

DRAFT SYLLABUS; SUBJECT TO CHANGE

HSTY 6300: History and Theology of the Covenant

North Park Theological Seminary
Fall 2026, Mondays, 7:00–8:30pm CT
3 credit hours, hybrid hyflex

“We enter the future with more faith and assurance if we have solid information of our past. Without the future the past is idolatry, without the past the future is but a continuing and uncertain innovation.” (Sigurd Westburg)

INSTRUCTOR

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Office hours: Immediately following class and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the history and theology of the Evangelical Covenant Church, from its roots in Sweden to its current multiethnic reality. Students will apply skills of historical research and analysis to their own denominational history and explore the significance of this history to the present mission and identity of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. **Factual knowledge.** Students will explain key figures, events, and themes from the history of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
2. **Historical interpretation.** Students will evaluate and formulate historical arguments on the basis of original source evidence.
3. **Appropriation.** Students will interpret the present life and mission of the ECC in light of its past.
4. **Stewardship.** Students will grow in commitment as stewards of and active participants within their denominational history.

This course contributes toward the following MDiv learning outcomes: (1) Interpret the Christian historical and theological tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the church; (2) engage diversity and exhibit growth towards inter-cultural competence for ministry reflective of God’s global redemptive work.

COURSE STRUCTURE

As a hybrid class, this course is structured with both asynchronous and synchronous learning components:

1. Asynchronous learning (Tuesday through Sunday): Preparation for each Monday evening session includes completing assigned reading, watching course lectures (average 1 hour/week), and contributing discussion posts in response to weekly discussion themes.
2. Synchronous learning (Monday pm): Our 1.5-hour live sessions will be devoted to interactive engagement with the week’s content and themes, building on your posts.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. The only book you need to purchase for this course is Glenn P. Anderson, ed., *Covenant Roots: Sources and Affirmations*, **2nd edition** (Chicago: Covenant Publications, 1999). This is available through covbooks.org ([here](#)); be sure to purchase the second edition!
2. Many additional primary and secondary source readings will be available on Canvas, including two digitized books (which can also be purchased as print books):
 - a. Karl A. Olsson, *Family of Faith: 90 Year of Covenant History* (Chicago: Covenant Publications, 1975). This will be our primary overarching historical narrative.
 - b. Mary Lou Sather, ed., *The Unfolding Mystery of Yes: Women Who Were Forces for Change* (Chicago: Women's History Commission of the Evangelical Covenant Church, 2007).

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance.** Only two absences are permitted without penalty to your final grade. More than two absences will result in a lowered grade; more than three absences will result in failure. Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence.
2. **Assessment submission.** All assessments are due 11:59pm in your time zone on the date indicated. Submit all work through Canvas links located under the week they are due. You may have a 48-hours no-questions-asked extension on one assignment. Otherwise, work submitted late will receive a 1/3 grade reduction each day (i.e., an A would receive A- after one day late, B+ after two, etc.). Work submitted over two weeks late will receive a zero. As preparatory for synchronous sessions, discussion post and responses cannot be submitted after their corresponding session.
3. **Incomplete.** The grade of "incomplete" is only given in exceptional circumstances, such as an unexpected hospitalization, and require a completed Incomplete Agreement form (including signatures from instructor and academic advisor) on file prior to the final day of the semester.
4. **Communication.** Please feel free to email me with any questions and concerns. I will make every effort to respond to your emails within 24 hours, M–F. Before emailing a question, be sure the answer isn't contained in the course syllabus. Please exercise professionalism by including a proper salutation and close.
5. **Meeting with instructor.** Students are welcome to schedule an appointment to speak in person or by phone or video chat at any point in the semester. If you are having any difficulties in the course, I encourage you to be in contact in the soonest instance so we can problem solve together.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.

4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX & EQUITY

In accordance with Title IX, North Park employees who become aware of any incident of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on sex, gender, including pregnancy or related medical conditions, and other protected classes are required by law to notify North Park University's Title IX & Equity Team by submitting a report [here](#). The Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about students. The Senior Director of Human Resources and Deputy Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about employees. More information can be obtained here: [NPU's Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

INSTRUCTOR COMMITMENTS & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I will...

- Return graded assessments within one week (provided they are submitted on time), with the exception of final oral histories, which take longer to review.
- Post all grades to Canvas gradebook in a timely manner so you can monitor your progress.
- Gladly be available for one-on-one conversation by phone or video chat. Please do not hesitate to reach out for clarification on course content, expectations, etc.

You are responsible for...

- All information provided in the course syllabus and class emails sent to your northpark.edu email address and through Canvas. This includes all assessment deadlines and course policies (grading, assessment submission, late penalties, etc.).
- Remaining up to date regarding your course progress and seminary drop deadlines. Incompletes will not be given except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization of you or your child) and require both permission and requisite paperwork on file prior to the final day of the semester.
- Weekly and week-to-week time management. The rule of thumb for graduate education is that each hour of classroom time entails an average of three hours of weekly work outside the classroom. That means you should plan to spend a minimum of 9 hours each week on coursework, including synchronous sessions. Success in the course requires you to moderate your time commitments accordingly.
- Communicating with instructor in a timely manner as questions and/or difficulties arise. Be sure to take initiative in emailing questions or scheduling a conversation, recognizing that it may be 24–48 hours before a mutually feasible meeting time is available. Last-minute communication is not a viable excuse for late or incomplete work.

