Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: Dean G. Blevins, Ph.D. Email: dgblevins@nts.edu
Office Phone: 816.268.5481
Office Hours: by appointment

Catalog Description
An exploration of the dynamics of congregational life necessary to disciple persons and communities in Christian faith and life. Attention will be given to the historical and theological dynamics informing Christian education through the processes of formation, discernment and transformation; as well as to pastoral oversight of educational ministries in the local church.

Course Narrative & Rationale
The history of the church remains marked by a call to faithful discipleship both within persons and within Christian communities. If the triune God reveals God-self as essentially relational, then faith exists relationally, developed and nurtured both within and between congregations that make up the Body of Christ. Wesleyan discipleship, known also as Christian education, involves three dynamic and interrelated approaches for faithful educational ministry: formation, discernment and transformation. Formation includes those practices, symbols and relationships that engender faith and holiness through our interaction within the life of the Church (in conversation with other living contexts). Discernment remains the careful exploration of the nature of the Christian faith, in direct conversation with the nature of persons, to engender
faithful practice and faithful living in a world that remains diverse and, at times, subversive and destructive. Transformation defines not only the outcomes of God’s presence in the lives of believers but also the very practices that believers exercise to become agents of transformation (means of grace) both within and outside the life of the local congregation. This course takes seriously the historic and contemporary life of the congregation seeking faithful discipleship, attending to the responsibility of leaders who must lead and “ad-minister” educational ministry in the church.

However, each of these processes requires a context for implementation so we must first “see” our context through analysis before bringing our ministry (the heritage and theories of discipleship to bear). This class proceeds first and foremost with an exploration the concrete experiences within a local congregation, moves to the traditions that inform Christian education, and ultimately moves to strategies based on “both” personal and social convictions. To guide this journey the course will include texts that help with both contemporary and historical analysis as well as personal application.

Degree Objectives
4. Cultivation of gifts, practical skills, and vocational identity as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through engagement in and reflection on the pastoral arts, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student/graduate will:
   a. Facilitate the formation of a community of faith as the called and gathered, centered in Christ, and sent people of God
   b. Model and facilitate Christian witness and spiritual transformation
   c. Communicate effectively in written, spoken, artistic, and other forms
   d. Engage the holistic nature of the church in redemptive ministries of restoration
   e. Lead in such a way as to develop the leadership potential in others

5. Understanding of local and global diversity through the investigation of cultural contexts, to enable the Church to proclaim effectively and to embody the mission of God, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student/graduate will:
   a. Articulate the missional nature of the church
   b. Exegete the congregation
   c. Exegete aspects of society including ethnicity and culture
   d. Navigate the complexities of globalization expressed through pluralism, world religions, and other issues
   e. Participate in the stewardship of creation

Course Outcomes
Upon completion of the course students should demonstrate the following course outcomes:
1) An ability to define discipleship within the local congregational context and within the historic life of the church. Assignments 1-3, 5
2) An ability to explore and understand the formative practices in a church as it pursues discipleship Assignments 1, 4
3) An ability to describe the stages of human development and other aspects of human life and to apply that knowledge in leading people in Christian maturity Assignments 1, 2, 4
4) An ability to envision Christian Education most appropriate for a local church and to assure the development of and empowerment of those serving in it. **Assignments 1, 4, 5**

**Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies**

CP 19  Ability to describe the stages of human development and to apply that knowledge in leading people to Christian maturity **Assignments 1, 4**

CP 20  Ability to envision Christian education most appropriate for a local church and to assure the development and empowerment of those serving in it **Assignments 1-5**

### Required Texts & Course Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>ISBN (13 characters)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Copyright Date</th>
<th>List price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Recapturing the Wesleys’ Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley</em></td>
<td>Paul Wesley Chilcote</td>
<td>0830827439</td>
<td>InterVarsity Press</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Educating Congregations</em></td>
<td>Charles Foster</td>
<td>0687-00245-1</td>
<td>Abingdon</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Nuts and Bolts of Christian Education</em></td>
<td>Delia Halverson</td>
<td>0687-07116X</td>
<td>Abingdon</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Discovering Discipleship: Dynamics of Faithful Christian Education</em></td>
<td>Dean G. Blevins and Mark Maddix</td>
<td>978-0834124967</td>
<td>Beacon Hill</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$44.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website: Kolb learning styles inventory</td>
<td><a href="http://www.haygroup.com">www.haygroup.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recommended Texts & Course Materials

• Moore, Mary Elizabeth Mullino. *Teaching as a Sacramental Act*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004
• Les Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation* (Wipf & Stock Reprints)

Additional readings provided by the instructor including Moodle resources.

