**COS 423--Mission**

**Summer Session 2021**

**July 12, 2021-August 21, 2021**

**Instructor’s Contact Information:**

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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.

**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 this message relevant?
* How do we maintain the integrity of the message?
* What is the nature of the faith community that bears the message?

**Required Reading:**

Students are expected to obtain their own copies of the required readings:

* Acts--please read in the New Revised Standard Version or New International Version.
* Outler, Albert C. & Heitzenrater, Richard P. *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology.* AbingdonPress. 2099. (ISBN: 978-0687-20495-3)
* Robert, Dana L., *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009 (ISBN 978-0-631-23620-7)
* Volf, Miroslav. *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*

**Supplemental Reading:**

* Jennings, Theodore W., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics*, Abingdon, 1990 (ISBN-10: 0687155282)

**Meeting Dates and Times:**

The course will be taught online through Zoom and Course Connect. Assignments are due according to the times that are listed. No assignments will be accepted after August 21, 2021.

We will meet through Zoom at the following times (link available through Course Connect):

* Friday, July 16, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 17, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
* Friday, July 30, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 31, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
* Friday, August 13, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, August 14, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
* In addition to the 12 hours of class meeting via Zoom, there are 8 hours of classwork that will include watching a lecture and videos, along with writing and responding to posts through Course Connect.

**PRE-COURSE WORK REQUIREMENTS: (April 15-July 10, 2021)**

Pre-course work should include reading of Acts, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* by Dana Robert, and *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* by Miroslav Volf.

After reading *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* by Dana Robert, write a 4-page critical review of her book by giving the main points in the publication. Write answers to the following:

* Summarize the growth of Christianity in its early years according to Robert.
* What does Robert mean by the term “Christendom?”
* Where in the world does Robert say Christianity is growing? Why and how?

(***Due by July 10, 2021 at 10:00 p.m. to instructor at scook@misssissippi-umc.org.)***

**WEEK ONE (July 12 through July 17): Synchronous Sessions via Zoom**

* Watch recorded syllabus introductions via Course Connect.
* To begin the process of becoming acquainted (or reacquainted) with other students, you will post online in discussion forum of Course Connect introducing yourself (questions found below):
  + What is your name?
  + Where are you presently serving?
  + How long have you been in ministry?
  + What Scripture guides you as you begin this adventure in learning?
    - After posting on Course Connect, read all your classmates’ introductory remarks and reply that you have read all introductions.
  + **(*Due July 13 by 10:00 p.m. via discussion forum of Course Connect)***
* Read Acts 1-7. Respond to the following questions in the discussion forum of Course Connect for Acts 1-7 **(*Due by July 14 at 10:00 p.m*.):**
  + What is the overall message?
  + How do we make this message relevant?
  + How do we maintain the integrity of the message?
  + What is the nature of the faith community that bears the message?
  + After you post your responses through Course Connect, reply to three classmates, reflecting on similarities/differences.
* Writing Assignment: **MISSION AUDIT**

**MISSION AUDIT:** **(*Due by July 15 at 10:00 p.m. via discussion forum of Course Connect)***

* + - Itemize all the mission projects your local congregation(s) support(s).
    - 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 (examples- Sunday school classes, youth group, UMM, and UMW units).
      * List of all non-religious organizations that receive support from your church or any specific group within your church (example-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, 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 food pantry.’
      * **Your audit should be done in the form of an outline. Respond to 2 other classmates’ posts in discussion forum, reflecting on similarities/differences.**
* Attend online classes, Friday, July 16 and Saturday, July 17-Synchronous Sessions. In preparation for online classes, review Acts 8-14 and *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* by Dana Robert.
  + *Class topics: History of Mission* and Acts 8-14 *(Scripture and Mission)*

**WEEK TWO (July 18 through July 24): Asynchronous Sessions via Course Connect**

**GENERAL CHURCH AGENCY RESEARCH PAPER:**

**Choose one of the following United Methodist agencies/commissions:**

* General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), htttp://www.umcmission.org/
* General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), <http://umc.gbcs.org/>
* United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), <http://www.umcor.org/>
* United Methodist Women, <http://www.unitedmethodiistwomenorg/>
* United Methodist Men, <http://gcumm.org>

**Outline the following:**

* An organizational chart of the agency/commission
* The name and a short biography of the agency/commission head
* Summary of their finances (not the entire budget)
* Outline of current major programs and initiatives
* List of the board of directors
* A story about one ministry or program (no longer than 2 paragraphs)
* Contact information for a local church to receive materials from the agency (there maybe more than one)
* The names of person in the district or annual conference who relates directly to the agency (list any conference staff and chairpersons of conference ministry teams)

Submit this assignment via discussion forum of Course Connect (***Due July 20 by 10:00 p.m.)*** Respond to 3 other classmates posts in discussion forum, reflecting on similiarities/differences ***(Due July 21 by 10:00 p.m.)***

