

COS 423 – Mission

Course of Study School of Ohio at Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Instructor: Dr. David W. Scott, dscott@umcmmission.org

Dates: Feb. 12–13 and Mar. 12–13, 2021

Overview

This course introduces the theology and scope of mission, and the pastor's role in leading congregations in their mission as agents of God's transforming redemption.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a biblical and theological framework for Christian mission.
2. Explain the Wesleyan relationship of personal piety and social holiness.
3. Examine and reflect on unjust social realities and the response of the church locally and globally.
4. Analyze their ministry context and develop strategies for transforming mission.

Requirements/Grading System

- Engagement in live, synchronous learning sessions (15% of total grade)
- *Grace Upon Grace* commentary paper (25% of total grade)
- Mission and global issues paper (25% of total grade)
- Ministry context analysis paper (35% of total grade)

Expectations for Synchronous Learning Engagement

Interacting with others is an important means by which learning occurs. Thus, students are expected to participate in all synchronous learning sessions and are expected to be prepared to engage with other students and the instructor on the assigned topics. Students come from a variety of backgrounds with regard to gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, political views, citizenship, family backgrounds, and theology. Such diversity can add significantly to discussions. Students are therefore encouraged to speak out of their experiences during discussions, but they are also expected to respect and seek to understand others' perspectives, experiences, and values, even with they differ from or disagree with their own. As part of this practice, students are expected to refrain from personal attacks or derogatory comments made about groups or individuals because of their membership in a particular group. Students should also avoid displaying inappropriate or offensive visuals during their virtual engagement with other students.

Accommodations Policy

If a student has disabilities requiring academic accommodations, or if a student finds that she/he must miss a synchronous learning session or submit work after the deadline, it is her/his responsibility to let the instructor know as soon as possible. The instructor will work with students to support them on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Honor Policy

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving, or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions: (1) warning; (2) probation; (3) suspension for the remainder of the course; (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio; (5) grade of Fail for the course. Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

Required Texts

- Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
- *Grace Upon Grace Commentary: A UM & Global Collection* (available online at https://drive.google.com/file/d/14E5EiOxzCWqxIWiyb_fQWTfppX8wwVRX/view).
- David W. Scott, *Crossing Boundaries: Sharing God's Good News through Mission* (Nashville, TN: Wesley's Foundery Books, 2019).
- Michael Mather, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2018).

Schedule

Feb. 5: *Grace Upon Grace* commentary paper due

- Choose one passage (of at least one paragraph) from *Grace Upon Grace*. Write a 3–5-page paper analyzing that paragraph according to your understanding of the biblical and theological framework for mission. What are the passage's strengths, and what does it get right about mission? Where should the passage be altered or amended? In your analysis, you may (but are not required to) respond to or incorporate the commentaries on that passage included in the UM & Global collection *Grace Upon Grace Commentary*.

Weekend #1: Understanding Mission Biblically, Theologically, and Historically

Read in advance:

- Robert, Chapters 1–3
- *Grace Upon Grace Commentary*
- Scott, Chapters 1–3
- *Grace Upon Grace* commentary papers of the other students in your breakout discussion group (to be assigned)

Feb. 12, 2pm–4pm EST: Synchronous session: Historical background of mission

Feb. 13, 9am–11am EST: Synchronous session: Biblical and theological frameworks for mission

Feb. 13, 2pm–4pm EST: Synchronous session: Biblical and theological frameworks for mission; Personal piety, social holiness

Mar. 5: Mission and global issues paper

- Choose a significant global issue of injustice, conflict, or suffering (gender oppression, colonialism, racism, war, forced migration, climate catastrophe, poverty, etc.). Write an approximately 5-page paper addressing the following questions: How does this issue impact the practice of mission? What do you see as the good news of God for or within that situation? How is the church as a corporate body and/or individual Christians called to respond to that issue as part of the mission of God? In your analysis, you may (but are not required to) refer to the class readings and/or other writings on the topic.

Weekend #2: Practicing Mission Globally and Locally

Read in advance:

- Robert, Chapters 4–6
- Mather
- Scott, Chapters 4–6
- Mission and global issues papers of the other students in your breakout discussion group (to be assigned)

Mar. 12, 2pm–4pm EST: Synchronous session: Personal piety, social holiness; Mission and unjust social realities

Mar. 13, 9am–11am EST: Synchronous session: Mission and unjust social realities

Mar. 13, 2pm–4pm EST: Synchronous session: Mission in your ministry context

Mar. 27: Ministry context analysis paper due

- Reflecting on the mission practices in the context of your current ministry setting, write a 10–12-page paper that draws upon what you have learned in this class to EITHER
1) Critique (positively and negatively) those practices and propose changes to them; OR
2) Propose new practices of mission appropriate for that setting.
In your analysis, you should refer to the class readings and may (but are not required to) refer to other writings on the topic.