ASSESSMENTS

AT A GLANCE (% of final grade)

Reflection papers	10%
Reading logs	15%
Weekly reflection	10%
Primary source presentation	10%
Oral history interview	35%
Outreach project	20%

Letter grades will be assigned according to scale printed in the Seminary Academic Catalog.

Reading (15% of final grade,). Reading logs are due mid-semester and end of semester. Input your progress directly in the document posted within submission link.

Reflection papers (10% of final grade). Papers should be 3–4 pages, using 1.5 spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and address each of the following questions in succession:

1. What characteristics constitute essential identity markers of the Covenant?
2. To what degree, and in what way, are these characteristics historical products?
3. What significance does Covenant history have for Covenant identity and mission today?

Pre-course reflection papers should be based on your current impressions and knowledge and do not need to incorporate any reading or outside sources. Post-course reflection papers should integrate course readings, lectures, and discussions. These may interact directly with your pre-course reflections, indicating clearly new material, which should total at least three pages.

Weekly reflection (10% of final grade). For any ten weeks of class, students will spend 30 minutes writing reflective responses to questions on the week's themes and readings, available in Canvas. Responses should demonstrate familiarity with the week's lecture and readings, both primary and secondary. Responses are due prior to the start of class.

Primary source presentation (10% of final grade). Each student will lead one discussion session of their choosing, facilitating our transition from asynchronous to synchronous discussion of historical material and application. The Sunday prior to the respective class session, the following materials should be submitted (submission link posted under "Main Page" module in Canvas):

- Text notes for instructor responding to these questions:
 - Author(s): Who wrote the text?
 - Context: When and where was this text written? What contextual factors, both internal to the Covenant and external to it (national, global events) shaped or elicit the text? In what way is the text a reflection of its context?
 - Audience: Who was the author writing to, directly or indirectly?
 - Impact: What was the intended outcome of the text (i.e., what did the author want to happen as a result of their writing the text)? What was the actual outcome of the text?
 - Significance: Why is the significance of this text for Covenant history and theology?
- Presentation slides for your presentation (note: your presentation does not need to follow the questions outlined above);
- Handout for classmates that includes four discussion questions, two historical and two re contemporary application.

Oral History Interview (35% of final grade). Each student will contribute a new primary source for Covenant history by conducting one recorded oral history interview with an historical actor. This will be completed in three distinct stages:

- Step 1 Learning from others (10%).** Listen to two oral history interviews available in the CAHL [Oral History Collection](#). Though you may select any two, I encourage you to choose diverse narrators—perhaps one whose experience in the Covenant seems to match yours and one whose experience seems quite different.
1. Write a short (2-page, single-spaced) paper on your observations (8%): What factors (types of questions, tone, degree of preparation) facilitate an interesting, helpful interview? What factors limit an interview? Where do you see evidence of preparation? What is the value of oral history interviews as historical sources?
 2. Briefly summarize those takeaways on the forum; bullet points are fine. (2%)
Read all posts, and respond as helpful.
- Step 2 Interview prep (10%).** Submit your finalized interviewee name, preparatory reading (min. 50 pages), and interview questions. Be sure to receive a greenlight from instructor on interviewee *before* submitting to Canvas or reaching out to potential interviewee formally. (And to do so with enough lead time to receive feedback and modify if necessary.) This is to prevent a single person's receiving multiple requests.
- Step 3 Interview & follow-up (15%).** Conduct your interview. Many free apps are available for recording phone conversations (e.g., I have used Rev Call Recorder). Though

video is possible and has some benefits, some interviewees will be more comfortable and relaxed with voice only. Once your interview is complete, submit all the following components:

1. To the archives and interviewee, with instructor copied:
 - a. Completed [paperwork](#) (signed release form, life history form)
 - b. Digital recording file(s)
 - c. Content outline with timestamps
 - d. Summary paragraph and keyword list
2. To Canvas: a 1–2-page, single spaced reflection on the interview experience (what you learned, what surprised/inspired/encouraged you, etc.).

Note that assignment will not be considered complete if any of these pieces is missing.

Outreach Project (20% of final grade). This final project invites you to contribute to historical stewardship, communicating a relevant aspect of Covenant history within your ministry setting (or a hypothetical but specific ministry setting). Depending on your content and intended audience, this may take a number of forms, including but not limited to:

- Web content (e.g., interactive timeline with images; historical content for congregational site)
- Art (e.g., music, graphic)
- Sermon series
- Adult Sunday school curriculum
- A *Covenant Companion* article (~3,000 words)
- Podcast

Include with your project a 1–2-paragraph **rationale statement** that details: (1) the intended setting and audience for your project, (2) your reason for selecting both the specific content and the delivery method for this audience (i.e., why you want to communicate *this*, to *this audience*, in *this way*), and (3) how the material to follow would be used.

COURSE SCHEDULE

To follow.