



**DISCIPLESHIP AND SMALL GROUPS**  
**CFM 532**  
**Spring 2007, M 8:30-10:20AM BGC 253**

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**About this syllabus** This course syllabus is a guide for our learning experience. Therefore, we may modify it as the course progresses depending upon our needs or the greater wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

**Course Description:**

This course guides students in growing in the principles and practices of being a disciple of Jesus with a special emphasis on the usage of small groups for making disciples. (2)

**Course Objectives:**

1. To reflect on your personal experience of following Jesus and to commit yourself to the intentional process of growing in the grace and knowledge of being Jesus' disciple in our contemporary culture and to guide others in the same journey.
2. To grow in the practice of being reflective and attentive to life and faith.
3. To develop the skills of reading, interpreting, and applying scripture in making disciples.
4. To discover the principles and practices of small groups and how they can be used in the process of making disciples.
5. To develop the ability of evaluating and developing small group resources for making disciples.

**Course Textbooks:**

*The Holy Bible*, preferably a good modern translation (e.g. TNIV, NIV, NRSV, NASB, NLT, ESV) **without** study notes.

Long, Jimmy. et. al. *Small Group Leaders' Handbook: The Next Generation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.

Course Reader

**Course Schedule:**

Jan 8: Community Building and Course Introduction

Jan 15: **NO CLASS Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Jan 22: Characteristics and Challenges of Being a Disciple  
**READ** Willard and Peace, Course Reader  
**Personal Discipleship Reflection paper due**

Jan 29: Becoming Attentive and Assessment  
**READ** Willard, 27-61 and Frankena, Course Reader

Feb 5: Spiritual Formation Principles and Growing in Christ  
**Read** Willard, 63-92, 217-232 and Webber, Course Reader

Feb 12: Discipled by the Spirit and Discernment

Feb 19: **NO CLASS President's Day**

Feb 26: Spiritual Disciplines, Grace and Effort  
**READ** Willard, 13-26 and Kierkegaard and Questions of Jesus, Course Reader

Mar 5: **NO CLASS Spring Break**

Mar12: Discipled by the Word  
**Read** Inductive Bible Study Process, Daily Passion, Lectio Divina, and African, Course Reader  
**Nature and Importance of Discipleship Presentation paper due**

Mar 19: Dynamics of Transformation and Wholistic Growth  
**Read** Willard, 93-216

- Mar 26: Using the Bible in Small Groups
- Apr 2: Using the Bible in Small Groups
- Apr 9: Importance of Community and the Purpose of Small Groups  
**Read** Willard, 233-255 and Long, 7-36
- Apr 16: Understanding Small Group Dynamics and Leadership  
**Read** Long, 103-143, 159-202  
**Small Group Bible Study Questions paper due**
- Apr 23: Nurturing Group Life and Dealing with Small Group Problems  
**Read** Long, 39-99, 145-158
- May 2: **Evaluation of Small Group Resource paper due (8:00-10:00AM)**  
**Reading Log Report due**

### **Philosophy of Education and Pedagogy:**

Bernard of Clairvaux, the highly influential Christian leader of the twelfth century, captured the challenge of education when he wrote, “For there are some who long to know for the sole purpose of knowing, and that is shameful curiosity; others who long to know in order to become known, and that is shameful vanity. ... There are others still who long for knowledge in order to sell its fruits for money or honors, and this is shameful profiteering; others again who long to know in order to be of service, and this is charity. Finally there are those who long to know in order to benefit themselves, and this is prudence.”

“Of all these categories, only the last two avoid the abuse of knowledge, because they desire to know for the purpose of doing good.... Food that is badly cooked and indigestible induces physical disorders and damages the body instead of nourishing it. In the same way if a glut of knowledge stuffed in the memory, that stomach of the mind, has not been cooked on the fire of love, and transfused and digested by certain skills of the soul, its habits and actions---since, as life and conduct bear witness, the mind is rendered good through its knowledge of good--- will not that knowledge be reckoned sinful, like the food that produces irregular and harmful humors?” (Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* 2. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976, (SC 36:3-4), 176-77).

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664), a Puritan pastor from England, reflects a similar approach to Bernard. He reminded his listeners, “Study therefore, and study more, but be sure thy study and thy knowledge, be rather practical than speculative; do not merely beat thy brains to learn the history of Christ’s death, but the efficacy, virtue and merit of it: know what thou knowest in reference to thyself” (Isaac Ambrose, *Looking Unto Jesus*, Sprinkle ed., 375). And St. Francis cautions us not to drive a wedge between our theology and spirituality, “It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, as long as –in the word of the Rule—you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion’ with study of this kind” St. Francis of Assisi. *The Complete Works*. Paulist Press, p. 79.

