

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**REFORMED & PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY**  
**CE101: CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**  
**Wed: 8:00 - 8:55; Fri. 8:00 - 9:55**  
**Fall 2023**

Instructor: Satya Maharjan

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Office Hours: Fri. 10:45 - 11:45 AM

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course introduces a basic understanding of discipleship by exploring the theological and ethical concepts of discipleship that promote virtuous living by bearing witness as a transformed disciple of Jesus Christ.

**EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Lack of authenticity in Christian discipleship hinders the making of disciples. In this course, students will deepen their understanding of authentic Christian discipleship and exemplary living in the contemporary world. We will seek to understand the implications of high moral living and how consequential it is for witnessing the world with an unfavorable view towards Christians. Through a close examination of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's seminal work, "The Cost of Discipleship," students will engage with Bonhoeffer's provocative ideas on (1) grace, (2) Christocentric understanding of the moral life from the Sermon on the Mount, (3) understanding the call of Jesus and following it in obedience, (4) embodying the nature of the Christian community, and (5) accepting the challenges of following Christ in a complex world. The course will examine the characteristics of discipleship by incorporating the scriptural passages on discipleship from the Johannine works.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Through readings, class discussions, and reflective writing, students will learn to practice, teach, and apply this Christocentric discipleship in various contexts of ministry.

**REQUIRED RESOURCES:**

- "The Cost of Discipleship" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:** (Journals and other supplemental readings pertaining to the course will be made available either in printing or electronically via email).

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

*August 16, 18*

Introduction to Christian Discipleship

- Course overview and its objectives
- Definition and Significance of Christian Discipleship

Foundational Concept of Discipleship

- The biblical foundation of discipleship
- The paradigm of Discipleship in John 1:35-51

*August 23, 25*

Introduction to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "The Cost of Discipleship"

- Read: Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1 of "The Cost of Discipleship"
- Supplementary Journal Reading: The historical context of Nazi Germany and the Confessing Church.
- Discuss and analyze the historical context of Bonhoeffer's text and his concept of costly grace.

*August 30, September 1*

Cheap Grace vs. Costly Grace

- Read: Chapters 2 and 3
- Reflect on the distinctions between cheap grace and costly grace.
- Writing Assignment: Discuss the concepts of "cheap grace" and "costly grace" in your own words.

*September 6, 8*

The Sermon on the Mount

- Read: Chapters 4 and 5
- Evaluate Bonhoeffer's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount as a foundation for Christian morality.
- Writing Assignment: Choose a specific teaching from the Sermon on the Mount and discuss its relevance in modern society.

*September 13, 15*

The Call of Jesus

- Read: Chapters 6 and 7
- Examine the radical nature of Jesus' call to discipleship and the implications for believers in a world ravaged by sin.
- Writing Assignment: Reflect on a time when you felt called to make a sacrificial choice and its impact on your faith journey (on any moral dilemma).

*SEPTEMBER 19-20: ONE-DAY SPIRITUAL RETREAT/NO CLASSES*

*September 22*

Christian Community and Discipleship

- Read: Chapters 8 and 9
- Explore Bonhoeffer's views on the importance of the Christian community and its role in discipleship.
- Writing Assignment: Describe an experience in which you witnessed or participated in a meaningful Christian community. What did you learn from it?

*September 27, 29*

The Church's Relationship with the World

- Read: Chapters 10 and 11
- Discuss the tension between the Church's role in the world and its distinct identity as a community of disciples.
- Writing Assignment: Analyze a contemporary social or ethical issue from a Christian perspective, considering Bonhoeffer's teachings.

*OCTOBER 2-6: MID-TERM WEEK*

*October 11, 13*

Conclusion and Application

- Read: Chapters 12 and 13
- Reflect on the overarching themes of the book and their implications for Christian living.
- Writing Assignment: Write a reflective essay on your personal understanding of discipleship and how it informs your approach to ethical decision-making.

*The syllabus is subject to change and modification depending on the workload as the course progresses.*

**WRITING REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Reflection Papers (1 page each): You are required to submit a one-page short paper critically engaging the assigned readings on the first day of class every week (Wednesday). These papers will be graded and due at the start of class. Note that there are no assignments for the first two weeks of class but the following weeks have writing assignments. Show your work by interacting with what the author was saying on any given topic and incorporate your insight and experience in the paper.

2. Please use Times New Roman font, 12-point (for footnote/bibliography also), double-spacing (i.e. 2.0 spacing), left justification, a one-inch margin on each side, and proper Turabian/Chicago style.
3. Please use gender-neutral or gender-inclusive language when making generic references to human persons.

**EXAMS:** Students will not sit for an exam on both the mid-term exam and the final exam. They are, however, required to submit 2-3 pages long reflecting paper. Further instruction will be provided in the classroom.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Students must bring their assignments to the classroom. They have the option to submit them by email to [satya@encounternepal.org](mailto:satya@encounternepal.org)

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

**Rubric:** Term papers will be evaluated based on the writing rubric provide at the end of this syllabus.

**Grading Scale:**

LETTER GRADE	4.00 SCALE	100 SCALE	DESCRIPTORS
A	4.00-3.85	100-96	Exceptional
A-	3.84-3.50	95-90	
B+	3.49-3.15	89-87	Meets Requirements
B	3.14-2.85	86-83	
B-	2.84-2.50	82-80	Needs Improvement
C+	2.49-2.15	79-77	
C	2.14-1.85	76-73	Significant Concerns
C-	1.84-1.35	72-70	
D	1.34-1.00	69-65	Unsatisfactory
F	<1.00	<65	

**Plagiarism:** It is an unethical practice of deliberately using the intellectual property or work or ideas of others and passing them off without proper acknowledgment as their's own. It rises to the level of intellectual dishonesty or theft that bears serious consequences to get blacklisted, suspended, and expelled from the program.

**STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION:**

**STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Assessment:

- Regular attendance: 10%
- Class Participation and Discussion: 10%
- Weekly Reflective Writing Assignments: 40%
- Final Reflective Essay: 40%