ECCO 5030: Theology of the Evangelical Covenant Church
North Park Theological Seminary
January 18-22, 2027
3 credit hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the core doctrines of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the theological diversity expressed in its life together. While the ECC identifies itself with the historical doctrines of the whole Christian church, it has distinctive theological positions and methods. The course will examine such central doctrines as scripture, ecclesiology, sacraments, and Holy Spirit, giving attention to Covenant Affirmations and other sources as a framework for theological reflection.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through the course, the students will:

1. Understand the Covenant's theological heritage as an apostolic, catholic, Reformation, evangelical, and Pietist church.
2. Understand, interpret, and contextualize the Covenant Affirmations.
3. Understand how the Covenant reads Scripture and how to contextualize it in a local ministry setting.
4. Understand and articulate the theological basis for the Covenant's positions on topics such as atonement, sacraments, ordination, justice, sexuality, anti-racism, and women in ministry.
5. Understand how the Covenant's theological character informs and shapes its faithful response to the whole Gospel.
6. Discover the theological richness of ECC resources such as the Covenant Hymnal, the Covenant Book of Worship, and Resolutions.
7. Become familiar with the breadth of theological perspectives found within the diversity of the ECC.

REQUIRED READING

1. James Bruckner, Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, & Paul Koptak (Eds.), *Living Faith: Reflections on Covenant Affirmations by the Faculty of NPTS,* Covenant Publications
   available in hardcopy here:
   https://covchurch.org/resource/living-faith-reflections-on-covenant-affirmations
   available as an ebook here:
   https://covbooks.com/products/living-faith-reflections-on-covenant-affirmations-ebook
2. Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, *Angels, Worms, and Bogeys: The Christian Ethic of Pietism*, Wipf and Stock
3. The Covenant Book of Worship, pp. 3-46, 123-155
4. Resources available on the ECC website:
   a. https://covchurch.org/resource/covenant-distinctives/
   b. https://covchurch.org/resource/covenant-resource-papers/
   c. https://covchurch.org/beliefs-resolutions/
   d. https://covchurch.org/resource/called-and-gifted-material/
   e. https://covchurch.org/resource/the-meaning-of-membership/

f. https://covchurch.org/resource/baptism-documents/
g. https://covchurch.org/resource/human-sexuality-paper/
h. https://covchurch.org/resource/freedom-and-responsibility/

5. Materials found on Canvas.
6. In addition, students are free to preview the video series we will be using during class time on the Covenant Affirmations; it can be found here: https://vimeo.com/36991977

RECOMMENDED READING

1. Dennis Edwards, *What is the Bible and How Do We Understand It?* Herald Press
2. Brenda Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice*
3. Russell Jeung, *At Home in Exile*
4. Mae Elise Cannon and Andrea Smith (Eds), *Evangelical Theologies of Liberation and Justice,* IVP Academic
5. Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*
6. Roberto Chao Romero, *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Social Justice, Theology, and Identity*
7. Dominique Gilliard, *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice that Restores*
8. Mark Branson and Juan F. Martínez, *Churches, Cultures, and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*

ASSESSMENTS

All assessments should be submitted through Canvas as .pdf files.

1. Preparation (pre-course work) Due Sunday, January 17, 2027

READ *This We Believe: Covenant Affirmations (available on Canvas),* and WRITE a 3-5 page (double-spaced) review of the book and post it on Canvas, answering these questions:

A. How does the book coordinate or confirm, or fail to coordinate or confirm, what you know of the Evangelical Covenant Church?
B. What do you find refreshing or helpful?
C. What do you not understand or feel that you need to reflect on more?

2. Class Participation (attendance and participation in all class sessions)

Because of the intensive nature of the class, it is essential that students attend all class sessions in full. Students should expect class sessions to run from 9 to 11:30 am and 1:00 to 4:30 pm Monday through Thursday, with an expected earlier completion Friday afternoon. Please plan schedules accordingly.

3. Final Essays: Due Friday March 5, 2027

Choose TWO of the following 6 questions which make application of a theological topic to ministry. All essays should interact with the course presentations, discussions, and reading material as appropriate.

1. Why is it important that the ECC grounds its affirmations in its apostolic, catholic, Reformation, evangelical, and Pietist roots? How does this grounding help to define our identity, including how we understand the affirmations themselves? Where do you see the influences of these roots in Covenant theology and ethos?
2. How does the Covenant's affirmation of the centrality of Scripture relate to any of

the following topics: women in ministry, anti-racism, or atonement? Explain and connect both the Covenant's view of the Bible and of the topic you choose.

3. How does the Covenant's affirmation of Christian freedom relate to the Covenant's position on baptism? Explain and connect the Covenant's view of both freedom and baptism.
4. Develop a theology of the necessity of new birth in relation to at least one other affirmation. Explore themes in the readings, in class presentations and discussions, and in your own experience.
5. What is the nature and mission of the church? Discuss the relationship between the whole mission of the church (affirmation #3) and the church as the fellowship of believers (affirmation #4).
6. Discuss how the six affirmations interact and coordinate with one another. Why is each important and how do they fit together to shape and guide the ECC today?

Essay Guidelines:
Essays should be 1,500 words each, or 3,000 words total for both essays (not counting reproducing the question). Double-space, with 1 inch margins all around. Your name and the page number should appear at the top right of each page (your computer can do this automatically). Include the question number; you do not need to type out the question, but it's fine if you do. Use a standard 12 point black font. Use good citations showing you read the material on your topic. Footnotes are not necessary but cite quotations or references in parentheses in the text. Do not use long quotations from source materials. Please use gender inclusive language when referring to people.

GRADING

Grades for participation and assignments will be weighted as follows:

Preparation report – 20%
Attendance & Participation – 30%
Final Essays – 50% (25% each)

PROPOSED DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Morning session (including a 10-minute break)
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Afternoon session (including a 15-minute break)
{possible earlier end on Friday}

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 Catalog located online Seminary Academic Catalog (pp. 25–27).

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 coursework 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.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to us. 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.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

We are here to help you. If at any point you need clarification *beyond what is already stated in the syllabus* or want to discuss the reading, lectures, discussions, or assignments, please ask. We are happy to talk with you.