

****DRAFT VERSION; SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

HSTY 6300: History & Theology of the Covenant Church

North Park Theological Seminary

Spring 2021, T 1:30–3:30 p.m., online synchronous

3 credit hours

“We enter the future with more faith and assurance if we have solid information of our past. Without the future the past is idolatry, without the past the future is but a continuing and uncertain innovation.”
(Sigurd Westburg)

INSTRUCTOR

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Office hours: Immediately following class on Tuesdays and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the history and theology of the Evangelical Covenant Church, from its roots in Sweden to its current multiethnic reality. Students will apply skills of historical research and analysis to their own denominational history and explore the significance of this history to the present mission and identity of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. **Factual knowledge.** Students will explain key figures, events, and themes from the history of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
2. **Historical interpretation.** Students will evaluate and formulate historical arguments on the basis of original source evidence.
3. **Appropriation.** Students will interpret the present life and mission of the ECC in light of its past.
4. **Stewardship.** Students will grow in commitment as stewards of and active participants within their denominational history.

This course contributes toward the following MDiv learning outcomes: (1) Interpret the Christian historical and theological tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the church; (2) engage diversity and exhibit growth towards inter-cultural competence for ministry reflective of God’s global redemptive work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Karl A. Olsson, *Family of Faith: 90 Year of Covenant History* (Covenant Publications, 1975). This can be [downloaded as a pdf](#) through the Frisk Collection of Covenant Literature.
2. Mary Lou Sather, ed., *The Unfolding Mystery of “Yes”: Women Who Were Forces for Change* (ECC Women’s History Commission, 2007). Available in print [here](#) and as a [pdf download](#) through the archives.
3. Glenn P. Anderson, ed., *Covenant Roots: Sources and Affirmations, 2nd edition* (Covenant Publications, 1999). Available through covbooks.org ([here](#)).
4. Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance.** Only two absences are permitted without penalty to your final grade. More than three absences will result in a lowered grade; more than four absences will result in failure. Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence.
2. **Assessment submission.** All assessments are due 11:59pm on the date indicated. Submit all work through Canvas links located under the week they are due. You may have a 48-hours no-questions-asked extension on one assignment (which I encourage you to save for times of real pressure). Otherwise, work submitted late will receive a 1/3 grade reduction each day (i.e., an A would receive A- after one day late, B+ after two, etc.). Work submitted over two weeks late will receive a zero.
3. **Incomplete.** The grade of “incomplete” is given in exceptional circumstances only, such as an unexpected hospitalization, and must be arranged through a completed Incomplete Agreement form (including signatures from the instructor and academic advisor) on file prior to the final day of the semester.
4. **Communication.** Please feel free to email me with any questions and concerns. I will make every effort to respond to your emails within 24 hours, M–F. Before emailing a question, be sure the answer isn’t contained in the course syllabus or assessment guidelines (Canvas). Please exercise professionalism by including a proper salutation and close.
5. **Meeting with instructor.** Students are welcome to schedule an appointment to speak in person or by phone or video chat (Microsoft Teams) at any point in the semester. If you are having any difficulties in the course, I encourage you to be in contact in the soonest instance so we can problem solve together.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For a fuller discussion of academic dishonesty, review the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–27.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the program’s office as soon as possible to ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. For further information, see [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 19–20 and “[Disability Resources](#)” provided through North Park’s Office of Student Enrichment Services and Support.

TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As a member of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to [North Park's Safe Community site](#) for contact information and further details.

INSTRUCTOR COMMITMENTS & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I will...

- Return graded assessments within one week (provided they are submitted on time).
- Post all grades to Canvas gradebook in a timely manner so you can monitor your progress.
- Gladly be available for one-on-one conversation by phone or video chat. Please do not hesitate to reach out for clarification on course content, expectations, etc.

You are responsible for...

- All information provided in the course syllabus and class emails sent to your northpark.edu email address and through Canvas. This includes all assessment deadlines and course policies (grading, assessment submission, late penalties, etc.).
- Remaining up to date regarding your course progress and seminary drop deadlines. Incompletes will not be given except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization of you or your child) and require both permission and requisite paperwork on file prior to the final day of the semester.
- Weekly and week-to-week time management. The rule of thumb for graduate education is that each hour of classroom time entails an average of three hours of weekly work outside the classroom. That means you should plan to spend a minimum of 9 hours each week on coursework, including synchronous sessions. Success in the course requires you to moderate your time commitments accordingly.
- Communicating with instructor in a timely manner as questions and/or difficulties arise. Be sure to take initiative to email questions or schedule a conversation, recognizing that it may be 24–48 hours before a mutually feasible meeting time is available. Last minute communication is not a viable excuse for late or incomplete work.

Academic work amid pandemic...

