



1514 WISDOM AND SCHOOLING

Syllabus

INTRODUCTION

This course explores a biblical view of wisdom as an alternative to the theory into practice paradigm, which has dominated the way in which schooling is conducted at virtually all levels. According to this paradigm, schooling is the process by which theoretical insight and abstract academic understanding lay the foundations for an abundant life. The Christian story, however, is that walking in the way of Jesus is truth and life. The challenge to the Christian school and the Christian teacher is how to be *in* the world of schooling while not being *of* it.

Wisdom is not something that one possesses in abstraction from the actual living of a wise life. Wisdom is always for the moment, which is why James (Ja 1:5) encourages us to ask God for wisdom in any situation in which we lack it. It is not a collection of timeless propositions that we merely have to apply to a situation, as Job's companions believed. Wisdom is always 'knowledge for', as well as a matter of 'knowing when': it is concretely and temporally situated.

Wisdom can be defined as the 'realization of value', in the two senses of realization: understanding and actualizing, or (in Hebraic language) hearing and doing. On this view, theoretical insight is one form of value among many that are to be realized. It is not to be denigrated, but it is by no means the primary or most important form. And the limitation of theory is that, in itself, it is powerless to change what we traditionally call 'practice'.

Drawing particularly on the Wisdom Literature, we will consider the implications of this perspective for schooling in general; however, as learning and curriculum are the foci of other ICS courses, we will attend more closely to issues related to teaching.

OUTLINE

1. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge
2. The fear of the Lord and the call of creation

3. Wise teaching
4. Where is wisdom to be found?
5. The challenge to care and do justice
6. It's all in the timing
7. Teaching as a moral craft
8. The rhythm of learning
9. The transformation of experience
10. Teachers: the 'living curriculum'
11. What are 'values' in education?
12. The formation of character(s)

TEXT

Melchert, C. (1998). *Wise teaching: Biblical wisdom and educational ministry*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

READINGS

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- Noddings, N. (1992). An alternative vision. In *The challenge to care in schools: an alternative approach to education* (pp. 44-62). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ormell, C. (1980). Values in education. In R. Straughan & J. Wrigley (Eds.), *Values and evaluation in education* (pp. 71-78). London: Harper and Row.
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- Sockett, H. (1993). Professional expertise as a virtue. In *The moral base for teacher professionalism* (pp. 62-88). New York: Teachers College Press.
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SUGGESTED STUDY SCHEDULE

| | Date | Topic | Text | Readings | Pp. |
|---|--------|---|--|--|-----|
| 1 | 19 Sep | The treasures of wisdom and knowledge | | Connelly& Clandinin, 86-102; Peck & Strohmmer, 31-45; Egan, 149-185 | 79 |
| 2 | 26 Sep | The fear of the Lord and the call of creation | | Von Rad, 53-73; Ansell, 31-57; Goldsworthy, 129-146; Groome, 139-151. | 79 |
| 3 | 3 Oct | Wise teaching | Introduction, 1-15 | Hogan & Smith, 165-180; Labouvie-Vief, 52-83. | 74 |
| 4 | 10 Oct | Where is wisdom to be found? | Proverbs, 17-73 | Brueggemann, 67-90. | 79 |
| A telephone conference call will be arranged for a suitable time during Week 4. | | | | | |
| 5 | 17 Oct | The challenge to care and do justice | Job, 74-111 | Noddings, 44-62; Palmer, <i>CTT</i> , 9-33; Apple, 26-42. | 72 |
| 6 | 24 Oct | It's all in the timing | Ecclesiastes, 112-140 | Blomberg, 7-26; Van Manen, 125-147; McDonald, 1-8. | 81 |
| 7 | 31 Oct | Teaching as a moral craft | | Tom, 77-97; (Huebner, 1996), 267-275; Van Brummelen, 27-50. | 63 |
| 8 | 7 Nov | An approach to curriculum | Apocrypha; Playing in the presence of God, 141-204 | | 64 |
| 9 | 14 Nov | A model for teaching and learning? | Why didn't Jesus tell Bible stories? 205-271 | | 68 |
| 10 | 21 Nov | Teachers, the 'living curriculum' (1) | | Shor, 25-35; Fernhout, 75-98; Kidson, 151-161; Walsh & Keesmaat, 115-131. | 63 |
| A telephone conference call will be arranged for a suitable time during Week 10. | | | | | |
| 11 | 28 Nov | The 'living curriculum' (2) | | Socketk, 62-88; Palmer, <i>TKAWAK</i> , 106-125; (Barab & Plucker, 2002)165-182. | 65 |
| 12 | 5 Dec | Values education | What counts as education?, 272-309 | De Bono, 112-135; Ormell, 71-78; Walsh, 102-117. | 86 |
| 13 | 12 Dec | The formation of character(s) | | Wolterstorff, 3-15; Brown, 1-19; Inlay, 69-71. | 36 |
| 23 January 2012: Email Assignment 2 as an attachment in Word or Rich Text format to dblomberg@icscanada.edu | | | | | |

ASSIGNMENT 1

Length: Minimum 3,500 words (13 postings of approximately 250 words each)

Weighting: 30%

On-line discussion forum

This assignment requires you to contribute actively to discussion through an on-line forum, Wisdom11@icscanada.edu. This 'listserv' will be established once enrolments in the course have closed and we have received everyone's email address.

The Study Guide contains many places where you are asked to write responses to questions, to comment on readings, to evaluate your own understanding and behaviour, etc. Each week, you are required to post your reflections on these reflections—your 'meta-reflections'—to the discussion forum. You may briefly summarise and then reflect critically on your own ideas and uncertainties, as these grow out of and extend the ideas you have already formulated and recorded in the Study Guide. You should raise specific questions and issues related to the topic that you feel are worthy of further investigation.

As well as posting your own reflections, and **quite importantly**, you are invited to comment on the postings of other students; in this way, it is probable that a lively discussion will emerge—but this is very much up to you and your willingness to engage with one another.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Length: 4,000 – 5,000 words

Weighting: 70%

Date due: 23 January 2012

There are a number of options from which to choose. You may also propose a different task than those outlined and discuss this with your instructor, or suggest a modification to one of the options described.

Case studies in wisdom: telling your stories

You are invited to tell a story, or series of stories, describing the way in which reflection stimulated by the course has affected your practice. You might describe changes in teaching strategies, planning processes, policy development, learning activities—indeed, anything in your life as a teacher or administrator that demonstrates the impact of a wisdom perspective.

A. A biblical view of wisdom: implications for policy and practice

You might like to write a more formal statement of your understanding of a biblical perspective on wisdom. In line with the reflections encouraged by the course, however, this should not be merely an abstract theoretical statement but will demonstrate how your imaginings may be translated into practice.

B. Planning for teaching: a curriculum segment in wisdom perspective

Although this task could also be included in either of the other options, you may choose to focus on developing a plan for teaching a segment of one of your current subject or skill areas. This would demonstrate the impact of a wisdom perspective, including a comprehensive rationale for the approach you adopt.