



ME 504 – Introduction to Missions- Spring 2023

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I. OVERVIEW

Our God is a missionary God. From Genesis to Revelation, God is working to create a community of redeemed people from every tribe, tongue and nation for his glory. This class will help you better understand God's mission (*Missio Dei*) and the vital role his church is called to play in advancing his kingdom. We will explore cross-cultural mission from four perspectives. First, we will look at what Scripture says about the mission of God (biblical/theological perspective). Second, we will trace the global history of Christian mission from the first century to the twenty-first century (historical perspective). Third, we will examine culture and how we can more effectively communicate the gospel cross-culturally (cultural perspective). Finally, we will explore how we fit into the global story of missions and how we can participate in God's mission to gather a redeemed people from every nation for his glory (strategic perspective).

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

A. Biblical / Theological (3 lessons)

1. Cultivate a God-centered and Trinitarian view of Christian mission (*missio Dei*).
2. Develop a greater passion to see Jesus Christ exalted in every nation and among every people.
3. Beginning with God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), trace the biblical basis for mission throughout the story of God from Genesis to Revelation.
4. Better understand the nature and scope of the Great Commission Jesus gave to the church (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).
5. Investigate four missiological themes in Acts: the importance of cross-cultural witness, the need for contextualization, the power of the Holy Spirit and reality of suffering in Christian mission.

B. Historical (3 lessons)

1. Beginning with the first century, learn how the gospel has spread around the world through the witness of the church.
2. Discover some of the surprising means God, in his providence, has used to spread the gospel around the world.
3. Better understand barriers to the spread of the gospel in the history of the church.

C. Cultural (3 lessons)

1. Further awareness about the current reality of the gospel among the people groups of the world.
2. Examine and explore Niebuhr's five classifications of "Christ and Culture" and its relevance to the missional task today.
3. Become a humble learner in the area of culture and ethnicity.

4. Develop greater motivation to cross cultures in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to every people group.
5. Grow in appreciation for the challenge in crossing cultures and effectively communicating the gospel. Better understand three aspects of culture (worldview, material-economic, social- relational).
6. Discover tools that enable you to better understand and communicate more effectively with your ministry audience (ethnography).
7. Become more persuaded of the need to contextualize the gospel in a way that is faithful to Scripture and meaningful to your ministry audience focusing on three areas: messengers, message and movements.

D. Strategic (3 lessons)

1. Understand how both local churches and ‘mission orders’ fit into God’s global plan of evangelization.
2. Consider and personalize how you can participate in God’s mission to gather a redeemed people for his glory from every nation.
3. Examination of ‘short-term mission’ activity.

III. **Weekly Class Sessions**

Class sessions meet for two hours each week. The first class hour is primarily devoted to lecture and direct instruction and the second hour focuses on group interaction and discussion for the purposes of applying the content.

IV. **Reading Assignments**

Since a very limited amount of material can be communicated through the weekly, two-hour class sessions, and since thoughtful and critical reading is such an essential skill for your personal and academic development, reading assignments form an essential part of the learning process for this course. There will be two reflection papers, one for each text, 3-5 pages long due during the course.

V. **Course Calendar**

Week 1: Jan. 31, 2023	Intro to Class / Lecture “Bible as a Missionary Book”
Week 2: Feb. 7, 2023	Gen. 12:1-3 cf Gal. 3:12-14 / Modality & Sodality
Week 3: Feb. 14, 2023	NT, with focus on Book of Acts
Week 4: Feb. 21, 2023	Early Mission Work / orders and monasticism
Week 5: Feb. 28, 2023	Reformation movements / counter reformation
Week 6: Mar. 7, 2023	“Voluntarism’ and lay mission work 18 th c - present
Week 7: Mar. 14, 2023	Cross-Cultural Ministry / contextualization
Spring Break March 20 – 24	NO CLASS
Week 8: March 28, 2023	Christ and Culture
Week. 9: April 4, 2023	Christian perspective on Cultural Anthropology
Week 10: April 11, 2023	Strategic Perspectives / ‘unreached peoples’

Week 11: April 18, 2023	Strategic Perspectives / cautions and concerns
Week 12: April 25, 2023	Strategic Perspectives / partnership and collaboration
Week 13 May 2, 2023	Students present case studies.
Week 14: May 9, 2023	Final Papers and assignments due. (no face to face class)

VI. Course Assignments and Assessments

1. Reflection Papers: Student will write one (1) 3-5 page reflection paper on each of the two required texts *for a total of two (2) reflection papers*. Professor will give clear guidelines for the format of the reflection paper. The first paper will be due at the end of week 4 and the second paper will be due at the end of week 8.
2. Case Study: Student will develop and write a ‘case study’ based either on actual cross-cultural mission experience, or based on an organization or project with which the student is familiar and can access necessary information (e.g., local mission agency or local church’s mission project). Professor will provide format and content information at the beginning of the course and, as a class we will work through some of the stages of the project. Student will have opportunity to present their case study to the class on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. Final written Case study will be due at the end of the course.
3. Weekly Discussion posts. Through Canvas, professor will provide a weekly discussion question. Student is expected to make their initial post by Thursday night each week, and make at least two additional posts, responding to another student by Sunday night. The posts will be ‘full-credit / no-credit.’ (The expectation is for a thoughtful, robust, and respectful back and forth dialogue.)

VII. Attendance and grading

Attendance at each class session is expected and is monitored. However, to allow for unanticipated circumstances, two unexcused absences are allowed without penalty. Each unexcused absence beyond the two will result in a 5% penalty against the final grade. Excuses may be granted for personal or family emergencies only. Emergencies include such things as illness, or the hospitalization of yourself or an immediate family member but do not include such things as work-related scheduling conflicts. Please make an effort to contact the professor prior to the scheduled class session.

Letter grades for assignments and exams follow the grade scale presented in the seminary catalog. Your final grade for this course is weighted as follows:

Reflection Papers	15% each =	30% of grade
Discussion Posts	30%	= 30% of grade
Case Study	30%	= 30% of grade
Class Participation	10%	= 10% of grade

VIII. Textbooks. (e-version is acceptable)

Required:

- Glasser, Arthur F., *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God’s Mission in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2003 **ISBN-13** : 978-0801026263
- Piper, John., *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 3rd edition, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010. **ISBN-13** : 978-0801036415

Recommended collateral Reading:

- Tennent, Timothy., *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century.*, Kregel Academic, 2010.
- Winter, Ralph D. (ed.) and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, Pasadena: Wm Carey Library, 4th edition, 2013.

Expanded Bibliography

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