

**EP143 -- RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE
ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

Spring 2018 – FRIDAY 7:00-10:00 P.M.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with a basic introduction to religious education and spiritual formation in the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. It is designed to give students skills to develop programs in a range of contexts, as well as to locate resources and ideas to enhance educational ministries. This course will also examine religious education from the perspective of various groups including adult learners, youth and young adults, children, families, etc. from the perspective of historical and contemporary models. Differing contexts for ministry, such as urban, suburban, etc. will be examined. Issues such as cultural contexts, as well as the connections between religious education and other aspects of congregational life such as preaching, worship, pastoral care, etc. will be addressed. Students are encouraged in this course to engage their analytical selves, but also their senses and their creativity. Religious education that responds to a variety of learning styles and supports the giftedness of all has the capacity to change lives. Religious education that changes lives engages the mind, body, spirit and souls of individuals and communities.

We live in an age where there is a deep yearning within the church and wider society for meaning and connection. While religious education is certainly not the only response to these needs, it is a tool for enhancing the spiritual resources of people, deepening human community, and nurturing hope. An assumption of this course is that authentic religious learning is lived in, and accountable to, human communities. Transformation is both personal and societal and is required of all who seek faith and find their vocation in the world. Those who find their way to the church door in many of our cultures are in a situation similar to that of early church converts. Like the early Christians, they experience a tension between the world they know and the God they seek. How then is the church an agent of transformation, personally and corporately? How can communities of faith equip people to participate in the transformation of themselves and the world? Participants will be invited to lead and participate in a range of spiritual practices, and will have the opportunity to gain concrete skills in enhancing community in congregations and other organizations.

This course is designed to invite students to meet a variety of educational needs. At the same time, community building within the class is a high priority because the course (1) relies on students to share connections with their own faith journeys and experience of religious education, and (2) asks students to collaborate as a learning community in understanding the implications of course content now and for their future ministries.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

No short-term exposure to the field of religious education can explore every aspect of the field. The tension between the time available and the amount of material to be covered is inherent in all survey courses. However, the hope of this course is that students not only learn something about religious education in general, but are able to engage the material and participate in the learning community in such a way as capture some of the excitement of the

field and develop some skills in the process. Given this scope, by the end of the semester, class participants will have:

1. Gained a basic understanding of the general literature of religious education focused on the needs of congregational life, in particular in the Anglican/Episcopal Christian tradition;
2. Learned some of the historical, theological, and educational contexts of religious education;
3. Developed skills to create and facilitate communities of learning and teaching;
4. Explored issues at work in the dynamics of educational design, shaping curriculum, and supporting the spiritual life of congregations;
5. Developed skills (teaching, facilitation, curriculum design, etc.) integral to working with people in a variety of ministry situations.
6. Critically evaluate approaches to religious education and developed diagnostic skills in order to make educational choices and decisions;
7. Articulated a personal theology of religious education;
8. Gained a familiarity with resources available for educational ministries.

III. PEDAGOGY

Due to the collaborative nature of this course, class participation is expected of all members. This course assumes that adult learners are responsible for their own learning; that all of us are part of the process, and that all of us are learners and leaders. As a group we will each need to take responsibility for sharing talking and listening space. Further, it is also assumed that every person has an impact, for better or worse, on the people and situations that are present. Purposeful participation will require students to explore our interconnectedness and hold in tension our commitments to our own personal stories, our faith communities, and our larger societies. Students are encouraged to begin with the context of their own social location, and then mine scripture, history, and tradition for insights into their own personal theology of religious education, and then to locate these insights within a particular faith community. It is an assumption that religious education involves reflection and action, as well as learning in the tension between these two realities.

IV. SCHEDULE

Week I, January 19, Introduction to the Course

Reading: Curry

Week II, January 26, Congregations as Learning Communities

Reading: Olson

Week III, February 9, Learning & Mission

Reading: Law

Week IV, February 23, Adult Learners

Reading: Barrie

Week V, March 9 – Workshop Week

Workshop assignment – will be distributed 2/9

Week VI, March 23, Children & Families
Reading: Kitch

Week VII, April 6, Initiation
Reading: Pearson

Week VIII, April 13, Youth & Young Adults
Reading: Misc. short articles (To be distributed)

Week IX, April 27, Interreligious Education,
Reading: Kujawa-Holbrook

Week X, May 11 – Project Presentations -- **ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE**

V. REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts are required and obtainable through online bookstores in either new or used condition. Handouts – required and optional – that correlate with the themes of the course will also be distributed many weeks, particularly in fields where the literature is more prevalent in short articles than books.

Wendy Claire Barrie, *Faith at Home* (2016)
Michael Curry, *Following the Way of Jesus* (2017)
Sharon Ely Pearson, *Signed, Sealed & Delivered* (2014)
Anne E. Kitch, *Preparing for Baptism in the Episcopal Church* (2015)
Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, *God Beyond Borders* (2014)
Eric Law, *Holy Currencies* (2013)
Anna B. Olson, *Claiming Resurrection in the Dying Church* (2016)

Recommended but not required texts:

Sharon Ely Pearson and Nancy Bryan, *Planning for Rites and Rituals, Year B* (2017)
Paul Fromberg, *The Art of Transformation* (2017)

VI. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES:

Students are required to complete 3, 5-10 page project papers for the course. Each paper will be based on a separate aspect of religious education. Rather than strict theory, the written assignments are praxis-based. For instance, design a Confirmation program, adult education project, social action experience, baptismal preparation, intergenerational experience, etc. for a *particular* context with a *particular* group of people. That is, for each paper students will be asked to design an educational experience from the perspective of a different context, age group, etc. The rationale is to enable students to use the written assignments to integrate the readings and to produce some work that they can apply to their own educational ministry, now and in the future. An outline for the projects will be distributed in class to guide your work. You may hand in the written work at any time, but ALL written work is due at the last class session.

Students are encouraged to look at these assignments creatively. For instance, it is possible for students wanting to work on a group project in lieu of one of the short papers, or as a central component for a project, to negotiate that possibility with the instructor. Also, it is possible to utilize other media – film, website design, photography, visual arts, music, etc. in lieu of one of the short papers or as part of the longer project through negotiation with the instructor. While the term “religious education” includes religious instruction and classroom-based experiences, it also includes other modes of learning such as retreat experiences, immersion experiences, etc. **In choosing topics students are required to consult with the instructor in an effort to demonstrate how the topic will meet the SLOs of the class. Work for this class may relate to work for another class, but the same project/paper cannot be handed in for 2 classes. Each student is required to present one of their projects on May 11.**

In addition to the written assignments, students may be asked to prepare a brief “take-home” exercise for many of the classes. The purpose of these exercises is to focus the agenda of the class quickly, as well as assist students in reflecting on their own experience in light of the topic of a particular class. In most cases these reflections will not require additional written work beyond the assigned readings. They do not need to be handed into the instructor.

The “take-home” assignments will be used in the assessment of class participations and SLOs #s 3,4,5,6.

VII. CLASS PARTICIPATION

It is the assumption of the instructor that all students have the capacity to do well in this course, and all are welcome. Due to the collaborative nature of the course, class attendance & participation, evidence of reading and preparation, and the quality of the written assignments, are all essential and weighed equally. Because the class is a learning community, class attendance is required.

In particular, class attendance is related to SLOs 1,4,7,8.