

PORTABLE **CMU** | 2009-2010





Portable CMU

Portable CMU offers you the benefits of university instruction in your own local setting! This brochure describes short courses on a wide range of topics our faculty members have prepared to deliver in a variety of contexts away from CMU.

Each course includes three or four sessions. When chosen for use in a church context, many of these courses can culminate in a sermon on Sunday morning. (However, please note that if the church requires a sermon that is not related to the topic of the short course, a separate negotiation is required.) These courses fit well into a weekend of educational activities. They may be adapted for settings such as retreats. Some of the topics also lend themselves very well to intensive sessions for leadership groups or focus groups within an agency or a congregation.

The cost of a course, including traveling expenses and an honorarium for the instructor, is \$550.00. For locations distant from Winnipeg, we also request that the hosting church or agency provide lodging and meals for the instructor, as well as transportation to and from the airport, where applicable.

For further information or to make a reservation, please contact:

Stephanie Penner
Canadian Mennonite University
Phone: 204.487.3300
Toll-free: 877.231.4570
Fax: 204.487.3858
www.cmu.ca

Please call early to make a booking since some offerings will be in high demand. We welcome bookings both by individual congregations and by two or more congregations working in cooperation.

Portable Topics



Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John 4

Preaching with Power and Passion 4

Biblical Resources for Healing 4

Do Denominations Matter? 5

Reading the Church 5
and the World Theologically

Theo-Mathematics 5

Proclaiming Christ 6
in a Post-Christendom Society

Understanding Islam 6

The Problem of Prayer 6

Love (All) Your Neighbours 7

Work, Play and the 7
Christian Imagination

Thinking Christianly 7
about the Movies

Modern Apocalyptic 8
Consumer Culture

Remembering Our Baptism 8

Ministry: Coming Soon 9
to a Screen Near You

Music and Spiritual Meaning 9

Questions about Creation 10

A Bloodthirsty People: 10
Revenge on Stage and Screen

Critical Issues in 11
Congregational Worship

Philippians and the Challenges 11
of Christian Citizenship



Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John

Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, Associate Professor of New Testament

Who is Jesus and how will you respond to him? This question lies at the heart of the many and varied encounters people have with Jesus in the Gospel of John. On the basis of John 20:31, one might say that this question is the very reason for which the gospel was written. We will examine various texts in which people meet Jesus. These people include a Samaritan woman, a man born blind, Jewish religious leaders, Mary and Martha, Nicodemus, and Pilate. Their questions and their responses to Jesus are as diverse as our own. Through learning to know the people who meet Jesus in the Gospel of John, we may also meet Jesus in a new way and be challenged to respond, as they were.

Preaching with Power and Passion

Dan Epp-Tiessen, Associate Professor of Bible

This Portable is designed to enhance the preaching abilities of lay preachers in the congregation. Workshops, spread over Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon, will cover topics like: the purpose of preaching, basics of effective oral communication, moving from Biblical text to sermon, sermon structures, beginnings and endings, connecting with the congregation, and using stories, illustrations, and examples. The material can be presented at a variety of different levels depending on the needs of the group. This Portable requires at least eight people to make it viable and so several congregations are invited to jointly sponsor the event.

Sunday sermon: “What Is God Doing Through Our Preaching?”

Biblical Resources for Healing

Dan Epp-Tiessen, Associate Professor of Bible

What light does Biblical teaching shed on human pain and suffering? What resources does the Bible offer us to deal with life’s difficult experiences? My discussion of these questions will include personal sharing about the Biblical passages that have sustained and nurtured me through the experience of being the father of a son who struggled with physical and mental disabilities, and who died of cancer at the age of eight. Some of the key points that will be discussed include: the assurance of God’s presence, accepting painful realities, being people of hope, lamenting our pain, the healing power of praise, gratitude for small blessings.

Sessions:

- » Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?
- » Living Faithfully in the Midst of Pain and Struggle
- » Suffering and Pain Transformed
- » Bringing our Woundedness to the Cross

Do Denominations Matter?

Karl Koop, Associate Professor of Historical Theology

In the North American context denominational loyalties are fading rapidly. Christians are switching denominations, and many are joining non-denominational churches. Is this trend inevitable or long overdue? Does it make sense, theologically? Sessions will explore the relevance of our theological traditions.

Reading the Church and the World Theologically

Harry Huebner, Professor of Philosophy and Theology

Contemporary Christians have a hard time seeing the world theologically. For example, what does it mean for our understanding of the world that God is a resurrecting God, or that Jesus was the incarnation of God? This Portable is really a primer on theology.