Further, one of the best ways to learn is through asking questions. John Cassian (c. 365-c.435), a key Christian leader who collected the wisdom of Christianity from the East and brought it back to the West once wrote, “One is very close to knowledge when one clearly recognizes the questions to be asked” (John Cassian, *Conferences*, 10.9).

### **Learning Covenant:**

As professor of this course, I covenant with each student that I will model Christ-like behavior, value and respect each student as a person in Christ, come to class prepared, begin and end class on time, make appropriate assignments and grade them fairly, and be available for consultation outside of class. In return, I expect each student to model Christ-like behavior, show proper respect to me as the professor and your classmates, come to class prepared, arrive and leave class on time, and submit assignments and participate in ways that demonstrate your integrity and desire to learn.

### **Requirements and Assignments**

#### **Personal Discipleship Reflection Paper:**

This 5-6 page paper invites you to reflect upon your own journey of discipleship or growing in Christ. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to review your life to discover or recall those who have had a significant role in the formation of your faith and what methods these mentors or guides used to help you follow Jesus. To guide your reflection select two or three key persons who have shaped your life in Christ. Your paper should address the following points: (1) What did you learn from them? (2) How did they form your perception and understanding of being a follower of Jesus? (3) What dimensions of your life most reflect the life of Christ (e.g. mental, emotional, relational, financial, etc.)? (4) Which areas do you feel require the greatest transformation at this time? (5) What specific steps can you take to be more open to the Holy Spirit in these areas? **20% of grade, due Jan 22**

#### **Nature and Importance of Discipleship Presentation and Paper:**

This assignment consists of a presentation to a small group of your choice (e.g. Sunday school class, small group Bible study, retreat, fellow students, family members, etc.) on the nature and importance of discipleship. This presentation seeks to help you to review and digest the content of this course by teaching it to a small group of persons. We often learn best that which we teach. Your group must consist of at least two other people beside yourself. Guide your group in discovering what discipleship is and why it is important for Christian living. This assignment expects you to present this information in your own way and not merely “copying” the class lecture notes or readings for your presentation. You should normally allow 30 to 60 minutes for your presentation and discussion and feedback. Therefore, if you are making your presentation to a group of CFM 532 students it is strongly advised that you do not attempt to complete more than two presentations at a time. In addition to your teaching notes include a 3 page summary that clearly describes the (1) context and setting of your listeners (be specific to introduce them so I can understand the appropriateness of your presentation for this small group) and the (2) insights and self-reflection learned by both you and (3) the feedback from your group. Both the teaching notes and summary paper must be typed. **25% of grade, due Mar 12**

**Small Group Bible Study Questions.** The purpose of this two-part assignment is to assist students in gaining the ability to analyze and develop appropriate study questions from the Bible for making disciples. Students will first evaluate a series of small group questions to assess their

appropriateness for use within a ministry setting for making disciples. In the second part of this assignment students will develop ten study questions for an assigned biblical passage that follows the inductive study method for reading the Bible. **25% of grade, due Apr 16**

### **Evaluation of Small Group Resource Paper.**

Students will write a 6-7 page paper using the Frankena questions and select one of the following options. The purpose of this assignment is to help you think and reflect upon the appropriateness of existing resources or develop your own resources for ministry. **30% of grade, due May 2**

Critique and analyze an existing method or resource that uses small groups for making disciples. Your paper must include the following sections: (1) A clear description and summary of the specific resource you are evaluating. Introduce it in such a way that a reader would be clear about its nature and focus. (2) An assessment of the appropriateness of this resource for various contexts. What type of group would most and less benefit from this resource and why? (3) A summary of the five categories or questions of Frankena as you evaluate the resource. Your analysis should also include the strengths and weaknesses of the small group resource.

### **OR**

Create and develop your own small group resource for making disciples. Your paper must include (1) A careful description of the specific context and background that you are using to develop your small group resource. Be specific in introducing this context so I can follow your design and development. (2) A clear and specific focus of the goals and purpose you have for any groups that would use your resource. How do you envision your resource could help them to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ? (3) A clear indication of how each of the 5 categories or questions of Frankena have guided the development of your small group resource.

