
Syllabus

COS 423 – Mission

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

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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 history of Christian missionary movements.
3. Examine and reflect on unjust social realities and the response of the church locally and globally.
4. Analyze their ministry contexts and develop strategies for local missionary outreach.
5. Understand the vision and contribution of UMC to world mission through studying its official documents and reflecting on them.

Required Texts

1. Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). ISBN 978-0-63123620-7.
2. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in A Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2019). ISBN 0-8028-0426-8.
3. Chris Wright, *The Mission of God's People*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2010). ISBN: 978-0-310-29112-1.
4. *Grace Upon Grace: Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church* (posted on Populi)

20 Contact Hours

On Zoom – 4 hrs

- Friday, September 16: 7-9 pm (2 hrs)
- Saturday, September 17: 9-11 am (2 hrs)

Online Asynchronous – 6 hrs

- During September 19-23 (2 hrs, deadline: Sept. 23)
- During September 26-30 (2 hrs., deadline: Sept. 30)
- During October 3-7 (2 hrs., deadline: Oct. 7)

In-Person – 10 hrs

- Friday, October 14: 3:30-6:00 pm & 7:00-9:00 pm
- Saturday, October 15: 8:00-11:00 am & 1:00-3:15 pm

Requirements/Grading System

- Participating in online (asynchronous) discussions and learning activities (20% of total grade)
- Effective engagement in Zoom classroom and in-person (on campus) classroom sessions (15% of total grade)
- A Critical Review of Dana Robert, *Christian Mission* (10% of total grade)
- Mission and global issues paper (20% of total grade)
- Formulating and writing *My Vision of the Church as God's Missionary People* (35% of total grade)

Assignments:

1. Pre-Course Work:

a. A Critical Book Review:

Students are required to write a 3-page review of Dana Robert, *Christian Mission*, critically reflecting on the text for implications for the nature and mission of the church.

Due: Sept. 9.

The following is a quote from "How to Write a Book Review" by Joel Green, which provides helpful guidelines:

“First, the review should indicate a thorough knowledge of the book as a whole, read on its own terms. . . . with an eye to several important questions, including: What is the book’s fundamental aim? Central theme(s)? Presuppositions? Method(s)? Second, the review should engage the book critically and personally. . . . Is its argument cogent? How has the reading of this book shaped you?”

Given the limited length, your review is to be *succinct* and *to the point*. You would thus need to be very *selective* of the themes to critically reflect on. There should be indications of **your thorough reading of the text** and of **your critical engagement with it**. Also you are to briefly share how the text has shaped and affected your personal understanding and practice of mission.

b. Discussion Questions:

Carefully read Chris Wright, *The Mission of God's People* and provide 10 discussion questions for the book, following each question with a sentence or two commentary. Good questions are clear, interpretive, and relevant. (To be ready by the instructor but not graded.)

Due: Sept. 15.

2. Reading Requirements:

- a. Completion of the reading of Dana Robert, *Christian Mission*.
Due: Sept. 16.
- b. Completion of the reading of Chris Wright, *The Mission of God's People*.
Due: Sept. 16.
- c. Completion of the reading of Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in A Pluralist Society*.
Due Oct. 14.

3. Two Term Papers:

- a. A short essay on a global missionary issue selected by the student. You may choose an issue from one of the textbooks. You may write the paper on any topic that interests you, for example, the causes of numerical decline of churches in America, violation of human rights and denial of justice, etc. Research, study, and write. Substantiate your work with evidence. Length of paper: 5-6 pages.
Due: Oct. 10 (by 11am).
- b. Write a short paper on *My Vision of the Church as God's Missionary People*. This is a position paper that would include the roles of the pastor, congregation, and the methods of reaching the society with the Christian message. What is your role and the role of the congregation? 7-8 pages.
Due: Oct. 24 (by 11am).

Paper Evaluation Grid

[Each paper/essay must be specific. You are most welcome to discuss the proposal with the instructor at any time. The grid is very basic.]

1. Title page details complete?
2. Are essay contents related to the topic selected?
3. Is the essay well-structured and its argument coherent?
4. Is this essay/paper original?
5. Is there an introduction with a clear, brief thesis statement?
6. Is there a proper conclusion?
7. Does the conclusion summarize the discussion of the paper, showing some implications?
8. Is the main idea of each paragraph easily understood?
9. Are ideas referenced appropriately and consistently in the paper?
10. Is bibliography complete, and correct?
11. Has the writer demonstrated knowledge of the subject?

Comments usually made: Excellent, Quite good, Fair, Unacceptable, Incomplete/ Complete, Yes/No.