Sessions:

- » The Theological Imagination of the Bible
 - » Keeping the Church Theological
 - » Reading the World Theologically
 - » Praise and Lament as Theological Worship
-

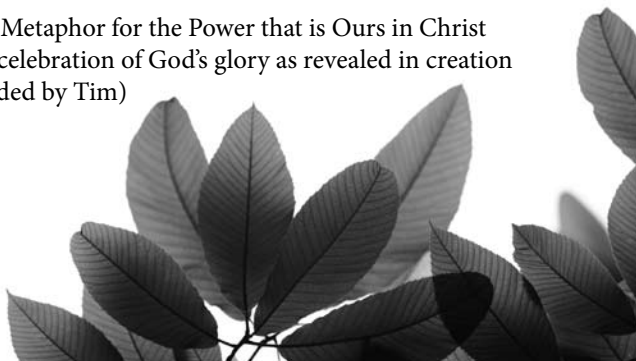
Theo-Mathematics

Tim Rogalsky, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

There are great possibilities for meaningful conversation between theology and mathematics, but they are seldom explored! These sessions will lead into an encounter with the sacred and the spiritual through the lenses of faith, science, and mathematics.

Sessions:

- » The Story of Blaise Pascal—Theologian, Philosopher, Mystic, and Mathematician
- » Chaos Theory—How Math and Science Demonstrate the Limitations of Human Knowledge
- » The Science of Resonance as a Metaphor for the Power that is Ours in Christ
- » An evening vespers service in celebration of God's glory as revealed in creation (with music on the viola provided by Tim)



Proclaiming Christ in a Post-Christendom Society

Titus Guenther, Associate Professor of Theology and Missions

The Christian church used to be a dominant voice in society. Today it is in a minority situation—it is only one voice among many. How do we proclaim Jesus Christ in a pluralistic society where secularism, consumerism, various media, and other religions compete for our attention? What challenges do congregations face in fulfilling our calling to Christian witness in the twenty-first century? With the majority of Christians now living in the Two-Thirds world, where is our “mission field”? If our North Atlantic church is indeed a Post-Christendom church, does this change how we do missions/evangelism? These and other questions will be explored, using Biblical and theological resources, in light of our personal and corporate experiences in Christian witness.

Understanding Islam

John Derksen, Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution Studies

What is Islam? What does the Qur'an teach? What do Muslims believe? What does Islam have to do with 9/11? How shall we relate to Muslims? Islam is the world's fastest growing major religion, and Christians the world over, including in Canada, find themselves with Muslim neighbours. These sessions will introduce Islam's origins and development, its scriptures and teachings, and its presence in the modern world. We will also discuss how Christians may relate to Muslims.

The Problem of Prayer

Pierre Gilbert, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Theology

Prayer can be a very confounding practice. Why do we pray? Why do we often have the impression that God doesn't answer our prayers? Does prayer really make a difference? We will explore this question by first examining the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:9-13. Second, we will look at the flipside of the issue and consider what happens when God does indeed answer our prayers, but in ways we didn't expect. Habakkuk, a seventh-Century prophet, once received an answer to an urgent prayer. But God's response shocked him...Beware what you pray for... Matthew 6:9-13 and the book of Habakkuk will provide a foundation for understanding more adequately the nature of prayer and will give us some insights into the basic principles we need to take into account as we anticipate God's response.

Love (All) Your Neighbours

Delmar Epp, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Today's churches seek to build community in the face of increasing diversity, both within our congregations, and in our broader contexts. Yet there often exists an anxiety over opening our doors to change, and our culture promotes a need for protection and isolation from those outside our circles. Working from a social-psychological perspective, we will explore the origins of prejudice, the variation in people's prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, and the potential to transform relations among people who differ.

Work, Play and the Christian Imagination

Irma Fast Dueck, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology


For many of us, our work defines us and envelops us wherever we go. The current plethora of books on time management, anxiety, stress and burn out, suggests that frequently our work has gotten the better of us. Christians are no exception and the words of Paul capture the Christian work ethic well, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as if unto the Lord" (Col. 3:23). Our scriptures provide valuable clues into how Christians might imagine and engage their work and play. This portable will explore a Christian theology of work as well as a corresponding theology of play.