**Course Outline**

**Unit 1:** Congregational Discipleship Introduction (Resource: Educating Congregations) Week 1

**Unit 2:** Discerning Discipleship in a Local Congregation (Resource: Educating Congregations) Weeks 2-3 (Course Outcome Four)

**Unit 3:** Defining Discipleship: biblical, historical, and theological concerns (Resources: *Discovering Discipleship*, Critical Concerns Reading, and Comparative Review) Weeks 4-5 (includes Reading and Research Week 6) (Course Outcome One)

**Unit 4:** Dynamics of Discipleship: Why and How of CE (Resource: *Discovering Discipleship*) Weeks 5-8 (Course Outcome Two)

**Unit 5:** Designing Discipleship: Congregational Curricular issues (Resource: *Discovering Discipleship*) Week 10 (Course Outcomes Two, Three, and Four)

**Unit 6:** Practicing Faithful Discipleship: Pastor as Educator (Resource: *Discovering Discipleship, Nuts and Bolts of CE*) Week 11-13 (Course Outcomes Two and Four)

**Course Assignments & Requirements**

1. **Class Participation:** general Moodle and Group participation (300 points) students are expected to read and discuss assigned reading in a timely fashion. For the sake of other learners in the class, students need to be able include engage, summarize, and apply readings not only for themselves but their classmates. The assumption remains that our collective insight weekly will make for a richer learning community. **Moodle Discussion Component:** To assist in this process, and also to allow students to demonstrate process strengths more written than oral, a Moodle discussion process will be included. Students will post 1-2 insights online by Sunday Evening 11:55 pm at the designated forum. **DO 4-5; CO 1-4; CP 19-20**

(Note: There will be times when "life gets in the way" or you have a "ministry crisis." These situations will be taken into consideration when communicated to the professor. One "Mulligan" is allowed during the course for late assignments if requested by the student).
2. **“Wesleyan Discipleship” Key concerns paper (100 points)** Students will write a reflective 1250 to 1750 (5-7 page) comparative review summarizing the key concerns for Wesleyan discipleship. This assignment must include dialog with D. Michael Henderson’s book *John Wesley’s Class Meeting* and Paul Chilcote’s *Recapturing the Wesley’s Vision*. Due Monday Week 8 at 11:55 pm DO 4; CO 1, 3, CP 20

3. **Critical Concerns book review (100 points)** Students will identify at least one supplemental reading and write a 1000-1500 word (4-6 page) review incorporating issues that correspond to definitional concerns for Congregational Discipleship. The reading may be taken from the recommended texts and should be submitted for approval at least two weeks in advance. Due in class Monday Week 5 at 11:55 pm DO 4, CO 1; CP 20

4. **Congregational Assessment and Strategy for Educational Ministry (400 points)** Students will work together to develop a comprehensive plan for nurturing discipleship within a congregation based upon a particular size (small, medium or large) and social location (rural, urban, suburban, inner-city, multicultural, etc.) While not a specific context, the students must identify the general context early since discernment and ministry strategies will be evaluated upon these circumstances. Students may elect a specific context (particular church) with appropriate permissions and use of human subjects (see professor). Ministry project groups will be assigned by the third week of class. Students may elect to “exchange” group members but only with the express permission of the moving students and the professor (have a rationale). Groups will be given some in-class opportunities but will probably need to arrange out of class meetings or postings on Moodle. Anticipated size of the project should run 3750-5000 words (15-20 pages) but may vary due to supplemental materials offered to support the overall plan.