**Reading Report Log.** Students will submit a Reading Log listing what percentage of each book they have read and what percentage they have skimmed. To receive full credit it is essential to read all of the books, and not just merely skim them. (Subjective grade) **Due May 2**

### **Policy for Writing and Grading Papers:**

Grading in Christian Spirituality is tricky and often misunderstood. It is only natural for students to associate their grades with their self-worth. However, grades are not intended to reflect your value or importance to God or others. Further, the discipline of Christian Formation and Ministry often intersects with our experience of God or other personal issues. You will never be graded on your experience of God or lack of experience. But you will often be challenged to reflect upon those experiences to assist you in deepening your awareness as well as guiding others in engaging similar self-examination to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Therefore any papers or projects that evaluate you will never be based on your experience but how you have understood or interpreted it.

All papers must be typed and double-spaced in 12 point size. Papers will be graded according to the following three criteria: content, clarity, and structure and style. (1) Content relates to the development of the major themes of your assignment. How clearly have you understood the topic and nature of your presentation or assignment? (2) Clarity relates to your ability to express yourself clearly with consistent sentences that develop your thoughts and present them in a logical and flowing manner. (3) Structure and style relates to grammar and spelling. All papers should be carefully spell checked and proofed.

Grades on unstapled papers will be reduced by 3 points. Since technology is not a respecter of discipleship or small groups it is strongly suggested that you back up all work on a separate computer disk and keep an extra hard copy.

Please use the following format when writing your papers. Place your name, class (CFM 532 Discipleship and Small Groups), box number, and date in the upper left hand corner of the paper. Do not use a title page. Your name should appear only on the first page. This process allows your papers to be read anonymously. **PLEASE NOTE:** email attachments of your papers are not acceptable.

**Expectations and Guidelines:**

**Attendance:**

Attendance and engaged participation are expected of all students. It is difficult for you to learn if you are absent. However there may be unexpected emergencies or crises that might prevent your attendance. Unexcused absences will lower the “subjective assessment” portion of your grade. Gross disregard for class attendance and participation could result in failure of the course.

**Grades:**

Satisfactorily fulfilling the expectations and assignments for this course as outlined in the syllabus will earn the student a B+ grade. It is possible to achieve an A- or A only by going beyond expectations—not necessarily in length, but in depth and integration of thinking, in creative development, and in level of involvement.

**Late Papers:** Late papers will be reduced by 5 points of a letter grade for each day late. After one week a late paper becomes a zero.

**Grading Scale:**

94-100 = A	74-76 = C
90-93 = A-	70-73 = C-
87-89 = B+	67 - 69 = D+
84-86 = B	64 - 66 = D
80-83 = B-	60 - 63 = D -
77-79 = C+	below 60 = F

***Subjective Assessment: 10% of final grade***

Attendance, preparedness, diligent work and engaged participation are important to me for this to be a collaborative and effective learning experience. I reserve a percentage of your final grade for my subjective assessment of these and other factors related to your coursework.

### **Academic Honesty:**

As students and faculty of Wheaton College, we are members of an academic community with high scholarly standards, a commitment to pursuing truth, a recognition that our actions affect others in the community and a desire to follow Jesus' example of integrity and truthfulness. Academic honesty is essential for establishing and maintaining the trust that is fundamental to the educational process. Examples of academic dishonesty, which will result in disciplinary action, include, but are not limited to ...

cheating – using unauthorized material or unauthorized help from another person in any work or examination submitted for academic credit  
fabrication – inventing information, citations, reporting participation in activities never done, or inflating the effort put in and/or the effect of various self-reported activities

facilitating academic dishonesty – providing unauthorized material or information to another person

plagiarism – representing the work of another as one's own without acknowledging the source

misrepresentation – giving the impression of having done more significant work than you actually did (e.g., padding references with works not consulted, doing less than your fair share of a group project, or recycling one's own work)

Disciplinary responses will be individualized to reflect the maturity of the student, the severity of the infraction and any evolving patterns.

### **Academic Support:**

College can be a challenging experience. While not intending to limit the possible resources students often find it helpful to visit the Writing Center to assist them in the preparation of their papers. Additionally the Counseling Center may be of assistance in resolving relational, emotional, and other issues that often can impact learning. For further assistance please visit the Writing Center: <http://www.wheaton.edu/learnres/writectr/> or Counseling Center: <http://www.wheaton.edu/Counseling/>

### **A Selective Bibliography:**

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