

# **Wesley Theological Seminary**

## **Course of Study**

## **Online**

**July 19-23, 2021**

### **CS-423 Mission**

Faculty: Rev. Dr. Aaron M. Bouwens

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### **Course Description**

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. Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a biblical and theological framework for Christian mission.
2. Explain the Wesleyan relationship of personal piety and social holiness.
3. Examine and reflect on unjust social realities and the response of the church locally and globally.
4. Analyze their ministry context and develop strategies for transforming mission.

### **Texts:**

Lupton, Robert D., *Toxic Charity*, New York: HarperCollins, 2011. (Paperback 2012)

Robert, Dana, *Christian Mission*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Volf, Miroslav, *A Public Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011

Selected articles to be provided

### **Assignments**

#### **Due June 12, 2021**

**Part 1: Book Summaries (20% of grade)** For each of the books, write a 1-2 page response as outlined below. Please start your reflection on each book on a new page. You must cite the page numbers of references for mentions of the books in parentheses. Write your responses in paragraphs; bullet points or outlines are not acceptable. Each response should speak to the learnings, questions, and applications you gained from the reading.

- Describe at least three things about mission you have learned from this reading—new knowledge, insights, understandings, perspectives, and/or analysis of issues.
- Pose at least three questions related to mission that you have about the reading—things you don't understand, disagree with, or need further explanation or clarification about.

- Identify at least three applications to the ministry and mission of your congregation.  
How can the concepts written in each book make an impact on your ministry?

**Part 2: Community Analysis (15% of grade)** Write a 3-5 page analysis of your church(es) and local community as context for mission. What does the demographic makeup of your church(es) and community, its history and culture mean for ministry in your context? In particular, what are the needs in your community for justice, reconciliation, healing, and hospitality? What attempts have been made to address those needs to date? What obstacles have prevented addressing them in the past?

### **Due June 23, 2021**

#### **Feature Films (20% of grade)**

From the list of movies below, select two. After watching the movies write a 2-3 page reflection, one each movie, focused on how the movie speaks to Christian missions. Use the texts for the class guide your reflection, however, this is intended to be your thoughts not a series of quotes from the movies, or the authors. Be sure to highlight points of resonance and dissonance with your understanding of mission. Finally, include how you would apply your reflections of the movie to the ministry context you are serving.

Joffe, Roland dir. *The Mission*. 1986; Warner Brothers.

Scorsese, Martin dir. *Silence*. 2017; SharpSword Films.

Hanon, Jim dir. *End of the Spear*. 2006; Every Tribe Entertainment.

Cameron, James dir. *Avatar*. 2009; Twentieth Century Fox.

Apted, Michael dir. *Amazing Grace*. 2007; Bristol Bay Productions.

### **Due July 24, 2021**

**Personal statement of mission (30% of grade)** Drawing on the work and readings of the course and prior education in the COS program, write a 8-10 page personal statement of mission. This statement should be divided into four sections:

1. How do you define mission?
2. How do you understand God's mission in the world?
3. What is the church and how does it relate to God's mission?
4. What is your personal sense of mission?

For the first three sections, you must cite biblical, historical, and theological resources help inform your sense of mission. In other words, quote Bible passages and other things you have read in this course and in other courses in the Course of Study to support your argument. All sources must be cited.

Part of the purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to synthesize your learning from other courses and this one, but students found reproducing sections of papers produced for other courses will receive a failing grade on this assignment.

All papers will be evaluated by the standards of the assignment, clarity of writing, accuracy, consistency, the ability to make a coherent argument, and fidelity to proper academic standards, including accurate quotation and citation of sources. Papers must include complete references. Proper citation of all sources is expected. Please submit all papers double spaced in Times New Roman, 12 point font, with 1 inch margins. Papers more than 1 page shorter or longer than the page requirements will be marked down accordingly.

**Class Participation (15% of grade)** All students are expected to be present and engaged during class time. A few, short additional readings may be provided for use during Zoom sessions in July. Students will be expected to demonstrate they have read and engaged with that material.

### **Zoom Sessions**

All Zoom sessions will be from 9am-11:30am with a break in the middle. It is expected students will attend each session in its entirety. Limited exceptions can be made in consultation with the instructor.

Here is an outline of the material that will be primary to each day.

<b>Monday (7/19)</b>	<b>Tuesday (7/20)</b>	<b>Wednesday (7/21)</b>	<b>Thursday (7/22)</b>	<b>Friday (7/23)</b>
History of Christian Mission	Foundations of Mission	Purpose of Mission	Mission vs. Charity	Wrap-up

### **Criteria for Evaluating Course Work:**

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work.

1. Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources. Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions. Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant

and accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.

3. Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas. Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.

4. Grammar, spelling, and form. Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

### **Grading:**

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a "B" grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

- A "B" means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.
- A "B+" means the assignment is also well crafted.
- An "A-" means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.
- An "A" means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student's prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student's imagination at work; it has a creative edge.
- A "C+" means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer's opinions than the results of the writer's analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.
- A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.
- A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.
- An "F" means the individual needs to see me immediately.

- Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due. Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades. We need to talk if an assignment is over 72 hours past due. Please note only two unexcused absences are allowed before grade is lowered one step. Final course grades are mailed to the student, GBHEM in Nashville and the student's conference representative by September 30. Grades are not posted on-line.

### **Inclusive Language:**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

### **Academic Policies:**

- Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty members have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.
- Plagiarism: Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:
  - Copying from another student's paper
  - Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
  - Using unauthorized material during an examination
  - Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.