

## Strategies of Hospitality and New Member Integration

AM-664

May 24-25 & June 28-29 - 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM  
with 10 additional contact hours online via Canvas

Nearly every congregation gets visitors, but only those who work at hospitality and new member retention will actually grow as a result. This course is a hands-on effort to learn a variety of visitor/new member approaches, engage in a first impressions audit, and carry out a project of revising your congregation's visitor/new member strategy. Through practical readings, class lectures and discussion, an experiential project and support throughout by the professor and classmates, this course will improve a visitor's first impression of and integration in your congregational community. Auditors and congregational teams are welcome.

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### Objectives:

- To have each student understand the factors related to new member participation and engagement within their ministry setting.
- To have students learn the personal, social and cultural dimensions of involvement and participation within congregational life.
- To expose students to the multiple perspectives of congregational consultants writings about new member integration.
- To have students create a plan to revise some aspect of the new member strategy for their congregations.
- To enable the students to implement their plan for new member engagement and then evaluate its effectiveness.

### Course Requirements:

#### **MA credit**

1. Class presentation on an aspect of participation within the congregation 10 percent
2. Attendance and class discussion – active participation 25 percent
3. All required Readings and Reading summaries for 2 of the your choice books – 2 to 3 pages each) 20 percent
4. A 3-5 page written plan, with rationale, for implementing change in the visitor/new member strategy. 15 percent
5. A 10-12 page paper evaluating the plan, process and outcome of the effort to alter the visitor/new member strategy. 30 percent

#### **DMIN credit**

1. Class presentation on an aspect of participation within the congregation 10 percent
2. Attendance and class discussion – active participation 25 percent
3. All required Readings and Reading summaries for 4 of the your choice books – 2 to 3 pages each) 20 percent
4. A 3-5 page written plan, with rationale, for implementing change in the visitor/new member strategy. 15 percent

5. A 15 page paper evaluating the plan, process and outcome of the effort to alter the visitor/new member strategy. 30 percent

**\*\*\* NOTE: I welcome auditors in the class but I strongly encourage any auditor to do the required reading and participate in the class discussion as well as encourage auditors to do a class presentation.**

*Class Participation* - Attendance at and active participation in all class sessions is expected of all students. Exceptions are only allowed if advance permission has been granted by the instructor, and only for unavoidable absences. The participation grade includes active familiarity with all readings, active in-class participation and regular attendance.

*The Plan Paper* – A 3-5 page paper outlining the rationale, process and concrete plan for improving an aspect of the congregation’s visitor/new member strategy. This paper, **due the end of the second day**, will form the basis of the project undertaken between the May and June class times.

The Required Readings – All students should read the 3 required books listed below, **DUE PRIOR to the first meeting of the class.**

*The Reading Summaries* – The format of these readings are 1) students will select 2 or 4 (depending on level of credit sought) from the list of your choice books below. Students will read the books and write a short 2-3 page (single-space, typed, 12pt. Font) review of each book. These reviews can be somewhat informal in tone, but should spend at least 1 page summarizing the most interesting insights of the author and 1 page identifying specific learnings that would help or you would like to incorporate into your ministry. These reviews are **DUE by the end of the course** and will be posted on Canvas and distributed to the other students in the class.

*The Class Presentation* – The format for this short informal presentation, **due the last day of the class**, will be discussed further in class and will take the form of a brief case study presentation and report of the strategy used and results achieved in the experiment to revise the congregation’s visitor/new member approach for 30 days.

*The Final Paper* – This 12 (MA) or 15 (DMIN) page paper will describe and then evaluate the strategy, process and outcome of the project to revise the congregation’s approach to visitors and/or new members. This paper is due after the course is completed, **due date is August 2, 2019**. This paper should conform to the Seminary’s “General Guidelines for a Research Paper.” Further instruction on requirements will be discussed in class. It should draw on course readings, outside sources and will critically reflect on the effort to improve an aspect of the congregation’s visitor/new member strategy and the results of this 30 day trial effort.

