

**33-837 Approaches to Christian Education**  
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
SPRING 2026  
Thursday Afternoons 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Reginald Blount  
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**Description** – An examination of key leaders, perspectives, and practices in Christian religious education in relationship to students’ vocations and practices of educational leadership. The class explores contemporary scholarship in the field of Christian education as a ministry and academic discipline for discipleship and mission.

**Specific Goals** – These goals are chosen from those developed by the Christian education field for the MA in Christian Education, the contribution of CE to the MDiv curriculum, and the PhD concentration in CE.

- A. **Knowing:** To know practices and disciplines of Christian education and formation and to reflect on how these are affected by differing cultural contexts.
- B. **Doing:** To examine, assess, and lead a variety of approaches to teaching and learning appropriate to a particular faith community. Additionally, for PhD students – To conduct research in educational ministry and to prepare for teaching and leadership in a seminary, college, and/or the church.
- C. **Being:** To be a theological educator who seeks to liberate and empower persons to be co-creators of the reign of God in our multi-cultural and multi-faith environment. This goal includes the following:
  - 1. To be a reflective teacher and leader who can empower others in the congregation to be reflective and open to transformation.
  - 2. To be a Christian disciple who continues to engage in the practices that develop and deepen faith.
  - 3. To understand oneself as a critical and open participant in an ongoing theological tradition; and for PhD in an academic discipline.

## Required Texts:

### CLASSIC APPROACHES

Maria Harris. *Fashion Me A People: Curriculum In The Church*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1989. ISBN: 978-0664240523. (Amazon \$26.00)

bell hooks *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Routledge, 2003. ISBN: 0415968186 (Amazon \$48.95)

Jack Seymour, ed. *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*. Abingdon Press, 1997. ISBN-13: 9780687008124 (Amazon \$17.09)

Christian Educators of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. [www.talbot.edu/ce20/](http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/)

**Theorists in Christian Religious Education** – See the following journals: **Religious Education, Journal of Christian Education and Information Technology (Korea), British Journal of Religious Education**. Also see the work of the following persons:

- A. Religious Instruction -- Elizabeth Caldwell, Thomas Groome, Sara Little, James Michael Lee, Richard Osmer, Robert Pazmino, Ronnie Prevost, Anne Streaty Wimberly
- B. Spiritual Development – Carol Lakey Hess, James Fowler, Maria Harris, Joyce Mercer, Parker Palmer, Sharon Daloz Parks, Karen-Marie Yust.
- C. Emancipatory Transformation – Mary Boys, Virgilio Elizondo, Paulo Freire, Evelyn Parker, Daniel Schipani, Yolanda Smith, Grant Shockley, Michael Warren, Lynne Westfield
- D. Faith Community – Kendra Creasy Dean, Craig Dykstra, Charles Foster, Maria Harris, Sondra Matthaei, William Myers, Mary Elizabeth Moore, Richard Osmer, Linda Vogel, Brett Webb-Mitchell, John Westerhoff, III, Boyung Lee

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES (Re-imagining Christian Education from the lens of G-ETS CE PhD Graduates)

### Justice

Mai-Anh Le Tran. *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*. Abingdon Press; First Edition (May 2, 2017). ISBN: 978-1501832468 (Amazon \$18.19)

### Hope

Dori Grinenko Baker. *Girl/Friend Theology: God-Talk with Young People*. Pilgrim Press (September, 2023). ISBN: 978-0829800463 (Amazon \$29.95)

### Advocacy

Reginald Blount and Virginia Lee. *Let Your Light Shine: Mobilizing for Justice with Children and Youth*. Friendship Press (June 27, 2019). ISBN: 978-1733075930 (Amazon \$26.95)

### Leadership

Anne Wimberly, Annie Lockhart-Gilroy, Nathaniel West. *From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry*. Wesley's Foundery Books (March 27, 2020). ISBN: 978-1945935749 (Amazon \$39.99)

### Requirements:

**1) Regular attendance and on time, completion of reading assignments, completion of all papers, and informed participation in class discussions.**

**2) Class session-group presentation of one of the designated contemporary approaches readings. The presentation (3-4 pages, single-spaced) should include:**

- a) A brief synopsis of the major issues or points posed by the readings;
- b) A reflection of how the readings affected the presenter;
- c) A formulation of 2-3 questions to spark class discussion.

**(Please provide copies of the presentation for other members of the class.)**

**2) Final Project (15 - 25 pages): Drawing from the class readings and other research, class discussions and personal reflection and analysis, explore "how do we engage in Christian formation in a way that sets people free?" Engage in the exploration through the lens of your own area of research and passion. (Due May 8<sup>th</sup>)**

## CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>January 29</b>	Approaches to Christian Religious Education (Introductions)
<b>February 5 &amp; 12</b>	Classic Approaches I ➤ <b>Reading: Seymour, <i>Mapping Christian Education</i></b>
<b>February 19 &amp; 26</b>	Classic Approaches II ➤ <b>Reading: Harris, <i>Fashion Me A People</i></b>
<b>March 5 &amp; 12</b>	Classic Approaches III ➤ <b>Reading: hooks, <i>Teaching Community</i></b>
<b>March 19</b>	<b>JUSTICE</b> ➤ Reading - Mai-Anh Tran
<b>March 26</b>	<b>HOPE</b> ➤ Reading - Dori Baker
<b>NO CLASS: April 2</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>April 9</b>	<b>ADVOCACY</b> ➤ Reading - Blount and Lee
<b>April 16</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> ➤ Reading: Wimberly, Lockhart, West
<b>April 23</b>	The Vocation of Christian Education
<b>April 30</b>	<b>Class Wrap-Up</b>

## Course Policies

1. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** These are serious breaches of academic integrity, involving claiming credit for the work that someone else has done. Don't do this! If you are uncertain in any way as to what is entailed in these activities, talk with the instructor.

2. **Excellence in Writing:** Even though this is a Christian Education course, everything you have learned about good writing style still counts! Obtuse or inelegant writing in your essays will be reason for a reduced grade. If you need help with your writing, please talk with the instructor.

3. **Intellectual Virtue:** We are striving not only to learn about a subject but also to sharpen our abilities to think critically. To do this, we must practice intellectual virtue by being open-minded, straightforward, and thoughtful in our spoken and written work. We show our scholarship not only by considering issues and questions that are central to our faith, but by being careful and respectful in our treatment of the authors of our texts, the ideas we discuss, and the thoughts of our fellow classmates.

4. **Disability Accommodation Statement:** Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see "Disabilities Policies and Procedures" in the Student Handbook.

## Grades

It is assumed that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a "B" grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members identify the strengths and problems in their written work. The syllabus has provided detailed information on each assignment to limit the amount of "guess work" by students about what needs to be included and addressed in the assignment.

A "B" means that the basic elements of the assignment are in place.

A "B+" means that the assignment is also well crafted.

An "A-" means that the assignment is well crafted and probes the issues with considerable insight.

An "A" means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student's knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject.

A "B-" means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus. It tends to explore issues superficially.

A "C+" means that the assignment lacks clarity and focus, tends to be superficial, and lacks personal insight into the issues being discussed.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and class discussions to engaging them with the issues being discussed.

A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

A "D" is a grade of grace.

An "F" indicates that the assignment has not been fulfilled at all points.