Donna. "Learnings and Vision: Burkina Faso." In James R. Krabill, David W. Shenk, and Linford Stutzman, eds *Anabaptists meeting Muslims : a calling for presence in the way of Christ*. Scottsdale, Pa. : Herald Press, c2005. <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip052/2004024042.html>
- Islam, Democracy, and Public Opinion in Africa. <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfrobriefNo3.pdf>
- Kaba, Lansiné. "Islam in West Africa: Radicalism and the New Ethic of Disagreement, 1960-1990." In Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000.
- Kaba, Lansiné. "The politics of Quranic education among Muslim traders in the Western Sudan: The Subbanu experience", *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10:3, 1976, pp. 409-421.
- Levtzion, Nehemia. *Muslims and chiefs in West Africa: a study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the pre-colonial period*. Oxford, Clarendon P., 1968.
- Mackintosh-Smith, Tim. *Travels with a tangerine : a journey in the footnotes of Ibn Battutah* London : John Murray, 2001.
- Martinson, Paul Varo ed. *Islam: An Introduction for Christians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.
- McCauley, John F., E. Gyimah-Boadi. "Religious Faith and Democracy: Evidence from the Afrobarometer Surveys" 2009 <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo113.pdf>
- Triaud, Jean-Louis. "Islam in Africa under French Colonial Rule." In Nehemia Levtzion & Randall L. Pouwels, eds. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens : Ohio University Press, 2000.

Educational process and student evaluation:

Students in the Outtatown French Africa program will experience a diverse number of Muslim communities in Canada, France and West Africa. Several key lectures will introduce the origins of Islam, key theological understandings, main tenets, and historic development. A number of tours will include visits to a Mosque, lectures or tours with an Imam, and times spent with Muslim families. Visits with various individuals and communities will allow students to see and experience how understandings of Islam are given expression in various Muslim communities. Journal reflections and assigned questions will allow students to articulate their understandings of these opportunities. Guided discussions with leaders and select country partners will enrich this process and allow for thoughts and ideas to be tested within the context of Christian Anabaptist understandings of God, faith and spirituality. Site Leaders will provide a graded evaluation based on the journal entries and evidence of personal participation in group discussion and various experiential opportunities during this part of the program. Throughout the program all students will be involved in significant study and experience directly related to the requirements for this course credit. This will be reflected as a course "Audit" on their transcript. However, students may also receive a graded course credit through some additional research and writing which must be done subsequent to the completion of the travel program. Students must indicate their intention complete this additional course credit prior to their departure from the program (December 10, 2011). The following two assignments must then be submitted by January 31, 2012 and will be graded in the Outtatown office, allowing for a final grade submission on a CMU transcript. The two additional assignments are as follows:

- Reflective Paper which reviews the various journal entries and experiences with Muslim communities which have taken place during the program. These should be evaluated in retrospect with the intention of comparing/contrasting these with traditional western understandings of Islam. How have understandings of Islam changed, and how has this been influenced by the various experiences in this program (typed, double-spaced eight to ten pages). Alternatively, this assignment could be done in a number of creative ways such as: a photo collage together with a textual analysis, the development of a short documentary related to this issue, or a collection of poems, short stories, or other creative art projects which are interpretive of the experience the student has had with Muslim communities.
- Research Essay – evidence of research leading to a ten page written essay on one aspect of Islam which would combine reflective thought on experiential aspects of the program with a desire to gain a more complete understanding of one aspect of Islam in an area of interest.

Evaluation and grading of the assignments will be as follows:

1. Journal entries following experiences in a Mosque or with a Muslim community – 30%
2. Assigned questions related to several lecture designed as an introduction to Islam – 20%
3. Participation in group discussion and experiential opportunities – 10%
4. Reflective paper interpreting the experiences with Muslim communities – 20%
5. Research essay on an area of interest related to understandings of Islam – 20%

Students who realize that they will not be able to complete these assignments may request a voluntary withdrawal by January 15, 2012.