### **Required Readings: To be read before the course begins.**

\*\* I realize that the majority of these readings are from an Evangelical perspective; however, this is because the vast majority of writing on this topic comes from a more conservative theological perspective. If you know of other readings and would like to substitute a reading, please contact me prior to the beginning of the course. This might seem like a lot of reading but these are short books, repetitious and not that difficult to digest – it is putting them into practice that is the hard work!

***The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants.*** Scott Thumma and Warren Bird. Jossey-Bass/Wiley. 2010. Primarily chapters 4,5,6,8,9, & 10.

***Fusion: Turning First-time Guests into Fully Engaged Members of Your Church.*** Nelson Searcy. Baker Books. 2017 edition.

*Lasting Impressions: From Visiting to Belonging.* Mark Waltz. Group Publishing. 2013.

**Your Choice Readings: (MA-2, DMin-4) Due by the end of the course.**

*Becoming a Welcoming Church.* Thom S. Rainer, B & H Publishing. 2018.

*Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church.* Gary L. McIntosh. Baker Books. 2006.

*First Impressions: Creating Wow Experiences in Your Church.* Mark L. Waltz. Group Publishing. 2005.

*Secrets of a Secret Shopper: Reaching and Keeping Church Guests.* Greg Atkinson. Rainer Publishing. 2016.

*The Come Back Effect.* Jason Young and Jonathan Malm. Baker Books. 2018.

*The Purpose Driven Church.* Rick Warren. Zondervan. 1995.

*Unwelcome: 50 Ways Churches Drive Away First-time Visitors.* Jonathan Malm. Center for Church Communication. 2014.

*Church Greeters 101: Putting the Pieces Together for an Effective Greeting Team.* Evangelism Coach. 2013.

*How to Wow Your Church Guests: 101 Ways to Make a Meaningful First Impression.* Mark Waltz. Group Publishing. 2011.

Additional recommended readings will be available on SonisWeb in the form of PDF chapters and articles.

**MA Grading Scale:**

A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+(87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B-(80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+(77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Please note: A+'s and C-'s are not part of the grading system.

**DMin Grading** – High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, Fail

**Expectations:** I would strongly suggest that students **NOT** miss any class meetings. Two absences, with good reasons and ideally with prior approval, will be allowed but anyone who misses more than two class periods will have their final grade reduced.

Please come to class well prepared. Since I will be basing a quarter of your grade on participation, come prepared and ready to engage in the discussion.

**Course extensions:** Past experience has shown that timely completion of all assignments and the entire course is essential to successful completion of the overall academic program. As a result, late writing assignments and incomplete course extensions are strongly discouraged. If students cannot attend class but would like to join via Zoom I will make every effort to accommodate this request.

**General Classroom Policies:** Student Handbook can be found at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/> The standard Seminary policies regarding plagiarism and writing style apply to this course. For more information about these policies, see the student handbook or the Seminary's website. Academic policies are listed at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/> .

**Writing Style and Assistance:** All academic papers are to conform to conventional technical, grammatical, and stylistic standards referred to in the General Guidelines for a Research Paper which can be found in the online forms center of the Seminary website. The Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines will be the standard of evaluation for the course. If you need writing assistance to produce an acceptably written MA/Dmin quality paper, the seminary offers free writing tutors. Please make use of them.

**Plagiarism warning:** Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

**Inclusive language** – Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's images of God.

**Email Policy** –The instructor will use the official Hartford Seminary student email address for all course communications. Students should check their hartsem.edu email account regularly.

**If anyone has any questions, suggestions, difficulties, or comments I would love to hear them and am always available by email [sthumma@hartsem.edu](mailto:sthumma@hartsem.edu) or during my office hours posted on my office door.**

## **Daily Topics and Assignments**

Day 1 - Introduction, Challenges Facing Congregations  
First Impressions, Second Impressions, Following up.

Day 2 - Involvement, Engagement, and Commitment  
Methods for Evaluating the Involvement of your members

**\*\* Proposals of Congregational Projects are due.**

Month Online - Online project support and class discussion - 10 additional contact hours via Canvas.

Day 4 – Systems of New Member Integration, Process of All Member Discipleship

Day 5 – Conclusions and Wrap up, Next Steps for your Churches.  
Initial Verbal Reports of Student Projects – and book reviews are due.

**Final paper** (Due date August 3)