



Ecologies of Christian Development – DC942CO

A Hybrid Course
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Office Hours by Appointment

Schedule in Columbia at First Presbyterian Church

Saturday June 4, July 2, July 30, August 20

Course Description

In a culture saturated with individualism the church has succumbed to a view of the Christian life as a solitary journey requiring individual acts of piety. In contrast to this view, this course sets out a biblical, holistic, and ecological concept of Christian formation that balances individual and communal dimensions. Students will examine ongoing research measuring the relationship between reciprocal interaction and mutual Christian formation toward holistic transformation into the fullness of Christ individually and corporately.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of natural ecosystems and how living organisms grow within them.
2. Articulate the relationship between natural ecology and the spiritual ecology of the Church as the Body of Christ.
3. Explain developmental interactionists and their concept of ecology of human development.
4. Describe the relationship between the ecology of human development and the ecology of Christian development.

Course Textbooks and Learning Resources

Liberating the Church: The Ecology of Church and Kingdom, Howard A. Snyder.

Connected: The Surprising Power of our Social Networks and How They Shape our Lives, Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler.

“The Genesis of a Concept,” Chapter Two in *A History of the Ecosystem Concept in Ecology: More than the Sum of the Parts*, Frank Benjamin Golley. This chapter is available in the online classroom.

“An Interactional Perspective for Human Development,” Chapter One in *Human Development: An Interactional Perspective*, David Magnusson and Vernon L. Allen, Editors. This chapter is available in the online classroom.

“Ecological Systems Theory,” in *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development*, Urie Bronfenbrenner, Editor. This chapter is available in the online classroom.

“Spiritual Formation in Theological Distance Education: An Ecosystems Model,” Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe, *Christian Education Journal*, Series 3, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2010. This article is available in the online classroom.

“Allelon Reciprocal Commands and Christian Development,” Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe, *Christian Education Journal*, Series 3, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2010. This article is available in the online classroom.

Module I – A Biblical Hermeneutic of Christian Formation

For Module I read first “The Genesis of a Concept” then read *Liberating the Church* chapters 2, 3, 5, and Epilogue.

For Module I write a 3-5 page paper exploring the relationship between natural ecosystems and spiritual ecosystems.

Module II – An Ecological Perspective on Human Development

For Module II read first “An Interactional Perspective for Human Development,” then read “Ecological Systems Theory.”

For Module II write a 3-5 page paper on the ecology of human development exploring its implications for a clearer understanding of Christian development.

Module III – An Ecological Perspective on Christian Development

For Module III read first “Spiritual Formation in Theological Distance Education: An Ecosystems Model,” then read “Allelon Reciprocal Commands and Christian Development.”

For Module III write a 3-5 page paper on the allelon reciprocal commands in the New Testament and their implications for a biblical understanding of Christian development..

Module IV – Implications of the Ecological Perspective on Christian Development for Church Ministry

For Module IV read the book *Connected*.

For Module IV write a 3-5 page synthesis paper in which you pull together all of the various facets and elements of the course weaving in the insights and observations of the authors of *Connected*. What implications do you see for community formation in the church and the importance of social relationships in fostering whole person and whole church transformation?

Relevant Academic Policies

Please follow this link to read the most current version of our Relevant Academic Policies

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf