

**ET/TH637: Workplace Theology
Spring 2011**

Mondays, 6:00-9:00 p.m. in AC242

Instructor: David W. Gill

Office: 114 Goddard Library Office Hours Mon & Tues 2-5pm and by appointment

E-mail: dgill@gcts.edu (O) 978-646-4098 (C) 510-919-5043**DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this course is to explore, seriously and constructively, a Christian way of thinking about work and calling, about the mission, values, and ethical guidelines appropriate to this domain. How can the grand themes and classic texts of the Bible help us understand work, business, and the broader economy and marketplace? What do Christians have to contribute to today's ethically challenged, global marketplace? Students intending to serve in church and parachurch contexts will understand and support more fully and truly the daily lives and challenges of the laity to whom they are called to minister. Students intending careers outside of church and parachurch organizations will find this course a great context in which to wrestle with their sense of calling, their philosophy of work and economics, and their ethical identity.

OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who complete this course will be able to

1. Understand and describe the major contours, opportunities, and challenges of today's global workplace.
2. Understand and communicate a biblical theology of work, vocation, business, and economic life --- including the positive purpose, value, and place of work and workplace organizations --- and the biblical analysis of how good work goes bad, and what to do about it.
3. Take biblical and Christian workplace insights and values into a diverse, global marketplace in a constructive, positive way that shows understanding and respect for colleagues with different perspectives.
4. Articulate their own personal sense of calling, philosophy of work and economics, mission and core values, both to all audiences.
5. Help churches and pastors to understand, value, and more faithfully and effectively support the daily lives and challenges of workplace disciples in their congregations.

FORMAT:

This course will meet once per week from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. for ten Monday evening sessions (spread over thirteen weeks that include two reading weeks). Course sessions will include lectures, discussions, guest panelists, and student presentations.

REQUIRED READING:

Jacques Ellul, *Money & Power* (Wipf & Stock, 2009). ISBN 13 : 978-1-60608-300-0 173 pp. pb

Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of this World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Eerdmans, 1990). ISBN: 0-8028-0298-2 213 pp. pb

R. Paul Stevens, *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace* (Eerdmans, 2006) ISBN 13: 978-0-8208-3398-3

Selected Readings ---to be distributed in class.

RECOMMENDED READING:

_____. *Word in Life Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1993) A Bible with marketplace annotations instead of the usual historical and doctrinal orientation.

Robert Banks & R. Paul Stevens, eds., *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (InterVarsity, 1997). Great dictionary on work and marketplace topics.

Ken Blanchard, Bill Hybels, & Phil Hodges, *Leadership By the Book: Tools to Transform Your Workplace* (William Morrow, 1999). 220 pp.

David W. Gill, *It's About Excellence: Building Ethically Healthy Organizations* (Provo UT: Executive Excellence, 2008)

Emilie Griffin, *The Reflective Executive: A Spirituality of Business and Enterprise* (Crossroad, 1993).
 Pete Hammond, R. Paul Stevens, & Todd Svano, *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business, & Vocation* (InterVarsity, 2002).
 Stephen V. Monsma, ed. *Responsible Technology* (Eerdmans, 1986). 252 pp. pb.
 Laura L. Nash, *Believers in Business: Resolving the Tensions Between Christian Faith, Business Ethics, Competition and Our Definitions of Success* (Thomas Nelson, 1994). 302 pp.
 Laura Nash & Scotty MacLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday* (Jossey-Bass, 2001).
 David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History & Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (Oxford, 2006)
 Jose Miranda, *Communism in the Bible* (Orbis, 1982).
 _____, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Orbis, 1974).
 Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (Free Press, 1996)
 _____, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation* (AEI, rev. ed., 1990).
 John M. Perkins, *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development* (Baker, 1993).
 C. William Pollard, *The Soul of the Firm* (HarperBusiness, 1996).
 C. William Pollard, editor, *The Heart of a Business Ethic* (University Press of America, 2005).
 Scott B. Rae & Kenman L. Wong, *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics* (Zondervan, 2nd ed., 2004).
 Max L. Stackhouse, et al, eds. *On Moral Business: Classical & Contemporary Resources for Ethics in Economic Life* (Eerdmans, 1995). ISBN: 0-8028-0626-0 979 pp. pb.
 Miroslav Volf. *Work in the Spirit: Toward A Theology of Work* (Wipf & Stock, 2001)
 Edward D. Zinbarg, *Faith, Morals, & Money* (Continuum, 2001)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: (details follow "Schedule" in this syllabus)

(submit all papers in electronic form as Word documents attached to e-mail to dgill@gcts.edu)

1. Interview Report. A 1000-1250 word summary with commentary on two interviews you conduct with (a) a Christian business/workplace veteran and (b) a veteran pastor. Topic: how do you understand, experience, and promote the connections between biblical Christian faith and the realities of the workplace? (25% of grade)
2. Book Review . A 750-1000 word critical review of either (a) a significant business/management book or (b) a book attempting to provide a Christian view of work, leadership, economics or related topics (book choice subject to approval of instructor). (25% of grade)
3. Topical Research Paper. A 1000-1250 word paper providing a biblical/theological perspective on an important topic in the workplace and marketplace. (25% of grade)
4. Final Exam (25% of grade).

SCHEDULE

(1) January 31 Workplace, Marketplace, Vocation, & Profession

Introduction to subject area, terminology, conceptual framework: (1) personal work/vocation/career, (2) organization/company/corporation, and (3) larger economic systems; Four ways to "salt" the workplace.
Read: Proverbs 10-12

(2) February 7 Creative Work, Hard Work, Wise Work, Redemptive Work, After Work

How the biblical teaching on creation, fall, providence, redemption and sabbath can illuminate and guide our view of the workplace. God is our teacher and our example.
Read: Genesis 1-3; Hardy, Fabric of this World

(3) February 14 Money, Property, & Stewardship

How the biblical teaching on money, property, stewardship, debt, interest, and related topics can illuminate and guide our perspective and practice.
Read Ellul, Money & Power

Reading Week: February 21

(4) February 28 Technology, Environment, Globalization

Technology, environmental challenges, and globalization are major drivers of change in the workplace today. How does a biblical theology illuminate and guide our perspective and practice on these topics?

Read Matthew 5-7; Gill "Technology" article in The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity (to be distributed in class)

Submit Interview Report

(5) March 7 Personal Character, Organizational Culture

Work is usually an activity occurring in relationships with others and with organizations and their structures and cultures. Biblical perspectives on organizational culture and values. Two purposes and ten traits of healthy organizational cultures.

Read Stevens, *Doing God's Business*

(6) March 14 Personal Ethics & Organizational Ethics

What does biblical Christian faith contribute to our personal ethical identity and practice? To our ethical leadership and practice in the workplace and in diverse or global settings? Ten principles of ethical leaders and organizations. Ethics communication and training. Trouble-shooting and crisis management. Read Gill, "Business Ethics" article in *Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Ethics (Macmillan, 2005; to be distributed in class*

Submit Book Review

Reading Week: March 21

(7) March 28 Workplace Leadership

What does biblical Christian faith contribute to our understanding of leadership in the workplace and its activities and organizations?

(8) April 4 Topics

Presentation and discussion of student topical research interests and projects

Submit Topical Research Paper

(9) April 11 Topics

Presentation and discussion of student topical research interests and projects

April 16 Saturday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm: attend seminar with Bill Pollard

(10) April 18 Topics

Presentation and discussion of student topical research interests and projects

April 25 Submit take-home final exam

PAPER ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

Submit all papers by e-mail as Word attachments. No paper allowed.

Grading/value: each 25% of grade; 75% total

Footnotes or end-notes or notes in body of text---your choice

Interview Paper 1000-1250 words

A summary with commentary on two interviews you conduct with (a) a Christian business/workplace veteran and (b) a veteran pastor. Topic: how do you understand, experience, and promote the connections between biblical Christian faith and the realities of the workplace? Set up an hour or so to personally (face-to-face) interview a business leader (company can be in any field or product area, large or small, old or new company); interviewee can be middle or upper-level executive but make sure it is someone with at least a few years of experience in leadership and management; find someone who takes his or her Christian faith seriously. Ask your other professors and your friends (or your pastor) to help you find someone to interview if you can't think of anyone. Tell the prospective interviewee that you are doing a paper on faith and work and want to interview a business leader. Most of the time they will be glad to help you.