Thinking Christianly about the Movies

Gordon Matties, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Theology

Movies often express our yearning for loving community, for happiness, and even for God's presence. Yet they also expose our compulsions, challenge our idolatries and lament the loss of God's presence. These sessions will invite participants into a practical exploration of how movies, like parables, invite us to have "eyes to see and ears to hear." How might we imagine constructive and critical conversation between faith and film? And how might we nurture a thoroughly Christian way of seeing?

Sessions:

- » Stimulating the Conversation between Film and Faith
 - » Tools for Seeing: Movie Viewing as a Spiritual Discipline
 - » Engaging the Conversation: A Practical Exploration of a Recent Movie.
 - » Resources for further Reflection on the Conversation
- 

Modern Apocalyptic Consumer Culture

Brian Froese, Assistant Professor of History

This is a four-part series on the Christian “end times” story and its appropriation in contemporary religious and “secular” popular culture. To help us in our conversations, we will focus our exploration of “end times” on the rich consumer landscape of apocalyptic goods, which may include radio, television, movies, literature, music, and documentaries. As we consider the cultures of endings surrounding us, we will think too about how the Bible has been used, and how we read it ourselves.

Sessions

- » Left Behind—We will explore the history of millennial desire in western civilization, in particular, the emergence of dispensationalism and its current significance.
 - » End Times Practices—We will look at the changing role of such practices as decoding 666, identifying the Antichrist, locating current events in the Bible, and contemplating what post-resurrection life will be like, throughout Church History, with an emphasis on the last century.
 - » Terminator History—We will explore selected “secular” end-of-the-world scenarios in popular culture and their possible meanings in our society today. Issues may include fascination with evil, humans and technology, and whether such endings reflect an attempt to re-enchant a secularized cosmos.
 - » Reading The Book of Revelation in its Biblical context for our contemporary context.
-

Remembering Our Baptism

Irma Fast Dueck, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology

“The church believes everything about baptism which we all believe about water.” (William Willimon) So what is it that Christians in the Believers Church tradition (those baptizing on a confession of faith) believe about the waters of baptism? Does water save? Is it necessary to being Christian? How do the meanings of water baptism continue to shape the Christian journey? The past couple of decades have presented serious challenges for both thinking about and practicing baptism. Early in the Christian tradition, baptism identified someone as being Christian; today we have many in our pews who are self-identified confessing Christians but who are not baptized. This portable will examine both the Biblical and historical meanings of baptism and will explore what it means to plant the seeds for an ecology of baptism in contemporary congregational life.

Note: A version of this Portable can also be designed for youth and young adult groups, retreat settings, etc. to help young people think about the meanings of faith commitments through images of baptismal water.

Ministry: Coming Soon to a Screen Near You

Sue Sorensen, Assistant Professor of English

Ministers and priests are astonishingly common characters on TV and in movies. Many people who have never encountered actual clergy may think they know what they're like by way of Brother Cadfael or Bing Crosby movies. What do movies say about how the wider public perceives the church? What are our own understandings of how ministry truly works? These sessions will be interactive and entertaining, but ultimately there are urgent questions to address. Many churches are facing a serious clergy shortage. Where are the pastors of the future (lay or ordained), and what do we want them to look like? Richard Burton, Rowan Atkinson, or ... you?

Sessions:

- » Popcorn Pastor I: on congregational expectations, with a look at troubling cinematic portrayals of the ministry in *Elmer Gantry*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and *The Preacher's Wife*
- » Popcorn Pastor II: a video lecture on positive portrayals, including the heroism of *Romero* and *The Mission*
- » Detecting the Next Generation of Ministers: on identifying needs and discerning gifts, with a look at films such as *Keeping the Faith* and *The Vicar of Dibley*

Music and Spiritual Meaning

Dietrich Bartel, Associate Professor of Music

Luther's claim that, next to theology, music is God's greatest gift to humanity, was much more than an enthusiastic endorsement of music. He understood music to contain transcendent meaning, pointing to a divine content, but also that music is able to convey something about God's very nature and relationship to humanity. From Augustine well into the eighteenth century, this understanding of music remained unchallenged. While Enlightenment and scientific thought questioned this "great tradition," relegating music to a purely human form of expression, nineteenth-century Romanticism identified music as a divine language, capable of articulating the inexpressible. However, music's theological foundations no longer seemed relevant. Much has been written in recent years about music's therapeutic benefits and effects. And yet, in addition to music's physiological and psychological effects, questions regarding spiritual meaning and content in music continue to be asked. This portable will explore the history of the "great tradition," some issues of our present understanding and practice of music, and will address areas in which music can express theological truths.



