COURSE OBJECTIVE
As a component of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s Statement of Mission, the objective of this particular class to help all of us who are in this class because we are interested in church planting and growth, either currently engaged or hoping to become engaged, to do it even more biblically, effectively and fruitfully than we might otherwise. Stated another way, this specific course’s objectives include: 1) further clarifying our thinking and understanding as to how they did it in the emerging church in the Book of Acts, and thus doing effective church planting and growth ourselves in our own piece of the 21st century world. Moreover, 2) to further develop our ministry plans stemming from that growing clarity and commitment and 3) implementing those plans by energetically engaging in new or altered actions even during the weeks of this course.

Situated learning theory posits that best learning is situated within authentic activity, context, and culture. So, expanding on the above, during these seven weeks can each of us engage at least a little bit with a church now being started. If we are starting a church or part of a core group that is, great. If not, can we come alongside somebody or some core group that is, at least for the seven weeks of this class?

COURSE CONTENT
Together we will discuss these following aspects of church planting. Church planters (plus others) currently in the trenches will be sharing in several of the class sessions.

May 21 What is a church? Can we grow existing churches and plant new churches at the same time?. Are you cut out to be a church planter? Characteristics of a real church. - Neal Armandt
The local church in its global context - Torli Krua
Assignment: 1) write a one page assessment of the church you are currently in or are starting, comparing things you heard Neal and Paul say with what you see in your current situation (this will be a confidential paper, for your eyes only, not for mine as the professor or anyone else.). 2) Read the Book of Acts

May 28 Church planting and the six gifts/tasks: apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, pedagogical, and diakonial. How do we go about starting a church? How do the six gifts fit into your church plant? How will you structure, organize your church? What do we learn from the Book of Acts?. Local church planting and significant neighborhood improvement - Paul Bothwell
Assignment: write a one page paper connecting evangelism and church planting and how in your church plant you would or do connect the two.

June 4 Does Greater Boston actually need more churches? Greater Boston church planting historically, in last 10 years, in 2014. Rudy Mitchell makes a presentation.
Does evangelism come before church planting? Are we doing enough evangelism in Boston? In our emerging church? How do we keep the evangelistic task going over time? Who keeps it going?
**Assignment** for next week: 1) write a one page list of steps you would take (1,2,3,4,5…) to get a church plant started. 2) Read the Book of Nehemiah

**June 11** The nitty gritty stuff. What do we learn from the Book of Nehemiah? Should our new church be denominationally affiliated or not? Vision statement, doctrinal statement, requirements for membership, legal issues, church budget, etc etc. My local church, my extended family of churches, other churches in my Boston neighborhood, the whole Body of Christ in Boston, the global church - are all important, mutually beneficial connections my church should participate in, encourage and maintain?
Buildings, lots of basic big questions - Glenn Knowles
Church planting as I see it/do it, in Boston and beyond - Rodney Harris
**Assignment:** write your reflections as to today’s class conversation

**June 18**
Doing church planting movements, in and out from Boston. Once your church plant is financially sustainable, should you stay on as pastor or turn the pastoral task over to someone else and start another church?
The prophetic components of church planting: 45 minutes each person
  - Starting a creation care church - Ed Brown?
  - Starting a church that culturally reconnects everybody as truly one in Christ - Judy Kee
  - Starting an egalitarian church - Deb Mel
  - Starting a peace church - Tim Colgrove
**Assignment:** write your thoughts to this question: “should I expand my thinking a bit as to intentionally trying to get more ethnic diversity into my church plant? How would I go about trying to do that?” Or, maybe a different question: “to get more age differentiation into my church plant?”

**June 25**
Church planting and shared church buildings - Lorraine Anderson
Can two or three anticipated new church plants, perhaps of different languages, collaborate in getting a common space they each share during their start up phase? Which is most reasonable for you, a largely monocultural church or a more multicultural church? Sharing our thoughts.
Churches starting churches that start churches - what do I think about that? How does that happen? How would I make it happen?
The bivocational church planter - Workneh Tesfaye

**July 2**
Sharing our 10 page papers as appropriate.
Rebuilding a declined church - Tiffany Chaney
Developing your heart and mind for the neighborhood around you - Kelly Steinhaus
Whatever else we as a class need to talk about. And as church planting advocates (Great Commission advocates) let’s look ahead: does Boston need to get the bishops and the apostles around the same table, to figure out how we grow the churches we already have in Boston and at the same time multiply the number of churches we need if every Bostonian is to be churched? Who are these bishops, these apostles? Who are the evangelists, the pedagogues in Boston, also needed to make this happen?

**REQUIRED READING**

The Book of Acts
Nehemiah
At least four of these books
Moving in the Apostolic, John Eckhardt ISBN 0-8307-2373-0 (trade paper)
Houses That Change the World - The Return of the House Church, Wolfgang Simson 1-85078-356-X
House Church and Mission - The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity, Roger W . Gehring isbn 1-56563-812-3
Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age, Ed Stetzer ISBN 0-8054-2730-9
The five “Little Books” Ralph Kee - Let’s Do It, Toward a More Adequate Mission-Speak, The Prophetic Task, Awakening Your Inner Church Planter, Diakonia: The Church at Work.
Price of the above books generally in the $20 to $30 range. The Little Books are available free in paper, also on line at www.egc.org Click on “What we do”, click on “Church planting”, then click on each of the five book cover pictures and read.

Assignment: after reading, write a paragraph about each of the four you read, telling what you found most important or helpful in each of the four.

An extensive broad-based bibliography of some 140 titles I have compiled is available on request.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Prayerfully prepare for, attend and actively participate in each of the class session. Bring your Bible to class each week. Reread Acts and Nehemiah. Memorize a new Bible verse each week that connects in some way to church planting and growth. Write a 10 page paper with the title “The Urban* Church and/or Churches I Envision.” If your church planting interest is something other than urban, make that social context the focus of your paper. Have the paper completed by June 18

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING STUDENT’S ENGAGEMENT
Class attendance and reading and preparation, written work adhering to proper academic requirements, class participation, active engagement in hands-on ministry and implementation of ministry decisions (all in harmony with the articles of the seminary’s Statement of Mission): each 20%