This comprehensive project includes an assessment of the local congregation utilizing information from texts in class. The strategy may be diverse but with usability, initiative, breadth and relevance providing significant criteria for assessment. The project should include a congregational educational assessment, a preliminary mission statement consistent with the students’ stated theology of educational ministry, and a set of goals for the church that are attainable and can be communicated to the local congregation. The students will then provide a two year master plan for discipleship along with supporting strategies including curricula and methods of pastoral educational administration (e.g., budgets, recruiting forms, teacher meeting agendas, and curriculum order forms), as well as assorted practical ideas for educational ministries, topical bibliographies, seminar applications, appropriate websites and any other materials or information the student deems important to the work of a pastor educator. Students will provide a report to the class as well as post their plan on Moodle as a potential resource. Grading will be based both on process as well as content but each student will receive a similar grade for the project. Students who fail to participate fully do jeopardize their class participation grade. DO 4-5; CO 2-4; CP 19-20

5. **Comprehensive essay (100 points)**. For the final exam, each student will write a summative 1250- 1750 word (5-7 pages) essay giving his/her own approach to “faithful” congregational discipleship that will guide future ministry. This summative paper may draw from sources within the class but should reflect the student’s synthesis of the material presented in class that
represents a consistent, coherent argument that pertains to the needs for discipleship today. Due Monday 11:55 PM CT final exam week. DO 4; CO 1, 4; CP 20

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

| Distribution of Student Learning Hours |  
|----------------------------------------|---|
| Online Participation in forums, groups, etc. | 48  
| Reading | 45  
| Writing | 34  
| Other Assignments and Learning Activities | 15  
| Exams & Quizzes |  
| **TOTAL** | **142** |

**Method for Submitting Assignments**

All assignments for online courses will be submitted using the corresponding location within the Moodle course. Assignments should not be submitted by hardcopy, fax or email.

**Form and Style Expectations**

All submissions must meet Turabian Form and Style

**Inclusive Language**

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

**Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**

Late posts receive a 20% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Posting after the assigned week will not be graded. All research/project work is due 11:55 PM of the date assigned. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 15% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after the last day of the regular semester.

**Additional Costs**

Students will need to take the following Learning style at the designated Website: Kolb learning styles inventory

http://www.haygroup.com/leadershipandtalentondemand/Products/Item_Details.aspx?ItemID=55&type=7

**Course Grading**

1000-901: A 900-801: B 800-701: C 700-600:D 599 or Below: F

**Grade Descriptions**

“A”-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)
“B”-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)
“C”-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)
“D”-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)
“F”-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

See rubrics for major assignments and posting for further information on assessment.

If a student does not meet class participation standards in an online environment for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail the student.

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

**Class Attendance**

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If a student does not meet class participation standards in an online environment for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail the student.
### Tentative Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>One</td>
<td><strong>Congregational Discipleship Introductory Assignment</strong> Take a moment to introduce yourself online on this forum and give a brief history of your own personal heritage when it comes to discipleship. Read Charles Foster's <em>Educating Congregations</em> pp. 17-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td><strong>Discerning Discipleship Assignment One</strong> Read Charles Foster's <em>Educating Congregations</em> pp. 37-108.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td><strong>Discerning Discipleship Assignment Two</strong> Read Charles Foster's <em>Educating Congregations</em> pp. 109 to the end of the text. Also read Carl S. Dudley’s chapter “Using Church Images for Commitment, Conflict, and Renewal” available on Moodle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td><strong>Defining Discipleship Assignment One</strong>: Read Introduction &amp; Part One of <em>Discovering Discipleship</em> (Defining Discipleship). <strong>Critical Concerns book review (100 points)</strong> Students will identify at least one supplemental reading that corresponds to definitional and dynamic concerns for Congregational Discipleship. Due Monday Week 5 at 11:55 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td><strong>Critical Concerns book review due in class for general discussion</strong> <strong>Defining Discipleship Critical Concerns.</strong> Identify and read one of the recommended readings that informs a critical concern you possess regarding a biblical, historical, or theological understanding of faithful discipleship (you may encounter summaries/adaptations of these books in the <em>Discovering Discipleship</em> so be sure to read beyond these summaries).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Six</td>
<td><strong>Dynamics of Discipleship Assignment One</strong>: Read Part II “Dynamics of Discipleship” in <em>Discovering Discipleship</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td><strong>Mid-Semester Reading and Research Assignment: “Wesleyan Discipleship” Key concerns paper (100 points)</strong> Students will write a reflective 5-7 paper summarizing the key concerns for Wesleyan discipleship. This assignment must include dialog with D. Michael Henderson’s book <em>John Wesley’s Class Meeting</em> and Paul Chilcote’s <em>Recapturing the Wesley’s Vision</em>. Due Week 9 in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td><strong>Dynamics of Discipleship Assignment Two</strong>: Review learning theories and curriculum theory in <em>Discovering Discipleship</em>. Also take the learning styles inventory by David Kolb. Review support information on the Moodle site. Website: <a href="http://www.haygroup.com/leadershipandtalentondemand/Products/Item_Details.aspx?ItemID=55&amp;type=7">http://www.haygroup.com/leadershipandtalentondemand/Products/Item_Details.aspx?ItemID=55&amp;type=7</a> Post your Learning style online before class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Nine</td>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong>: Wesleyan Discipleship Key Concerns Paper due in class <strong>Designing Congregational Discipleship</strong>: Read Part Three “Designing Discipleship” in <em>Discovering Discipleship</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Ten</td>
<td><strong>Practicing Faithful Discipleship Assignment One</strong>: Read Part Four “Practicing Faithful Discipleship” in <em>Discovering Discipleship</em> focusing on Environments of Learning and Developmental Faithful Discipleship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Assignment/Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td><strong>Practicing Discipleship Assignment Two</strong>: Read Part Four “Practicing Faithful Discipleship” In <em>Discovering Discipleship</em> focusing on Shepherding Faithful Discipleship and Appendices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td><strong>Congregational Assessment and Strategy for Educational Ministry and Peer Review</strong>: Presentation in class and submit final project to assignment forum as well as the student forum by Wednesday 11/28 at 11:55 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td><strong>Student Evaluation and Dialog (Summative Response)</strong>: Students will post a review of a classmate project by class time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Fourteen</td>
<td><strong>Comprehensive essay (100 points)</strong>. For final exam the student will write a summative essay (5-7 pages) giving their own approach to congregational discipleship that will guide future ministry. This summative paper may draw from sources within the class but should reflect the student’s synthesis of the material presented in class. Due Tuesday 11:55 PM CT final exam week.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Grading Rubrics**