Ask this person to describe briefly (1) their Christian faith and experience, (2) their work and business leadership/management experience, (3) how their faith and ethical values have affected the way they

work, manage and lead. Have they ever experienced any conflicts between their faith and their work/business? Do they think their faith has helped them in their business leadership? Cost them? How do they think about religious diversity in their workforce? Does it cause problems or is it an asset? You should take the interview in whatever direction you think would be interesting and helpful.

In your paper, (1) Clearly identify the interviewee, explaining who it is, their business position & experience. (2) Concisely and accurately summarize their opinions on faith and work/business. (3) Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their perspective. What is helpful, what not? What is missing or not well supported? Where do you disagree or find them superficial or less informed than they should be? etc..

Then find a veteran pastor to interview. How would they describe a “theology of work”? What would be their key points on how to work in a faithful Christian manner? What specifically do they do as pastors (teaching, mentoring, pastoring, praying, liturgy, communication, etc.) to equip and support their people in the business world? Have they ever visited their parishioners’ places of work? What do they do to stay current and informed on the challenges their business folk are facing? What help would they like from seminaries and from veteran Christian business folk to strengthen their ministry to the workplace? You should take the interview in whatever direction you think would be interesting and helpful.

Summarize what you find out and comment on the implications of the interview for your future ministry.

Book Review 750-1000 words

Choose (with approval of professor) and read a book that allows you to explore a problem or topical area of particular concern and relevance to you. Could be either (a) a significant business/management book or (b) a book attempting to provide a Christian view of work, leadership, economics or related topics. In your written review: (1) Clearly identify the author of the work, explaining who it is and the basis for his or her authority on the subject. (2) Concisely and accurately summarize the argument of the work, paying special attention to the way their religion, theology, or philosophy plays into their views on work, business, and economics. (3) Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the work. What is helpful, what not? What is missing or not well supported? How does the book rate in terms of its theological perspective (well-done? Superficial? Partial? etc.).

Topical Research Paper. 1000-1250 words

A paper providing a biblical/theological perspective on an important topic in the workplace and marketplace (approved by the professor). You choose a problem or topic to research and write on. An oral report to the class will be part of the assignment. Executive compensation, privacy, health care benefits, environmental responsibility, intellectual property, lobbying government, regulation, safety, worker health, marketing and sales, competition, hiring, firing, promotion, etc., etc.. The paper is short but must be based on careful research into the problem or topic and must provide a biblical Christian way of thinking about it.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Academic credit for a course requires regular attendance, not just completion of the assignments. Attendance means being present in the class for the entire scheduled class meeting, not just some part of it. In the event of absence for any reason, you are responsible for any information or class content missed. Additional work to make up work may be required for an absence. If you are absent from a significant portion of the course, or if you are frequently late for class meetings, even due to extenuating circumstances, this may result in a lower or even failing grade for the course. Please inform the professor well in advance of any urgent circumstances requiring you to be late or absent.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to review and understand the academic integrity standards and commitments of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Our community values serious intellectual engagement and personal faithfulness more highly than grades or degrees. We are committed to being beyond reproach in our academic work as a reflection of a Christian character. We commit to honesty in all aspects of our work. Ask for help from your professor or your counselors and support group if you find yourself tempted to engage in any of the following violations of academic integrity --- or are just having great difficulty in your studies:

- Submitting the same work in whole or in part in more than one course without the permission of the professor(s);
- Submitting as one's own work paper(s) obtained from another source;
- Plagiarism, i.e., large and/or multiple unattributed quotations or paraphrases of ideas from published or unpublished sources;
- Unpermitted collaboration in preparing assignments;
- Cheating on exams by any means;
- Aiding another student on papers and tests in violation of these commitments.

Any of these violations will result in a failing grade in the course and a report to the dean.