

INDIANA EXTENSION COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL

The United Methodist Church

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COS 423: Mission

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

The word 'mission' has been fraught with a variety of meanings and used in different (and at times conflicting) ways. This course will explore the meaning of Christian mission from a biblical, historical and theological perspective. Critical analysis will be given to cultural, political and economic forces and structures in which Christian mission takes place. Because mission is inseparable from the nature of the Church, this course will explore the meaning and practice of Christian mission in the Wesleyan tradition and The United Methodist Church. This course seeks to help pastors gain theological understanding and practical ministry skills for leading congregations to carry out the mission of the Church as God's agents of transformation.

Organizing Questions:

The General Conference has stated that the mission of The United Methodist Church is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." In every generation and every context, the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) elicits four fundamental questions:

- What is the message?
- How do we make the message relevant?
- How do we maintain the integrity of the message?
- What is the nature of the faith community that bears the message?

In this course, we will examine the history and issues of the mission of God in light of these interrelated questions.

Course Objectives:

1. Developing a biblical and theological framework for Christian mission;
2. Understanding the Wesleyan perspective and approach to Christian mission;
3. Examining unjust social systems and the growing influence of globalization and their impact on the mission of the Church;
4. Gaining exposure to United Methodist, ecumenical, interreligious and community programs that model faithful witness for the Gospel;
5. Analyzing the context of the ministry of local congregations for the developing of strategies and leadership for the mission of the Church.

TEXTS

Required Reading:

Acts (please read in the NRSV, NIV or NLT)

Gerald H. Anderson and Darrell L. Whiteman, eds. *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Seedbed, 2014 (ISBN 978-1-62824-083-2)

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), *Missio Dei and the United States: Toward a Faithful United Methodist Witness*, GBHEM, 2018 (ISBN 978-1-945935-37-4)

Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics*, Abingdon, 1990 (ISBN-10: 0687155282)

Robert P. Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, Simon and Schuster, 2017 (ISBN-10: 1501122320)

Michael Mather, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything*, Eerdmans, 2018 (ISBN 9780802874832)

Dana Robert, *Christian Mission*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009 (ISBN 978-0-631-23620-7)

Tex Sample, *Hard Living People and Mainstream Christians*, Abingdon, 1994 (ISBN-10: 9780687179312)

Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*, Brazos Press, 2011 (ISBN 978-1-58743-298-9)

2020 General Conference, *Advance Daily Christian Advocate*

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/general-conference-2020-advance-daily-christian-advocate>

- "Report of the General Board of Church and Society," vol.2, sec.1, p.125-128
- "Report of the General Board of Global Ministries," vol. 2, sec.2, p.661-702
- "United Methodist Committee on Relief," vol. 2, sec. 2, p. 672-681
- "Report of United Methodist Women," vol. 2, sec. 2, p. 853-855

Required Viewing:

The Mission (1986), Robert DeNiro, Jeremy Irons, (d) Roland Joffé.

Silence (2016), Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver, Liam Neeson, (d) Martin Scorsese.

Recommended Readings:

Response (magazine of United Women in Faith, formerly UMW)

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/response-magazine/>

UWF (formerly UMW) *Prayer Guide*

https://www.umwmissionresources.org/shopping_product_detail.asp?pid=53512

Resources on Racism through the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR),

<https://www.gcorr.org/>

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, revised edition. The New Press, 2012 ((ISBN 978-1-59558-643-8)

Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, 2nd Edition, Baker Academic (ISBN-13: 978-0801036958)

Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Oxford University Press, 2011 (ISBN-13: 978-0199767465)

Jonathan M. Metz, *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland*. Basic Books, 2019 (ISBN 978-1-5416-4497-7 paperback; 978-1-5416-4496-0 ebook)

Ruby K. Payne, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty: A Cognitive Approach*. aha! Process, Inc., 2013 (ISBN 13:978-1-938248-01-6)

Mark R. Teasdale, "Extending the Metaphor: Evangelism as the Heart of Mission Twenty-Five Years Later," *Methodist Review*, 14 (2022), 49-67.

SCHEDULE

All reading assignments are to be completed and writing assignments are to be turned in by the date of the assigned session. Do not turn in any assignment prior to the session to which it is assigned.

