Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Course Profile
CC/RHTH 604 Contemporary Theology of Mission (GMS)
Instructor: Peter Vethanayagamony
Semester/Year: Spring 2021

Short Description:
This course is designed to acquaint students with historical accounts of Christian mission and the church’s changing theological self-understandings of mission since 1910.

Delivery Mode:
This seminar format course meets virtually for three hours a week via Zoom.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and RATIONALE
Why is this course offered in the curriculum? Which of LSTC’s degree program learning competencies does it address?

The Church’s attempt to theologically formulate a comprehensive understanding of mission is the highlight of the twentieth century Christianity. We will trace modifications and revisions in conceptions and practices of mission since the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, using a combination of historical and theological approaches. Various missiological themes and issues that evolved in the course of the interactions among the various ecclesiastical traditions are investigated by bringing to light resources from the past for contemporary reflection on the basis, purpose(s) and methods of Christian mission. This course is a doctoral-level seminar to which MA and MDiv students are welcome.

The Church is by its very nature a community of worship gathered together and sent into the world to be the ‘hands and feet’ of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Church is gathered and sent; worshipping and missional, representing God’s presence concealed, and pointing to God’s future revealed. Thus mission is not merely an activity of the church rather its very essence. However, global changes and the exposed blunders committed in the past practice of Christian mission led to two opposite attitudes toward mission. One is to ignore the global changes, and deny crisis, and carry on mission using the old colonialist model of mission as if nothing is changed. The other is total withdrawal from mission. But the truth of the matter is since the Church by its very nature is missionary we should neither withdraw from mission nor keep using the methods of yester years uncritically. Rather, we ought to reconceive and reformulate the Church’s mission in continuity with the best of what mission has been in the past millennia. In order to accomplish this we need to examine various models of mission that developed during the last one hundred years or so.

This class will address a number of LSTC Ph. D Program’s stated Learning Competencies. For example, it will be an opportunity for developing competency in sustained original research (Competency #1), developing a broad grasp of the history of research and current questions in global mission and world Christianity (Competency #2), developing competency in teaching (Competency # 4), and integrating their specialization with their overall competency in theology, religious studies, and other academic discipline (Competency #2). It also helps students to acquire research methods, familiarity with resources, and enhance their ability to formulate productive questions and pursue research about significant issues.
For the Master Students this course meets LSTC’s curricular goals by providing learning opportunities for a student to develop and to demonstrate:

Competency in drawing the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges for the sake of scholarly endeavors in religious communities and beyond. (LSTC MATS Learning Competency #3).

Competency in drawing the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges (LSTC MDiv Learning Competency #3).

Competency in drawing the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges for the sake of transformational ministries of word and service in the church and the world (LSTC MAM Learning Competency #3).

Although this course is an opportunity to focus on religious heritage, it is assumed that one’s religious heritage is always in a reciprocal relationship with spiritual formation, biblical exegesis, and visionary ministerial and public leadership.

### Learning Competencies
(What difference will this course make to students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)

1. The participants in the class will have
   a. become conversant with influential missiological concepts and terminology.
   b. engaged with the mission theologies of major thinkers (selected) of various theological persuasions.
   c. identified several paradigm shifts in mission.
   d. acquired an understanding of the origins and growth of indigenous churches all over the world and various issues facing them.
   e. recognized key figures, events, institutions and structures of mission that have shaped the mission theology and history.
   f. identified and interacted with contemporary issues facing Christian mission.
   g. brought to light resources from the past mission paradigms for contemporary reflection on the basis, purpose(s) and methods of Christian mission.
   h. reconsidered and made some plans towards the necessary and particular involvements in world mission.

2. The participants shall have learned and practiced a variety of Skills:
   a. of reading primary texts (in English translation) and relevant secondary sources; reflecting on these, bringing them into a conversation with contemporary concerns; and articulating these reflections.
   b. of finding up-to-date information and responsible scholarship about topics of interest, and making use of these resources through analysis and interpretation to enrich conversations about the meaning, in past and present, of being a disciple of Jesus, or of being the Church in mission.
   c. of communicating their ideas in a group and engaging in scholarly discussion.

### Strategies for Learning:
How shall we go above achieving the above Competencies?

1. **Regular Active Participation and Attendance**: You are required to attend each class fully prepared to participate in that day presentations. This means beyond just showing
up, you are expected to have done the reading and be ready to engage actively in the day’s work.

