

SPIR 525: LIVING ELDERS IN A DYING CHURCH

Dr. James Houston
July 29-August 2, 2013
8:00-11:00 am
1 or 2 graduate credit hours



Please Note: The Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses.
The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information.
Syllabi are available to Regent students at <http://www2.regent-college.edu/courses/login>

Course Description

As the aging of society is now progressing, the role or lack of role of its 'seniors' will become a serious burden for church and society alike. Yet Biblically, the church should see the role of 'elders' as the dynamic of its spiritual health; instead our hope lies in a youth culture. Facing the medical consequences of advancing bodily health, are churches prepared for the rapid increase of 'seniors' who have never been equipped to be 'elders'? Such is the challenge of this course. While the course is primarily intended for pastors, Christian leaders, medical and nursing care-givers, it is also an open challenge to Christian youth to accept new paradigms in discipleship.

Class Outline

Monday, July 29	Facing a demographic challenge of aging population in the western world
Tuesday, July 30	The neglect of biblical "elders" in a culture of ageism
Wednesday, July 31	How do disabilities challenge our cultural assumptions of "being persons-in-Christ?"
Thursday, August 1	Is there a theology of Alzheimer's disease?
Friday, August 2	How does the church prepare us for dying?

Assignments

1. Reflective Paper
Students are to write a reflective essay of 2,000 words (approx. 8 pages) on one of the themes or questions raised by the course, demonstrating the ways this class has shaped your thinking about the topic.

DUE: (postmarked by) Monday, September 16, 2013

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2013**

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2. Research Essay (*2-credit hour students only*)

Two-credit hour students are to write a paper investigating one of the topics of the course in more detail. The final product should be 3,750 words in length. Students may either write a typical research essay, an experiential activity paper (incorporating 15 hours of activity such as interviewing older members of the student's church, speaking with caregivers of people with Alzheimer's, or visiting a senior care facility and reflecting on the setting), or a combination of the two.

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Evaluation (*All grading in this course will be done by the TA*)

	1 cr hrs	2 cr hrs
Reflective Paper	100%	35%
Research Essay	—	65%

Required Reading

Houston, James M. and Michael Parker, *A Vision for the Aging Church: Renewing Ministry for and by Elders*, Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780830839483.

Deadline for dropping the course with refund is 4:30 pm on July 29, 2013 (100% refund) or 4:30 pm on July 30, 2013 (75% refund). There is no refund of any tuition fees after the 75% refund deadline, but the course may be dropped, changed to audit, or reduced in credit hours up until 4:30 pm on August 2, 2013 (no refunds).