Session One: February 17-18

- *Topics*: Biblical and theological perspectives on mission; Critical analysis of systems and trends affecting Christian mission; Contemporary understandings and approaches to Christian mission; Mission in The United Methodist Church; Wesleyan theology of mission.
- *Reading Assignments*:
 - Acts 1-15
 - Textbooks:
 - Jennings, *Good News to the Poor*, chapters 2-5 & 7
 - Whiteman & Anderson, *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, chapters 4, 6, 14, 27
 - GBHEM, *Missio Dei and the United States*, selected chapters TBA
 - Putnam, *The End of White Christian America*, chapters 1-2 and read one additional chapter 3,4 or 5
- *Writing Assignments*: Mission Audit
- **Bring a copy of your Mission Audit to this session for discussion**

Session Two: March 18

- *Topics:* History of Christian mission; Wesleyan and EUB mission history; Comparison of Volf and Wesley; Contemporary understandings and approaches to Christian mission (con't.)
- *Reading Assignments:*
 - Textbooks:
 - Robert, *Christian Mission* (entire book)
 - Volf, *A Public Faith*, chapters 1,4-7
- *Writing Assignments:* General Agency Research Paper; Mission Movie Review
- Between Sessions Two and Three: Instructor Consultations

Session Three: April 22

- *Topics:* Christian mission in the local community and the local congregation; Role of the pastor in mission; Wesleyan theology of justice ministries
- *Reading Assignments:*
 - Acts 16-20
 - Textbooks:
 - Whiteman & Anderson, *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, chapters 8, 25, 27
 - GBHEM, *Missio Dei and the United States*, selected chapters TBA
 - Sample, *Hard Living People*, chapters 1-5
 - Mather, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything*, chapters 1-6
- *Writing Assignments:* Mission Sermon; Mission Strategy

DESCRIPTION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You are not allowed to turn in writing assignments prior to their due dates. Please read #5 'Instructions for Writing Papers.' All written assignments will be submitted on Moodle unless otherwise specified.

INSTRUCTOR CONSULTATION

Prior to submitting your mission strategy, you will have a one-on-one consultation with the instructor to review your strategy. The consultation may be in-person, live stream (e.g. Zoom), or by telephone. Scheduling will be done after the course begins and will accommodate the schedules of the student and the instructor.

MISSION AUDIT

Submit on Moodle AND bring a copy with you to Session One.

In an *outline or chart* format, itemize all the mission projects your local congregation(s) supports. Include local community projects as well as 'overseas' mission projects,

organizations and missionaries. Types of support include financial contributions, collection of items, and volunteers. Your audit will include:

- List of all mission and local outreach projects supported by your church as a whole
- List of all mission and local outreach projects supported by specific groups within your church (e.g. Sunday school classes, youth group, UMW unit)
- Note whether any of these projects are **Advance Specials** (check with your district office or conference office to see if they have this status)
- List of all non-religious organizations that receive support from your church or any specific group within your church (e.g. a Sunday school class participates in a walkathon for the American Cancer Society)
- Indicate type of support (financial, in-kind donations, volunteers)
- List amount of each support
- List of outside organizations that meet in your building
- List of partnerships your church has with community organizations

When you list the mission and outreach projects be sure to include the specific name of the project, the sponsoring organization or agency, and whether it is United Methodist, ecumenical, nondenominational or secular. For example, do not say 'food pantry'; instead, say 'St. Mark's Episcopal food pantry.' In the case of missionaries, include their name, place of service, type of work and sponsoring organization. For example, 'Dr. John Doe, Albania, medical, Overseas Missionary Society.' In the case of missionaries who are not affiliated with an organization, list as 'independent.'

Be sure to review check day and charge conference reports for data on volunteer hours and numbers of projects. You may need to ask your mission committee chairperson, UMW president or church treasurer for assistance.

MISSION MOVIE REVIEW

Students will select one of the following films: *The Mission* or *Silence*. Links for accessing the films are available on Moodle. Will write a review of the film which must include:

- Brief summary of the plot
- Description of the historical context (based on classroom lecture and textbooks)
- Critical assessment of the protagonist's approach to the mission context in light of a Wesleyan understanding of mission

Length: 3-4 pages

GENERAL CHURCH AGENCY REPORT

Choose 1 of the following United Methodist agencies:

- General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), <http://www.umcmision.org/>

- General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), <http://umc-gbcs.org/>
- United Women in Faith (UWF; formerly United Methodist Women), <https://uwfaith.org/>
- In addition to the websites, see the 2020 General Conference Advanced DCA (see above under required readings)

