

MC535: THE EMERGING CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY (4 units)

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Online facilitation by JR Rozko, Adjunct Instructor in Contemporary Culture

DESCRIPTION:

The course identifies characteristics of postmodern churches and examines how these communities embody their faith within urban, new age, holistic, and artistic contexts. The class will explore the dynamics of the sacred/secular split, forms of community, contextual forms of apologetics, hospitality, new forms of participation, creativity, leadership, and the spirituality of everyday life. Theologically, the class will explore how the reign of God might manifest in worship, in formation, and in witness in postmodern cultures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will:

- Assess the nature of postmodern cultural contexts
- Gain tools to engage postmodernity through worship, spirituality and witness
- Develop plans for particular churches to be restructured as missional congregations in postmodern culture.

COURSE FORMAT:

The class will be conducted on the Internet using a 10-week lesson program aligned with Fuller's academic calendar. Each week, class interaction will take place around threaded discussions, book reviews, and the sharing of work.

REQUIRED READING: If you have previously read any of the required texts, please discuss alternatives with the instructor.

Read the following three books:

- Jones, Tony. *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emergent Frontier*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008, 288 pp.
- Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2005, 352 pp
- Keel, Tim. *Intuitive leadership: Embracing a Paradigm of Narrative, Metaphor, and Chaos*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007, 272 pp.

Read one of these:

- McLaren, Brian. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 256 pp.
- Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture*. Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006, 332 pp

Read one of these:

- Cole, Neil. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2005. 272 pp
- Pagitt, Doug. *Church Reimagined, The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005, 240 pp

Read one of these:

- Rollins, Peter. *How (not) to Speak of God*. Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 144 pp
- Taylor, Steve. *The Out of Bounds Church? Learning to Create a Community of Faith in a Culture of Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2005, 176 pp.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. An introductory, 1000 word, reflection paper discussing some initial assumptions about the nature and purpose of the church as well as familiarity with the Emerging Church discussion/movement. (30 points – 12%)
2. Six two-page book reviews. (10 points ea. – 24%)
3. 10 weekly threaded discussions. (6 points ea. – 24%)
4. A final 3500 word paper analyzing a familiar church community in light of the combined resources of the class and the various marks of emerging churches. (100 points – 40%)

PREREQUISITES: None

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: Elective.

FINAL EXAM: None

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