**Congregational Discipleship Assessment Tool**

1. “The project should include a congregational educational assessment, a preliminary mission statement consistent with stated theology of educational ministry, and a set of goals for the church that are attainable and can be communicated to the local congregation.

2. Provide a two year master plan for discipleship along with supporting strategies including curricula and methods of pastoral educational administration (e.g., budgets, recruiting forms, teacher meeting agendas, and curriculum order forms), as well as assorted practical ideas for educational ministries, topical bibliographies, seminar applications, appropriate websites and any other materials or information deemed important to the work of a pastor educator. “

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Domain</strong></th>
<th><strong>Non-compliance</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recognition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comprehension</strong></th>
<th><strong>Analysis</strong></th>
<th><strong>Synthesis</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Congregational context ignored</td>
<td>Personality Stated but supplemental support missing</td>
<td>Personality stated and programs with no connection</td>
<td>Personality stated and programs/processes presented to clarify &amp; elaborate</td>
<td>Personality stated programs/processes presented, with synthesis with other class information</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 Possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>No Mission Statement or goals</td>
<td>Mission Statement but no elaboration and no connection to goals</td>
<td>Mission statement with clear connection to goals and implicit Philosophy CE connections</td>
<td>Mission Statement and Philosophy of CE supporting Statement and goals</td>
<td>Mission Statement and Philosophy of CE with clear connections and goals related to context as well as personal philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 Possible</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Year Strategy</td>
<td>No two year strategy</td>
<td>Two year strategy but not connection to Mission Statement</td>
<td>Two year strategy connected to Mission Statement and goals</td>
<td>Two year strategy with strategic interventions based on analysis (could be small moves but addresses particular needs of congregation)</td>
<td>Two year strategy with strategic interventions that that directly draw upon Personality and programs of congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 Possible</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Ideas and interventions</td>
<td>Incomplete Practical Ideas</td>
<td>Practical ideas but not connected to strategy, limited range</td>
<td>Practical ideas commensurate with strategy and displaying some range of resources</td>
<td>Practical ideas commensurate with strategy, sufficient range, and appropriate to context</td>
<td>Practical ideas that relate to overall strategy, mission and personality/programs revealing a workable approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 Possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback: 1 or 2 sources</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation Quality</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intangibles (reflects creativity)</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Final Total 400**
## Grading Rubric for Reading and Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Considerations</th>
<th>Cognitive Levels (Reasoning)</th>
<th>Recognition &amp; Recall</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Target Level</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading/ Research Indicators</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point/ percentage of writing</td>
<td>Overview of writing or introduction to paper</td>
<td>Able to identify/ state key claim(s) of reading/ paper</td>
<td>Able to explain claims in clear &amp; concise manner</td>
<td>Able to indicate how key claim develops through reading/writing</td>
<td>Relates Key Claim to Class focus</td>
<td>Indicates importance of material to Class focus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary review/ development of writing</td>
<td>Identifies primary support claims and backing</td>
<td>Able to define clearly &amp; concisely support claims, backing, and qualifications</td>
<td>Able to identify warrants &amp; assumptions support claims &amp; backing</td>
<td>Relates support claims to each other and to class focus</td>
<td>Able to show relative strengths and weaknesses of support claims</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Interaction</td>
<td>Connects specific claims to personal interaction</td>
<td>Demonstrates why claim elicits response</td>
<td>Reflection nuances range of writings support claims</td>
<td>Reflection indicates sources that endorse/dispute writing</td>
<td>Reflection references constructive alternatives or application</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argumentation Level</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Detail</td>
<td>Demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target Level</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Form &amp; Style Level</td>
<td>Demonstrates standard form (pagination) and clear writing style</td>
<td>Consistent outline with headings and subheadings detailing development of argument</td>
<td>Forceful writing with consistent documentation at key claims and clear transitions and anticipates qualifications</td>
<td>Documentation addresses supporting claims &amp; backing internally with detailed transitions and intersects with issues in class</td>
<td>Wide range of academic sources with strong rhetorical skills at each level. Clearly identified audience to elicit response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Surprise Factor**

