

Hartford International University, Summer 2022

Religious Adaptation and the Pandemic Challenge (RS-668)

Thousands of congregations who have resisted changing to meet the needs of the times have shifted toward greater openness to innovation and creativity in response to the global pandemic. It is possible to learn from the traumatic situation of Covid-19 and uncover the dynamics of innovative and creative ministry to effect change in any organizational context. This course will explore the dynamics of religious adaptation and innovative as seen in a large national study of congregations entitled Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations. It will deeply engage this new data, along with business literature on entrepreneurial creativity and leadership, and translate this material into insights for religious leadership who face numerous questions about what changes are needed and how to lead their congregations through change. The pandemic is ushering in a new social reality that requires continuing congregational adaptation. The final project for the course will be to create an actionable plan to continue the flexible adaptation evidenced throughout the past two years in many communities of faith or other ministry settings.

Scott Thumma sthumma@hartsem.edu
860-509-9542 or 9553

Course modality: **5-days, 3.25-hour face-to-face seminars and longer online Canvas component – Tuesday June 13th to June 17th**

Class location: On campus and Zoom

Office hours: in person, via zoom or phone TBD (to schedule an appointment, email sthumma@hartsem.edu).

I welcome auditors but I expect active participation from them and those taking the course for credit. This is an applied course, therefore, each person in this course should have a ministry context to reflect on and strategize about. It need not be a congregation (it could be a nonprofit, a community need or a social issue) but it does need to be a tangible entity to use as a focus for your reading and reflection in this course. While this reflection is hypothetical for the course, it would be ideal if you also intend to engage later in innovative and creative implementation of the ideas generated in this course.

Texts*

What should I read? All of these?! You get out of the course what you invest in the course. I do not intend to teach you what is written in these books and the articles available on canvas. Instead I hope our in person and zoom time will be spent discussing the ideas in the readings and their implications for that week. Therefore, if you don't read, we have less to discuss. Also please remember we are cramming a full semester course into 5 short days so this will be a summer "intensive."

All of the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) Research Reports.
<https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/research/national-survey-research/navigating-the-pandemic-a-first-look/>

<https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/research/national-survey-research/extraordinary-social-outreach-in-a-time-of-crisis/>
<https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/research/national-survey-research/religious-education-report/>
and other blog posts.

Susan Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019) **On the DTL:**
<https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1107059965>

Mark Deymaz, *Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community* (Nashville: HarperCollins, 2017) **Not available as a Library e-book, but available for student purchase as a Kindle (\$6.99)** [Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community - Kindle edition by DeYmaz, Mark. Religion & Spirituality Kindle eBooks @ Amazon.com.](#)

John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012) **On the DTL:**
<https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1015872016>

HBR's 10 Must Reads on Innovation (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013) **On the DTL:**
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=5181790>

OPTIONAL READINGS:

* If you were excited by Deymaz's ideas in *Disruption*, this book goes into greater detail about making the church financially stable. Mark Deymaz, Harry Li, *The Coming Revolution in Church Economics: Why Tithes and Offerings Are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About It*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019)

Not available as a Library e-book, but available for purchase as an ebook (\$11.99)

<https://www.amazon.com/Coming-Revolution-Church-Economics-Offerings-ebook/dp/B07PYY6M35/>

* If you want to reinvigorate the culture of your organization this might be a good book to read. Scott D. Anthony, Paul Cobban, Natalie Painchaud, Andy Parker, *Eat, Sleep, Innovate: How to Make Creativity an Everyday Habit Inside your Organization*. (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2020) **Not available as a Library e-book, but available for purchase as an ebook (\$15.39)**
<https://www.amazon.com/Eat-Sleep-Innovate-Creativity-Organization-ebook/dp/B0843KJLWG>

***Additional readings will be available in CANVAS.**

Please email sthurma@hartsem.edu if you are having any difficulty accessing the texts.