4. Online Asynchronous Assignments:

For asynchronous learning, our class will be divided into small groups, each consisting of five students. Post your initial reflection on an article or a video in 250-300 words on discussion board on Populi. Then, read the postings of your group members and post brief comments on them.

- a. *Grace Upon Grace: Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church* (posted on Populi):
Carefully read this significant United Methodist mission statement with these questions in mind: What are the strengths of the statement, and what does it get right about mission? Does the statement reflect a distinct Wesleyan understanding of mission?
Due: Sept. 23.
- b. Missions Dilemma 1: A Lecture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTfeQwKOy6k>):
Listen to the video lecture and write what lessons about mission you have learned from it. What is the dilemma presented here?
Due: Sept. 30.
- c. Andrew F. Walls, “The Expansion of Christianity: An Interview with Andrew Walls” (posted on Populi):
Read and summarize what the author is saying about the expansion of Christianity. Do you agree with Walls’s analysis? What do you think of Christianity in Africa?
Due: Oct. 7.

Topics for Zoom Sessions in September (Read Dana Robert’s and Chris Wright’s books):

Session 1: September 16 (7:00-9:00pm)

1. The origin of Christian mission and its growth to become a world religion
2. The rise of Catholic Europe and the collapse of the medieval culture
3. Asia, Africa, and Latin America in world mission
4. Evangelization of Europe: A new reality of the present time

Session 2: September 17 (9:00-11:00am)

5. The politics of mission and the post-colonial criticism
6. The major themes in the study of missionary movements
7. The self-consciousness and identity of God’s missionary people in America: Toward a Biblical and theological understanding

Topics for In-Person Sessions in October (Read Lesslie Newbigin’s book)

Session 1: October 14 (3.30-6:00 pm)

1. Religions of the world and the uniqueness of the gospel
2. Understanding the logic and the characteristics of Christian mission in the world
3. Congregations and the nature of ministerial leadership
4. Jesus, the center of universal history

Session 2: October 14 (7:00-9:00pm)

5. What contextualization means in crosscultural mission
6. The gospel and the cultures
7. The Bible as universal history
8. The finality of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world

Session 3: October 15 (8:00-11:00 am)

9. The concepts and ideas that shaped the Asian cultures
10. The Home Base is Everywhere
11. Conversion and Christian Community
12. Women in world mission

Session 4: October 15 (1:00-3:15pm)

13. Indian religions and cultures: How to understand them from a missionary perspective
14. Roberto De Nobili's work among the 17th century India
15. Christian and non-Christian understanding of God in Mission studies
16. The five marks of mission
17. Christian church and human rights issues

Expectations for Learning Engagement

Interacting with others is an important means by which learning occurs. Thus, students 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.

Electronic Devices

As an institution dedicated to the advancement of learning, MTSO is firmly committed to a philosophy of mutual respect. When students' use of electronic devices violates that respect, instructors have the right to impose appropriate grading penalties. The use of such devices should be restricted to course-related purposes. General browsing of the Internet or engaging in email or social networks during class time is inappropriate. Unless there is an emergency requiring immediate attention, phone calls should be returned during classroom breaks (even if students are at home) in an area that is not disruptive to others.

Course Of Study School of Ohio Attendance Policy

National policy from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) states that a student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing 20% or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances which require the student to miss up to 20% of a course (4 hours for an in-person class or 20% of synchronous time on Zoom for an online course), the student should contact both the instructor and the Director prior to the start of the class to

get approval and discuss make-up work. Extenuating circumstances include emergency situations, illness, and dire circumstances, for example.

Cancellation and Withdrawal: Student must notify the COSSO office if they will be unable to attend class for which they are registered. Although there is no penalty when withdrawing more than two weeks in advance of the beginning of a term, registration fees are nontransferable and nonrefundable. A \$25.00 late withdrawal fee is charged for all withdrawals within two weeks of the start of a class. All tuition and housing payments are applied to a future term.

Students withdrawing after the start of a term will be assigned a grade of AW (Administrative Withdrawal) and will be responsible for the full \$270 tuition amount. Any annual conference scholarship applied to the student billing record becomes the student's responsibility and is due by the end of the term. Housing payment is non-refundable.

No Shows: Except in cases of immediate and dire emergencies, if a student misses any class without notifying the COSSO office, tuition and housing fees are due immediately, a \$25.00 no show fee is charged, and the student will receive an "F" in the class.

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 with 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 sanctions: (1) warning; (2) failing grade for the assignment and/or course; (3) probation; (4) suspension; (5) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio. In severe or repeat cases (regardless of the sanctions) a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

Disclaimer: Sections of the syllabus have been adapted from an existing COS syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as deemed necessary and will communicate such amendment to the students in the course. The purpose of minor revision, if any, is to provide greater clarity to students.