| Total point/ percentage |          |
WRITING A COMPARATIVE BOOK REVIEW

(Guidelines adapted from Christian Education Journal available online at http://wisdom.biola.edu/cej/downloads/cejbookreviewguide.pdf)

Of course, not all of the following instructions need to be addressed equally since space is often limited by the guidelines of book reviews (many reviews limited to 1,000 to 2,000 words). In the classic work on reading books—How to Read a Book by Mortimer Adler—we learn the reviewer’s task involves two main parts: demonstrating your understanding of the argument of the author (comprehension), and then interacting and evaluating the quality of argumentation (analysis of reasoning and rhetorical methods). With comparative reviews often the task is to provide an abbreviated understanding and then focus on the relationship between the texts, particularly how their argumentation may serve each other and the reader when taken as a “set” of texts. Reviews can take on various formats. However, in general, a summary of each book will precede the evaluation component where the two books are assessed in light of each other and in light of the class focus. Remember, in a comparative review, the focus remains on the interpretation of how the two texts inform each other once the writer demonstrates their understanding of each text.

A. UNDERSTANDING
Before evaluating a book, we first must understand it. This aspect is more descriptive and factual—preferably 30-40% of the review for both texts. Summarize the subject matter and contents of the books. Give the reader a sense of the scope of the whole work.

A1. Overview: What is the main subject matter or topic of each book? Provide a brief overview (by chapter if possible) of book contents (scope). How does the author organize the book (sequence, e.g., chapters grouped together within parts?) Is there a main organizing framework or model being followed, explicit or implicit? What is the book genre or type (e.g., scholarly-technical? textbook? trade/popular?)?

A2. Main Thesis, Conclusion(s): What is the main problem/question being addressed? What main claim/conclusion is proposed? What argument is offered to support these proposals? What are the major sub-claims of each book? Have the authors’ intentions been clearly understood?

B. INTERACTION AND EVALUATION
This aspect involves your professional judgment regarding how well the author carried out his or her project, related to the intentions of the author and in relation to the other text. This aspect is an essential contribution that transforms plain “book summaries” into a “comparative review.” This task is the more difficult one, yet it can become easier with increasing breadth of knowledge of the field and depth of critical thinking.

B1. Author's Qualifications: What is important to tell us about each author and his or her qualifications to write his or her specific book?

