

## 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 or the NIV)

John Edgar, *A Front Porch for All People*, Cascade Books (ISBN: 978166674752)

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)

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

Dana Robert, *Evangelism as the Heart of Mission*, Mission Evangelism Series, Number 1, General Board of Global Ministries, 1997 [to be distributed by the instructor]

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

2024 General Conference, *Advance Daily Christian Advocate Supplement* [adca-v3-supplement-2024-en-full.pdf](https://www.adca-v3-supplement-2024-en-full.pdf) ([resourceumc.org](https://www.resourceumc.org))

- Report of the General Board of Church and Society, p. 1187
- Report of the General Board of Global Ministries, p. 1510
- Report of United Women in Faith, p. 1592

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

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

### Recommended Resources:

*Response* (magazine of United Women in Faith, formerly UMW)  
<https://uwfaith.org/resources/response-magazine/>

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)

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

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)

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

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

## 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. Tip: Read ahead, especially the readings for Session Two.

### Session One (September 7, 2-4pm EST)

- *Topics*: Introduction to mission concepts; Biblical and theological perspectives on mission
- *Reading Assignments*: Acts
- ***Have a copy of your Mission Audit to this session for discussion***

### Session Two (September 14; 8:30am-4pm EST):

- *Topics*: History of Christian mission; Wesleyan and EUB mission history.
- *Reading Assignments*: Robert, *Christian Mission* [entire book]
- *Writing Assignments due*: Mission Audit
- ***Bring a copy of your Mission Audit to this session for discussion***

### Session Two (October 12; 8:30am-4pm EST):

- *Topics*: Critical analysis of systems and trends affecting Christian mission; Contemporary understandings and approaches to Christian mission; Mission

trends in The United Methodist Church; Wesleyan theology of mission; mission and spiritual formation.

- *Reading Assignments:*
  - Report of GBGM to the 2020 General Conference
  - Jennings, *Good News to the Poor*, chapters 2-5 & 7
  - Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, chapter 1 & 2, read 1 of these chapters: 3,4, or 5
  - Whiteman & Anderson, *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit*, chapters 4, 6, 14, 27, 8, 25
  - *Missio Dei and the United States*, chapters 7, 9, 14
- *Writing Assignments due:* General Church Agency Research Paper

### Session Three (November 9; 8:30am-4pm EST):

- *Topics:* Relationship of mission to evangelism; mission and creation care; mission and social justice; Christian mission in the local community and the local congregation; role of the pastor in mission; revisions of mission strategies.
- *Reading Assignments:*
  - John Edgar, *A Front Porch for All People* [entire book]
  - Robert, *Evangelism as the Heart of Mission*
  - Volf, *A Public Faith*, chapters 1, 4-7
  - *Missio Dei and the United States*, chapters 4, 12
- *Writing Assignments due:* Mission-Evangelism Reflection Essay
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### **November 17: Due date for Mission Sermon and 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.'

### MISSION AUDIT (Due: September 14)

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)
- 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.

#### GENERAL CHURCH AGENCY RESEARCH PAPER (Due: October 12)

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-EVANGELISM REFLECTION ESSAY (Due: November 9)

You will write a 1 page reflection on Dana Robert's, *Evangelism as the Heart of Mission*, assessing its benefits and limitations for your congregations. You will include a brief explanation of how you see the relationship between evangelism and mission, which

will include how you define both terms. Bring this to the morning portion of Session Three.

Length: 1 page

### MISSION STRATEGY (Due: November 17)

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: 5-8 pages

### MISSION SERMON (November 17)

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

### **GRADING**

Total Points: 400

40 points each (total 120):

- Audit
- General Agency Research Paper
- Mission Evangelism Reflection Essay

140 points each (280)

- Strategy
- Sermon

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 a) in person, b) via 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. Citations and references must conform to Chicago Style (also, "Turabian" style). See Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, University of Chicago Press, 2018.