COS 423: Mission

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description:
The word ‘mission’ has been fraught with a variety of meanings and used is 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:**
Lecture Notes by the Instructor [Pdfs online classroom site.]

Acts (please read in the NRSV or the NIV)


**Required Viewing**


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

**Recommended Resources:**
*Response* [http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/response](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/response)

*UMW Prayer Calendar*, [https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/prayer-calendar](https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/prayer-calendar)
SCHEDULE

The contact hours necessary for the completion of this virtual class will be fulfilled in four different ways:

- 8 Zoom Sessions (approximately 90 minutes each). The first meeting will be September 11 and the remaining will be scheduled by the instructor in consultation with each student. **The first session will be Sept 11** (time to be announced).
- Viewing of a film on mission to be completed by each student
- Student forums on Moodle
- Instructor and peer coaching (times and dates to be assigned)

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 TOPICS AND READINGS

Session One—Overview and Local Church Missional Assessment

- Whiteman & Anderson, *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit* (chapters to be assigned)
- Sample, *Hard Living People*, chapters 1-5
- Mather, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything*, chapters 1-6
- Submit your Mission Audit to this session for discussion

Session Two—Scripture and Mission

- Acts 1-20

Session Three—History of Mission

- Watch *The Mission or Silence*

Session Four—History of Methodist Mission & General Agencies

- Jennings, *Good News to the Poor*, chapters 2-5 & 7
- General Agency Research Paper due

Session Five— Wesleyan Theology of Mission
• Whiteman & Anderson, *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit* (chapters to be assigned)

Session Six—Contemporary Mission Trends
• Readings to be assigned.

Session Seven—Social Justice and the Wesleyan Vision
• Whitworth, *Missio Dei & Means of Grace*, chapters 1-4, 6-8, 10
• Volf, *A Public Faith*, chapters 1, 4-7

Session Eight—Mission Strategies for the Local Church
• Mission Sermon due

Mission Strategy due at end of course.

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.’

MISSION AUDIT

In an *outline or chart*: 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.

Your audit can be done in the form of an outline or a chart.

GENERAL CHURCH AGENCY RESEARCH PAPER

Choose 1 of the following United Methodist agencies:
- General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), http://www.umcmission.org/
- General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), http://umc-gbcs.org/
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), http://www.umcor.org/

Outline the Following:
1. An organizational chart of the agency
2. The name and a short biography of the agency head (for GBGM & GBCS it will be a General Secretary; for UMCOR it will be a Deputy General Secretary; the Women’s Division it will be a Chief Executive)
3. Summary of their finances (not the entire budget)
4. Outline 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 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 (Do not include the text in the page count)
- 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 Session One lectures and/or the Robert book.

Length: no less than 5 pages

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.’ Requirements:

• Scope of the Project:
  o a new ministry
  Or
  o a substantial redesign/expansion of an existing ministry

• Target of the Project:
  o a previously unserved group outside the congregation
  Or
  o 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 Two):
  o Transformative—either of individuals or of the community
  o Wholistic—addresses multiple aspects of the target population
  o Asset-Based—affirms and utilizes the gifts and potentials of the target population (i.e. not solely a needs-based approach)
  o Collaborative—builds partnerships with others in the community
  o Lay Empowered—demonstrates engagement and leadership of the laity

• Check List/Format (to be turned in; use these format headings):
  o 1 sentence summary of the project
  o A short description of the project (1 paragraph)
  o State the goal(s) of the project
  o The target audience or population to be served
  o List potential partners in the community and/or volunteers in the church
  o List potential resources and assets
  o A budget of income and expenses
  o Describe the lines of accountability and authority that will oversee the project
  o 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: 5-8 pages

GRADING

Total Points: 400

50 points each (total 100):
- Audit
- General Agency Research Paper

100 points each (300):
- Strategy
- Sermon
- Forums

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 expected to read the required books and come to class prepared with questions raised by the assigned materials.
2. Persons are to follow the instructions on preparing written materials for the class.
3. All written work must be typed on 8 ½ x 11 white paper, double-spaced, 12 font in Times New Roman or an equivalent font style.
4. All quotations from texts must be cited using end or foot notes. Overuse of quotations will result in a lower grade.
5. **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.**
6. Staple the paper and begin numbering on front page. **Do not staple multiple assignments together.**

7. Submit all work to the instructor either via a) Moodle, b) email, or c) U.S. Postal Service. When submitting via email, format written work in Word or WordPerfect. Email submissions must be sent by midnight of the due date. When submitting via post office, it must be postmarked by the due date.

8. **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.

9. If you would like to have course work returned, please inform the instructor.

**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.