Outline the Following:

1. An organizational chart of the agency
2. The name and a short biography of the agency's general secretary
3. Summary of their finances (not the entire budget)
4. List of current major programs and initiatives
5. List of the board of directors
6. A story about one of their ministries or programs (no longer than 2 ¶ s)
7. Contact information for a local church to receive materials from the agency (there may be more than one)
8. The names of persons in the district or annual conference who relate directly to the agency (list any conference staff and chairpersons of conference ministry teams)

MISSION STRATEGY

For this assignment, you will prepare a strategic plan for how you will lead your congregation to engage in the mission of 'making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.' You will have a one-on-one consultation via Zoom or in-person with the instructor regarding your project (dates will vary depending on student's schedule).

Requirements:

- Scope of the Project:
 - a new ministry
 - Or
 - a substantial redesign/expansion of an existing ministry
- Target of the Project:
 - a previously unserved group outside the congregation
 - Or
 - a previously unaddressed aspect/need/subset of a group the congregation is currently serving
- Features of the Project (These reflect a Wesleyan approach to mission as described in Session One):
 - Transformative—either of individuals or of the community
 - Wholistic—addresses multiple aspects of the target population
 - Asset-Based—affirms and utilizes the gifts and potentials of the target population (i.e. not solely a needs-based approach)
 - Collaborative—builds partnerships with others in the community
 - Lay Empowered—demonstrates engagement and leadership of the laity
- Check List/Format (to be turned in):
 - 1 sentence summary of the project

- A short description of the project (1 paragraph)
- State the goal(s) of the project
- The target audience or population to be served
- List potential partners in the community and/or volunteers in the church
- List potential resources and assets
- A budget of income and expenses
- Describe the lines of accountability and authority that will oversee the project
- Timeline or schedule of events
- How the project will be evaluated
- If there is a worship component, include any liturgy or music that will be used
- Summary of how the project reflects a Wesleyan approach to mission (1 paragraph)

Length: 6-8 pages

MISSION SERMON

The culminating assignment for this class is a written sermon expressing your theology of mission. The sermon is a summary of your beliefs that are grounded in the critical reflection and United Methodist perspective that you have learned through the class. It cannot be a previously preached sermon, but it should be written with your congregation in mind as the audience. The sermon must:

- Manuscript form (not an outline)
- Be based on a passage from Acts
- Reflect a distinctive Wesleyan perspective, including references to specific writings by John or Charles Wesley
- Include at least one example of a contemporary United Methodist missionary or mission project from your research of a general church agency
- Include at least one historical example of a missionary, mission organization or movement (NOT John Wesley) from the lecture notes and/or the Robert book.

Length: no less than 5 pages

GRADING

Total Points: 400

25 points: Instructor Consultation

50 points each (total 100):

- Audit

- Movie Review

75 points: General Agency Report

100 points each (total 200):

- Strategy
- Sermon

Scale:

400-385: A

384-369: A-

368-358: B+

357-347: B

346-336: B-

335-320: C+

319-304: C

303 or less: F

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING PAPERS

1. Persons are to follow the instructions on preparing written materials for the class.
2. All written work must be double-spaced, 12 font in Times New Roman or an equivalent font style.
3. All quotations from texts must be cited using end or foot notes. Overuse of quotations will result in a lower grade.
4. **All written material must include the following in the upper left hand of the first page, single spaced: a) title, b) course name, c) course number, d) due date, e) your name. Do NOT use a cover sheet.**
5. **Submit all work to the instructor on Moodle by uploading your document to the designated assignments. All documents must be in Word.**
6. WARNING: Using other documentation and property without acknowledgement, whether from a book, a journal, teacher, student, sermon service, lectionary aid, etc. is unacceptable. Stealing, or plagiarism, means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry.

CLASS PREPARATION AND STUDY

While study habits vary, be prepared to spend two hours of study outside the class for each hour in class. Keep notes on reading assignments and write down questions that arise through reading that can be shared in class.

For help on writing style see *Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. For how to footnote materials see *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achert

Studying is a spiritual discipline, an act of dedicating the mind to Christ. With this in mind you are asked to include in your weekly studies prayers for United Methodist missionaries and mission projects that are listed in the *Prayer Calendar*. The *Prayer Calendar* will also be a valuable resource for your writing assignments and for classroom discussions. It is available at www.missionresourcecenter.org.