



A M B R O S E
SEMINARY

PT 645 The Meaning and Purpose of Work in Theological Perspective

Instructor: Marv Franz, MDiv, ThM, MBA

Phone: 519-618-9333

Email: marvfranz@gmail.com

Course Description

This course will explore the intersection of Christian faith and the world of work. In particular, focus will be given to several key theological themes that inform the integral role our work plays within the Christian life and God's activity in the world. In addition to understanding the meaning and purpose of work, attention will be given to how a theological understanding of our work can impact both how one engages the workplace and how one makes career choices. The course will largely be structured as a seminar course, providing students with an opportunity to engage in topics and issues presented in the course by way of class discussions based on course readings, but will also include material presented in a lecture format.

Course Objectives

This course aims to expand and grow student theological understanding of:

- How work is an integral part of the grand Biblical themes of creation and redemption
- The meaning and purpose of work as understood in both the Old and New Testament
- The meaning of Christian vocation and career in relation to the role of work
- The role of the Christian vocation and societal change
- The ways in which attitudes have been shaped towards work and its meaning within the church
- The role of work within the mission of the church
- How to live faithfully, reflectively and creatively as Christians in the context of the workplace

Outline of Course Topics

The topics covered in the course include:

1. Introduction and course overview
2. Understanding the importance of theological reflection on work and its meaning
3. Work and its relationship to a theology of creation
4. Work and its relationship to a theology of redemption
5. Engaging societal change through work
6. The role of vocation and calling in the Christian life and its relationship to career decisions
7. Practicing holistic missional thinking within the workplace

Course Readings & Materials

The core text for this course will be:

R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999.

Students will be expected to have this text in hand over the duration of the course.

Additional texts for this course include:

1. Theodore R. Malloch, *Spiritual Enterprise: Doing Virtuous Business*, Encounter Books, 2008.
2. Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Calling*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
3. Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001.

Additional course readings will be provided by the instructor.

Course Requirements

Course grading and evaluation will be comprised of the following:

Participation and class discussion	20%
Critical book reviews (3 @ 15%)	45%
Integrative paper	35%

Participation and class discussion (20%):

Participation in class discussions and group activities will be a key component of learning throughout this course. Students are expected to attend all classes, having read assigned materials ahead of time and prepared for class in order to actively participate in these discussions. Small daily assignments may be required as assigned by the professor. If external circumstances or illness prevent you from attending or adequately preparing for a class, please let the professor know so that this can be taken into account, as repeated absences from class will negatively impact a student's individual participation grade.

Critical book reviews (3 @ 15%)

Three critical book reviews will be written including required texts *The Other Six Days* by R. Paul Stevens and *Work in the Spirit*, by Miroslav Volf. The third book review can be chosen from among the remaining two selections listed.

The outline of the book review must include the following elements:

- 1) Explanation of title and subtitle (10%)
 - Clear statement of subject related to title and subtitle
 - Clear statement of purpose related to title and subtitle
 - Clear statement of thesis related to title and subtitle

- 2) Structure of the book outlined (20%)
 - Summarize the structure of the book by section
 - How does the argument flow through this structure?
 - What links the sections together?
- 3) Critical evaluation of the book (50%)
 - Substantial reflection on the author's argument
 - What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument?
 - To what degree is the author persuasive or convincing? Why or why not?
- 4) Personal impressions (positive and negative) (20%)
 - What impressed me positively about the book?
 - What impressed me negatively about the book?

Each report must NOT exceed 1250 words (about 5-6 pages) and MUST use 12 point Arial or New Times Roman font.

Integrative paper (35%)

Each student will write an integrative paper which will explore a particular field of work that is of interest and relevance to the student through a reflective analysis related to the course content, texts and readings. The paper will explore how the particular chosen field of work interacts with the following areas:

- 1) With a theology of creation, describing its relationship to key themes such as Imago Dei and the Creation Commission, among other themes. How is this field of work related the created order? (25%)
- 2) With the consequences of “the fall” and the “powers” which are fallen. How has this field of work been used as part of “domination systems” to oppose God’s original intentions and purposes? (25%)
- 3) With a theology of redemption and new creation, describe its relationship to the work of Christ, and the redemption of creation, including the “powers”. How does this field of work relate to the mission of the church? (25%)
- 4) With relationship to your particular/specific calling (vocation). What is it about this field of work which aligns with your personality and abilities? In your journey of vocational discovery, what outstanding questions do you have about how you may fit with this field of work? What other challenges and opportunities may exist for you in this field of work and how might you approach them? (25%)

In each of these four areas, the student is expected to draw upon course concepts, the texts and readings, as well as any other relevant sources, such as trade publications related to the chosen field of work, newspapers, magazine articles or academic articles in order to substantiate the argument.

The integrative paper must NOT exceed 4000 words (15-16 pages) and MUST use 12 point Arial or New Times Roman font.

Grading

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

% Grade	Letter Grade	Description
95% to 100%	A+	
90% to 94%	A	Excellent
85% to 89%	A-	
80% to 84%	B+	
76% to 79%	B	Good
72% to 75%	B-	
68% to 71%	C+	
64% to 67%	C	Satisfactory
60% to 63%	C-	
55% to 59%	D+	
50% to 54%	D	Minimal Pass
0% to 49%	F	Failure

To pass the course, students must achieve an overall grade of at least 50%. Failure to submit an assignment by the assigned date without legitimate reason (i.e. evidenced illness) or prior approval of the instructor may result in a failed grade for the course. In the case of legitimate or approved absence, and at the instructor's discretion, the assigned date may be rescheduled to a later date, or if this is not practically possible, the marks reallocated to other components of the course grade.

Due Dates for Assignments:

The critical book reviews and interactive paper must be emailed to the instructor no later than May 31, 2011.

For those who are graduating in April 2011, all assignments are due to the instructor no later than April 22, 2011.

Important Notes:

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

In-class Use of Electronic Devices

The use of personal electronic devices by students in-class is purely at the discretion of the instructor. The use of laptop or notebook computers, cell phones, PDAs, music players, headphones or any other personal entertainment devices will not be allowed in-class. Audio or video recording of class lectures is strictly prohibited without the prior expressed consent of the instructor.

Although extensions to coursework within the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last due date listed on the syllabus unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office two weeks prior to the course due date. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Registration and payment in full is open up to the morning of the first day of class.

Students may drop this class and receive a full refund only prior to the second class session (i.e., before 1 pm on Tuesday, on the first day of class). No tuition refund will be issued after this deadline.

Students may voluntarily withdraw or change their registration from credit to audit, without academic penalty, only prior to completing 70% of the course (i.e., before 1pm on Friday, or the fourth day of class). Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. ‘W’ grades are not included in grade point average calculations. A limit on the number of courses from which a student is permitted to withdraw may be imposed. Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

All registration changes must be made through the Registrar’s Office by completing a Registration Revision Form. Forms are available in the Registrar’s Office or on the website.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from Ambrose. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

DISCLAIMER

The instructor reserves the right to change all or part of this syllabus as he seeks to adjust to advances in the field, the particular dynamics of the class, or whatever is in the best interest of students.