Coursework and Assessment

- Class Participation: 20%
- daily Reflections posted in CANVAS: 25%
- One presentation: 15%
- Final paper or project: 40%

Learning Outcomes

- To demonstrate knowledge and the challenges of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications for religious leadership.
- To demonstrate knowledge related to the components of innovation and creativity in leadership.
- To demonstrate the capacity and willingness to think creatively about religious leadership.
- To develop the competence to produce original research and written work for the benefit of religious communities and religious leadership.

Plagiarism policy – plagiarism is not tolerated, see:

<https://www.hartsem.edu/currentstudents/policies/>

Schedule: Always subject to change!

Daily Topics:

Day 1 For Such a Time as This - Innovation in a Pandemic Context

The Steps to Religious Innovation

A. The Seriousness - interest/ambition, creativity, effort, and risk. The Vision

Module day one online assignments

Readings – **In the Module, read prior to class:**

Peter Drucker “Discipline of Innovation” in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Innovation*

Rosebeth Kanter “Innovation the Classic Traps” in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Innovation*

John Kotter “Leading Change” Just the article, not the book.

Disruptive Innovation in 2 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cu6J6taqOSg>

D.I. in 6 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbPiAzzGap0&list=PLVw8bxKfsO6aB5VNarUGWGEL0K016lRs8>

D.I. in an hour from Clayton Christensen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDrMAzCHFUU>

Reflection postings –

1. Introduce yourself to the class
2. What is your innovative vision? What need do you want to address and why? Be passionate because if you aren't then it isn't the right issue for you to address.

Day 2

B. The Season – The right timing, the crisis real or manufactured, and the appropriate time for your region.

C. The Soil – Preparation, planning, prior cultivation – including the manure.

Module day two online assignments

Readings –**read prior to class:**

All the EPIC reports.

ASSET-BASED STRATEGIES FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES: A Community Building
Workbook from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute
By Susan Rans and Hilary Altman

Reflection postings –

1. Having read the EPIC results and trends, and reflecting on your innovative issue (II), what are your opportunities in the post-pandemic reality to disrupt the “market?”
2. Do an inventory of your assets that you can leverage to address your II and post a description of the key assets to leverage? This might help <https://denverinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Asset-Mapping-Exercise.pdf>

Day 3

- D. The Seeds – The right crops for your area, your space, your tastes/community.
- E. The Sun/rain/pollination – God’s role, what’s that buzz, the unknowns.

Module Day three online assignments

Readings –**read prior to class:**

Mark Deymaz, *Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community*

Article - Church Capitalizes on Public Funds to Fuel Ministry

Church Experimentation starter kit Faith+Lead Luther Seminary

Reflection postings –

1. In *Disruption*, Deymaz discusses 5 different sectors of disruption, thinking about your Innovative Issue, in which sector does it fall and how does Deymaz’s writing add to your thoughts about your approach and possibilities?

Day 4

- F. The Structures – support, stakes, cages, weed block fabric.... small successes.
- G. The Sweat – prune, weed, remove pests, fertilize, give shade, etc.

Module Day four online assignments

Readings –**read prior to class:**

Susan Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*

Select a few of the religion articles and the ALT church stories linked in the bibliography and read them for inspiration.

Reflection postings –

1. As we come out of a liminal period and are thinking about leading in new and innovative ways, what is a key learning that you took from Beaumont’s book?
2. Describe briefly several of the alternative and creative ministries or innovations you read about in the online articles? What insights did they give you about your own II?

Day 5

H. The Store – harvest, marketing, in the bushel basket not under the bushel. Success breeds more success.

Your Plan for an Innovative Future

Module Day five online assignments

Readings –**read prior to class:**

John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* – more extensive version of the summary article we read at the beginning of the course.

Reflection postings –

1. Outline of your plan for an innovative future and **10 minute class presentation of this plan.**
2. Describe briefly several of the alternative and creative ministries or innovations you read about in the online articles? What insights did they give you about your own II?