Questions about Creation

Glen Klassen, Adjunct Professor of Biology

The accounts of creation in the Bible are incredibly important in forming our worldview in the Church and even in our civilization in general. The Bible provides a guide for intellectual, moral, and creative living in a very different way from that of ancient or modern mythologies. How sad it is, then, that the teachings of the Bible are obscured by controversy, especially by the on-going debate between scientists and creationists. This portable is meant to address the standard controversial questions and to open the floor for discussion of others. Answers are offered from a position that respects the authority of the Bible but also accepts the findings of evolutionary science without succumbing to evolutionism. This position is sometimes called theistic evolution.

Sessions (illustrated):

- » How should we interpret Genesis 1-11? What about the age of the earth? What was the purpose of the genealogies? Did the flood really happen? What can we learn from Genesis? What is the basis of the authority of Genesis for us today? What can we learn from the young earth creationists? What about the old earth creationists?
 - » What should we make of the Intelligent Design movement? Is it good science? Is it good theology? Should it be taught in schools?
 - » Is Theistic Evolution the answer? What is the evidence for evolution? What about the origin of life? Can Christians really accept Darwinian natural selection? How do we answer the 'new' atheists who undermine faith in favour of evolutionism?
 - » Sermon: "The most surprising development ever to appear on earth" I John 3:11-18
-

A Bloodthirsty People: Revenge on Stage and Screen

Paul Dyck, Associate Professor of English

The theme of revenge pervades popular culture and always has. Though we now like to think of it as barbaric, revenge nonetheless has a deep hold on us. Looking at some of the great revenge dramas of the past as well as the popular revenge films of today, and culminating with a consideration of the Eucharist as a drama that ends revenge, this short course will ask how revenge works and how the church engages it.

Sessions:

- » Revenge Fantasies: Dreaming of Revenge
- » The Bonds of Affection: Hamlet Torn
- » Getting Your Attention: Revenge and Love in Medea and Kill Bill
- » "This is my blood": The Offence of Grace and the Undoing of Revenge

Critical Issues in Congregational Worship

Christine Longhurst, Sessional Instructor of Music and Worship

Churches today have experienced the impact of a variety of cultural forces that have affected their practice and understanding of worship—consumerism, individualism, and the rise of niche marketing. These cultural forces present a variety of unique challenges and opportunities for today’s congregations. In these sessions we will explore the impact of these forces on corporate worship, and the critical issues they raise for worshipping communities today.

Suggested sessions:

» “What You Want is What You Need.” The Challenge of Worship in a Consumer Culture

In today’s consumer culture, the search for personal satisfaction and fulfillment has become a way of life for many people. This workshop explores the impact of consumerism on corporate worship.

» Marketing for Success: The Lure of Separate Services

This workshop explores the contemporary trend toward ‘niche’ worshipping communities based on differences in age and worship style preference.

» Jesus and Me: The Demise of Corporate Worship

For many people today, worship is an essentially private experience rather than a corporate one. This workshop explores the rise of individualism and its impact on community worship.

Philippians and the Challenges of Christian Citizenship

Gordon Zerbe, Professor of New Testament

Using visual images of ruins and reconstructions of Paul’s world, this study of Philippians will explore both the deeply personal encouragement of the letter, and its stress on the practice of faith in the communal and public sphere, what Paul calls “Christian citizenship.” This brief but stimulating letter poses numerous questions for us, of which the following will be topics for specific sessions: How do we find joy, hope and unity in the midst of hardship or pressure? What does it mean to be “partners in grace,” which includes expressing Christian *koinonia* (partnership) through links of mutual aid? What does it mean to be a faithful witness for Jesus, taking the path of lowliness, in the context of a hostile or consumerist culture? What is the meaning of Christian citizenship and identity in the context of competing claims for our loyalty, including national ones?



SHAFTESBURY CAMPUS

500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB | R3P 2N2

ph. 204.487.300

toll-free 877.231.4570

fax 204.486.3858

www.cmu.ca



DOWNTOWN CAMPUS (Menno Simons College)

Suite 210-250 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB | R3C 0G2

ph. 953.3855

fax 783.3699

www.mscollege.ca

MISSION STATEMENT:

Canadian Mennonite University is an innovative Christian university, rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition, moved and transformed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through teaching, research and service CMU inspires and equips women and men for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.