

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
LIFESTYLE, SPIRITUALITY, AND HEALING: LIVING MORE WITH LESS
“Times like these grow compassion in us.” – Michael Schut

MF/IS- 590 (1 unit)
Summer, 2009
August 14, 5:00-9:00, August 15, 9:00-4:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Lifestyle issues of justice, economics, caring for the earth, globalization and simplicity often create stresses in relationships. This course will consider ways to understand and strengthen commitments to God, self, children, families, churches and communities through both theory and practice of living more with less.

REQUIRED READING ASSIGNMENTS AND TEXTS:

Friesen, Delores Hiland. (1999). Living More With Less: Study/Action Guide. Sioux City, IA: Alternatives for Simple Living.
Longacre, Doris Janzen. (1980). Living More With Less. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
Schut, Michael, Editor and Compiler. (1999) Simpler Living Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective. Denver, CO: Living the Good News.

Recommended Texts:

Hostetler, Jep. (2007). The Joy Factor. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
Ratzlaff, Steve. (2008). 7 Steps to End War and Save the Planet. Xlibris.
TREK: Venturing Into a World of Enough. Mennonite Central Committee, Available also through Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

There are also some binders and books on the shelf outside Dr. Friesen’s office with other articles relevant to the course, which you may borrow. See the bibliography for additional suggestions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

- To develop attentiveness to the needs of others so we can live by both compassion and simplicity.
- To show that simple living is a deeply rooted biblical directive and not merely a fad or imperative in light of diminishing resources.
- To develop an appreciation for the fact that happiness, well-being, freedom, contentment and well-being are at the heart of biblical guidelines for living simply.
- To explore healing and lifestyle changes for self and others, including how to present, teach and explain these concepts to others in individual, congregational, and community settings.
- To enjoy learning from cross cultural and global community perspectives.
- To encourage more nurturing of ourselves and others.

- To see people as more important than material things or tasks.
- To understand that the gifts of God are held in trust and are to be used for the building of community.
- To prompt actions that respect and honor natural resources and set conservation (cherishing the earth) in a context of the biblical understanding of creation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Everyone does # 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Choose a combination of additional items for a total of 100 points.

1. Read at least 400 pages and turn in an annotated log of your reading. 20%
2. Respond in writing to at least two scriptures on lifestyle, spirituality and healing. You are encouraged to create a brief sermon, responsive reading or Bible study that you can utilize in your place of worship. (A list of Scriptures will be provided, but you may also find your own.) 10-20%
3. Develop or find appropriate materials, ideas, and resources on lifestyle, spirituality and healing to use with children. Share these with other members of the class. 10%
4. Create an action plan for your own practice of some of the disciplines discussed in the readings, including but not limited to the five life standards in the Living More With Less texts. 10%
5. Develop a brief referral notebook of good websites and lifestyle, spirituality and healing resources and agencies in your local geographical region. 10%.
6. Write a psycho educational “rap”, song, or poem that explains the basics of simplicity, doing justice, earth keeping, nurturing people, or learning from the world community. 10%
7. Visit Margaret Hudson’s art community, the San Joaquin River Parkway, or another agency that is caring for the earth, doing justice, nurturing people etc. Write a brief response paper describing what you experienced. 10-25%
8. Watch videos and movies such as Earth, that deal with lifestyle, healing or spirituality issues, and write a brief response to each. 10-25% (5% for each movie)
9. Read additional materials on making lifestyle changes, especially experience stories and study guides. 10-25%
10. Interview someone who takes lifestyle questions seriously. This could also include the person’s family members, spouse, etc. Write a brief 1-2 page response paper. 10% for each interview.
11. Search the Internet for useful information and sources. Write a brief critique of what you find and share this with the class. 10%
12. Create or find brochures about lifestyle issues that are appropriate to give to others. 10%
13. Browse and critique some of the magazines and journals in the fields of spirituality, healing, and lifestyle, i.e., Weavings, Alive Now, Sojourners, Mother Jones, Preventive Medicine, Real Simple. 10%
14. Make a presentation to the class, or prepare a simple nutritious snack or meal for the class to enjoy together. 10%
15. Develop an educational plan similar to the study guides in our texts that will help you teach and share these concepts with others.

Schedule your study time so you spend 25-30 hours on your assignments and reading.

Three hours of study time should be worth approximately 10% of the total points.

All assignments are **DUE** on or before August 31. If you are not taking a full load of courses in the fall semester, additional week of time for work may be negotiated. The course may also be taken for additional (or less) units with the professor's and Academic Dean's approval.

If you are taking the course for CEU requirements, or are auditing the course, please attend all sessions of the class. Any additional work or reading you do is voluntary and not required. However, the instructor is willing to respond to work completed by auditors and continuing education participants.

ACADEMIC POLICIES: MBBS academic policies are described in the current *Academic Handbook*. The *Handbook* contains policies on such matters as policies for incomplete work, extensions, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, and academic appeals. Students are expected to be familiar with MBBS academic policies and to follow them. Copies of the *Academic Handbook* are available on the MBBS Website.

ADVANCE ASSIGNMENTS: Prior to class, you are encouraged to do as much of your reading as possible, especially in the Living More With Less text by Doris Longacre and Simpler Living Compassionate Life, edited by Michael Schut.

Resources: In addition to the Pacific Bookshop, most of the textbooks and many other related materials are available from Alternatives for Simpler Living. www.SimpleLiving.org Alternatives @Simple Living.org. Purchasing through this website empowers and encourages their ongoing ministry. Many public and church libraries also have these texts, and you are encouraged to utilize their copies. A more detailed bibliography and resource list is available from the professor upon request. Please consider bringing other family members, laypersons, or colleagues along to class, as it helps to have a community of persons around you, who are also committed to lifestyle changes. The professor is willing to consider teaching this class in your local congregation or work setting.