The following are some questions to think about as you do the assigned readings:
What did you find well-articulated? What did you find intriguing? What did you find troubling or annoying? In what way has your previous understanding of Mission been challenged, affirmed or modified? Did you learn anything from these sessions that seems relevant for today in your ministry/mission setting? At the end of the day you post these notes and observation in the course website.

2. Collecting Relevant Resources: The student who is assigned to present and facilitate the conversation on a given day in addition to the assigned readings, assembles relevant sources on the topic using the JKM catalogue as well as online database like ATLA, WorldCat and JSTOR, and show his competence in analyzing and interpreting.

3. Class Presentations & Discussion: Each participant should choose three topics and make a 50 minutes presentation and facilitate the discussion on three different sessions [The number of presentations each do might vary depending upon the number of students in the class.]

The presenters are required to send their presentation-draft to the professor at least a week before the day of presentation. This draft is in formal paper format with parenthesis notes and bibliography to help the professor to guide you further.

4. Research Project: A 20-25 page [MA/ MDiv student 10-15 page] research paper must relate to a topic [controversy/issue, event, person, or on a Mission Paradigm or Concept] within the scope of this course. Your research proposal should be submitted by the first week of November for review, approval, possible redirection, and bibliographic suggestions. You are welcome to use one of your presentation topics to do your research paper, provided your final paper shows of evidence of significant further research. For the final paper please use footnotes and bibliography formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

5. Optional/extra credit:

On March 11 [7- 9 p.m.] the annual World Mission Institute is held. You are encouraged to attend the conference that examines how mission is understood in our day and age. Writing a four to five page reflection on the content of the keynotes and panels can earn extra-credit [10%].

ASSESSMENT
(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the Learning Competencies?)

1. Regular feedback from the instructor: Feedback on the presentations and the research proposal will be provided in a timely manner (normally within a week); feedback on the final papers will be provided before the beginning of summer break. All papers will be graded with attention to:
   a. The student’s comprehension of the material read;
   b. The quality of reflection, including the student’s capacity to connect issues in the history of the church with contemporary issues of Christian life and practice;
   c. Clarity of articulation and writing.

2. Grading Procedure: In calculating the final grade, the various assignments will be weighted as follows:
   Class Presentation & discussion 60%
Final Paper 40%

3. **Student Evaluation of the course:** The Register will release a student’s grade until online course evaluation has been completed. This evaluation will include the student’s evaluation of the course and instructor as well as a self-assessment as to how much progress was made toward the Outcomes listed above.

4. **Contribution to the student’s portfolio:** The final paper should be thought of as a candidate for inclusion in the student’s portfolio, as an artifact of progress towards LSTC’s stated Learning Outcomes.

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**Bibliography [Required Texts]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission</td>
<td>David Bosch</td>
<td>9781570759482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices.</td>
<td>Kinnamon, Michael and Brain E. Cope (eds),</td>
<td>9780802842633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century</td>
<td>Yates, Timothy.</td>
<td>9780521434935</td>
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**Course Outline**

1. An overview of the modern missionary movement
2. The significance of World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 to the mission theology
3. Missiological themes and issues before the World War II
4. Towards a Modern Theology of Mission: Mission as mission Dei, Mission as Witness, and Mission and Church Unity
5. Crisis of Mission (including the “Moratorium”) and the Ecumenical Re-Conceptualization of Mission in the Second Half of the 20th C.
6. The post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church’s contribution to the debate on mission: Ad Gentes/Evangelii Nuntiandi/Redemptoris Missio/ Dialogue and Proclamation/Ecclesia in Asia
7. Evangelism and the Ecumenical Movement—the issues of conversion and evangelism in the ecumenical debate and the challenges of Evangelical Christians (the Lausanne Movement)
8. “Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation”: ecology as a concern of Christian mission
9. Mission in the pluralistic world of religions and cultures: (1) The Issues of interfaith dialogue, and (2) the Gospel and culture discussion with reference to Salvador 1996
10. The challenges and contributions of Charismatic and Pentecostalism to the debate on Mission
11. Mission and the Marginalized: Toward a Church in Solidarity with the Poor (Melbourne 1980 and Beyond)