- We continue to pursue theological study amid increased demands at home and work, economic insecurity, and persistent uncertainties on many levels, straining our time and mental/emotional capacities. In recognition of this, the following adjustments have been made to this course:
 - Course work is comprised of many shorter assessments, spread out over time, so that your course grade does not depend upon the work of a single day or week. (Note that while the oral history assignment is 25% of your grade, this is comprised of many constituent parts, each worth a much smaller percentage.)
 - Research exercises and discussion posts will be graded on completion.
 - Extra credit opportunities will be offered in the final weeks of the semester as a further safeguard.

- Successful completion of the course nevertheless requires your investment as outlined above and throughout this syllabus, and it is important that you enter the course with realistic expectations regarding the time commitment entailed. If you have any questions or uncertainties, please feel free to be in communication so that we can discern this together.

ASSESSMENTS

AT A GLANCE (% of final grade)		
Reflection papers	10%	due 1/25 (pre-course) and 4/26 (post-course)
Reading logs	15%	due 3/1 (midterm) and 4/26 (end of term)
Presentation	10%	as scheduled
Discussion posts	15%	across semester (graded on completion)
Oral history interview	25%	in two stages, due 2/15 and 3/15
Outreach project	25%	due 5/3
Letter grades will be assigned according to scale printed in the Seminary Academic Catalog , p. 21.		

Reading (15% of final grade). Reading logs are due mid-semester (**Mar 1**) and end of semester (**Apr 26**). A reading log is posted within the assignment submission link, under the “Assessments” tab on Canvas. You can input your progress directly into this document and upload it to the submission link.

Reflection papers (due Jan 25 and Apr 26; 10% of final grade). Papers should be 3–4 pages, using 1.5 spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and address each of the following questions in succession:

1. What characteristics constitute essential identity markers of the Covenant?
2. To what degree, and in what way, are these characteristics historical products?
3. What significance does Covenant history have for Covenant identity and mission today?

Post-course reflection papers may interact directly with your pre-course reflections, indicating clearly new material, which should total at least three pages.

Presentation (10% of final grade). Each student will present and lead discussion on one primary source document, offering a brief (~15–20 minute) presentation on their document and leading class in discussion. Preparatory notes (submitted) and presentations should address:

- Basic information about the document and its origin: Who wrote the document? When and where? Who were they writing to or for? What was their primary purpose in writing?
- Content: What does the author’s primary concern seem to be?
- Historical significance: How does the document reflect the time in which it was written? (This can pertain to the internal life of the Covenant and/or external events/circumstances taking place more broadly.) Is there any way to know what the impact of this text was?
- Include three questions for group discussion. At least two of these should focus on the document’s content and historical significance; the third may move to contemporary relevance.

Sources will be selected in week 2.

Discussion posts (15% of final grade). Students will post short responses to discussion questions and responses to classmates, in preparation for each synchronous session. Weekly posts will be available; you may choose which 10 you want to answer. These will draw on both assigned readings and concrete research tasks.

Oral History Interview (25% of final grade). Each student will contribute a new primary source for Covenant history by conducting one recorded oral history interview with an historical actor. This will be completed in two distinct stages:

Step 1 Interview prep (10%, due Feb 15). Submit your finalized interviewee name, preparatory reading (min. 50 pages), and interview questions. Be sure to receive a greenlight from instructor on interviewee *before* submitting to Canvas or reaching out to potential interviewee formally. (And to do so with enough lead time to receive feedback and modify if necessary.) This is to prevent a single person's receiving multiple requests.

Step 3 Interview & follow-up (15%, due Mar 15). Conduct your interview (by distance!). Many free apps are available for recording phone conversations (e.g., I have used Rev Call Recorder). Though video is possible and has some benefits, many interviewees will be more comfortable and relaxed with voice only. Once your interview is complete, submit all of the following components:

1. To the archives (archives@northpark.edu) and interviewee, with instructor copied:
 - a. Completed [paperwork](#) (signed release form, life history form)
 - b. Digital recording file(s)
 - c. Content outline with timestamps
 - d. Summary paragraph and keyword list
2. To Canvas: a 1–2-page reflection on the interview experience (what you learned, what surprised/inspired/encouraged you, etc.).

Note that assignment will not be considered complete if any of these pieces are missing.

Outreach Project (25% of final grade; due May 3). This final project invites you to contribute to historical stewardship, communicating a relevant aspect of Covenant history within your ministry setting (or a hypothetical but concrete ministry setting). Depending on your content and intended audience, this may take a number of forms, including but not limited to:

- Web content (e.g., interactive timeline w images)
- Anniversary materials
- Art (e.g., music, graphic)
- Sermon
- Adult Sunday school curriculum
- A *Covenant Companion* article (~2,000 words)
- Podcast

Include with your project a 1–2-paragraph **rationale statement** that details: (1) the intended setting and audience for your project, (2) your reason for selecting both the specific content and the delivery method for this audience (i.e., why you want to communicate *this*, to *this audience*, in *this way*), and (3) how the material to follow would be used.

The final class session (5/4) will be devoted in part to project presentations.

COURSE SCHEDULE to follow.