B2. Assessment of the Argument: How well did the authors develop the arguments to support the main conclusions, claims, proposals? How well did the authors deliver on their promises to address the problem(s) posed? [Also see "B5" below.] Any strengths of the argument to highlight? Any weak elements or limitations to note? How might the different books complement, critique, challenge, resolve issues both within and between the texts? For points of important disagreements, did you offer a reason: (a) if the author was uninformed (unaware of relevant information)? or (b) misinformed (in error)? or (c) illogical (a conclusion that does not follow)? (For guidelines see brief explains below. See also Anthony Weston. 2000. A Rulebook for Arguments. 3rd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 87pp.) Is the book title accurate? Can you suggest a better title?
B3. Compatibility within the class perspective (theological and theoretical frameworks): What theological or theoretical perspective is/seems to be evident in the books and how do they relate to the class (specific themes or general focus of the course)? From what perspective do the authors address the issue? Perhaps keep in mind a traffic light analogy for potential integration within your theological heritage, specifically a Wesleyan (for this class) or evangelical Protestant Christian perspective and also with the focus of the course as you understand it (e.g.: "green" [compatible], "yellow" [concerns, issues needing further study], "red" [clearly competing, incompatible]). Any problematic claims/critical concerns worth mentioning? Do any major claims fit within a "yellow" or "red" zone? Explain. Also, what is the style, tone of the books?

B4. Contribution: Is there a real need for either book in combination with each other? Why? Are there distinctive or novel contributions/proposals in either book worth mentioning, conceptually or practically? (Note those particularly of personal interest to you) Any quotes worth including? How does the specific contents of either text relate within the broader context of books from the same field of study? Do the authors treat concepts, issues, authors cited, subject matter similar or different? How so? What is the quantity and quality of the citations?

B5. Reviewer's Conclusions: Do you finally agree or not with the conclusions of either book or their focus in tandem? Based on Adler's How to read a book have you indicated either: (a) General agreement with major proposal(s)? (b) Agreement as far as the argument was developed? (c) Agreement in the main with only minor disagreements? (d) Or disagreement with the main conclusion(s)? Do you privilege one book over the other or see them working in a particular light? (See Chapter 11 in Adler’s How to Read a Book for help here, as briefly explained below; reviewers might also find Chapters 4-10 helpful.) For whom do you think the book was written/target audience or for what use (e.g., undergraduate, masters, doctoral, layperson; as a primary text or supplemental)? Was the book well-written, or did you experience any difficulty in reading the book? Can you recommend the book? Are there any qualifications to note?

ADLER'S GUIDELINES ON AGREEING AND DISAGREING WITH AN AUTHOR

Note: The following is taken from Adler and Doren's (1972), How to Read a Book. (revised). Ultimately a reviewer can either agree or disagree with the author's main argument. (Adler admits that in some cases it may be necessary to withhold judgment so one can study the issue more before rendering a judgment.) When a reviewer generally agrees with the main argument, Adler outlines three possible options:

1. Basic Agreement without qualifications.
2. Agreement as far as the book goes--the analysis is correct, but incomplete. The author has not solved all the problems he or she started with
3. Agreement with the overall argument, but there is disagreement on a minor issue (see below for what kind of disagreements Adler identifies).

When a reviewer generally disagrees with the main argument, Adler also outlines three possible options. Also, a reviewer may agree with the main argument, but disagree with some sub-points for which these same categories of disagreement apply. Adler notes, “When you disagree, do so reasonably, and not disputatiously or contentiously” (145):

1. Disagreement with the argument because the author is uninformed, lacking information relevant to the problem. (Yet, is this an intentional or unintentional omission?)
2. Disagreement with the argument because the author is misinformed and in error, asserting "what is not the case" (157). The facts are wrong.
3. Disagreement because the author's argument is illogical, the reasoning is fallacious. The conclusions cannot follow from the reasons offered (non sequitur), or the conclusions are inconsistent with other conclusions in the book. When possible, identify the specific logical fallacy(ies). (For help here, see Weston 2000 or Booth et al. 1995).

A final note: Do you have any personal reactions to either book? What are they based on specifically? Also be careful that underlying reactions do not pervade the texture and tone of your review. Be honest, yet fair and gracious. Avoid the crimes identified by John Timmerman, "Reforming the Reviewers” Christian Scholars Review, 30 (3), Spring 2001, 323-28:

(a) Misunderstanding author's intention about the book or proposing how the book should have been written;
(b) Quoting out of context;
(c) Wrong passion—the review is mainly about reviewer's prejudices or the review "gushes" as if it was a publisher's publicity piece, and
(d) "Ego" centered review (too many "I"s).

Please keep the focus on the books and not on the reviewer. Does the tone of your writing appear objective, fair and gracious? Is the writing style appropriate for the readership?

Resource texts

Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren's (1972), How to Read a Book. (revised). New York: Simon and Schuster