**Review *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics* by Theodore W. Jennings.**

* In a 5 page reading interaction of *Good News to the Poor,* write about the content of the text. Anyone reading your summary should learn what this text is about.
* Explain three significant lessons that you derive from the material.
* Explain three theological implications of this text to the mission of the church today.
* Explain three pastoral implications of this text to the mission of the church today.
* What are some subjects and themes in the text that cause some concerns and/or bring up questions for future studies and reflections on the text?
* How might the information impact your ministry today and how might you use this knowledge in practical ways in your community?
* ***(Submit to the instructor by uploading your paper to Course Connect by July 24 by 10:00 p.m.)***

**WEEK THREE (JULY 25-JULY 31):**

* Watch online link of and listen to podcast Episode 4: [“Becoming an Outward Focused Church”](https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/becoming-outward-focused-church-featuring-junius-dotson/) featuring Rev. Junius Dotson. After listening to the podcast, post your responses to the questions in the discussion forum of Course Connect by **July 25 at 10:00 p.m.:**
  + Why do you think people are reluctant to share their faith?
  + Describe in 3 to 4 sentences the distinction between missional engagement and outreach.
  + Respond to 3 other classmates’ posts via discussion forum, reflecting on their understanding of missional engagement and outreach.
* In *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology* read: “One Thing Needful,” “The Scriptural Way of Salvation,” and “The Marks of New Birth.”
  + Make an online post to the discussion forum of Course Connect of 500 words on the chief issue(s) raised by Wesley in these sermons. Relate to what you learned or the question(s) you have about the sermons and the application to your current context of ministry.
  + Respond to 4 other classmates’ posts, reflecting on what impacted you the most from their writing on the sermons.
  + ***(Due by July 29 at 10:00 p.m. via discussion forum of Course Connect)***
* Attend online class meetings, Friday, July 30 and Saturday, July 31-Synchronous Sessions. In preparation for class meetings, review Acts 15-21, Wesley’s Sermons (“One Thing Needful,” “The Scriptural Way of Salvation,” and “The Marks of New Birth,” and *Good News to the Poor* by Theodore Jennings.
  + *Class Topics: Wesleyan Theology of Mission* and Acts15-21*.*

**WEEK FOUR (AUGUST 1-AUGUST 8): Asynchronous Sessions via Course Connect**

* Watch lecture “Moving Forward: Engaging with People Outside the Church” via Course Connect.
* Make online posts to discussion forum responding to the following questions:
  + How will you leverage technology to your benefit to reach more people?
  + What has stirred within you about opportunities to build relationships across barriers that so easily beset us? ***(Due August 5 by 10:00 p.m.)***
* Review Acts 22-28.
* **MISSION ESSAY** ***(Due August 8 by 10:00 p.m.* *Submit your essay to the instructor by uploading your paper through Course Connect.)***
  + Summarize 1 of the topics covered in chapters 4 or 6 from Part II of Robert, *Christian Mission (Politics or Conversion),* based upon your reading of Wesley’s sermons, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics* and your research on a general agency/commission, describe a Wesleyan perspective.
  + **Length: 3-4 pages**

**WEEK FIVE (AUGUST 9-AUGUST 14):**

**MISSION STRATEGY *(Due: August 11 by 10:00 p.m.).* The MISSION STRATEGY should be emailed to scook@mississippi-umc.org.**

For this assignment, prepare an outline of how you will lead your congregation to engage in the mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” **Types of projects can include:**

* Designing a mission-education program.
* Developing a Mission Sunday event.
* Starting a new mission project in your community.
* Launching a pledge campaign for missions.
* Redeveloping or expanding an existing ministry to your community.

The Mission Strategy project must reflect a Wesleyan approach to mission.

**Your project outline must include:**

* A short description of the project.
* 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.
* Share 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. Include the theological rationale that expresses the Wesleyan foundation for the project. How does the project embody a Wesleyan approach to mission?

**Length: 3-5 pages**

Attend online class meetings, Friday, August 13 and Saturday, August 14-Synchronous Sessions. In preparation for the class meetings, review *A Public Faith* by Miroslav Volf.

* + *Class Topics: A Public Faith, Missio Dei, The Means of Grace, Social Justice, and the Wesleyan Vision*

**FINAL PAPER: MISSION SERMON--(*(Submit to the instructor by uploading your missions sermon through Course Connect by 10:00 p.m. on August 21, 2021*).**

* Review Acts 1-28.
* In no less than 5 pages, the culminating assignment for this class is a written sermon expressing your theology of mission. It should not be a previously preached sermon. The sermon must:
  + - Be based on a passage from Acts
    - Reflect a distinctive Wesleyan perspective
    - Include at least one example of a contemporary United Methodist missionary or mission project from your research of a general church agency/commission
    - Include at least one historical example of a missionary, mission organization or movement and/or the Robert’s book.

**GRADING:**

Grades are awarded on a letter grade scale to indicate how well the student has learned the material and is able to apply it to his/her ministry:

**A-Outstanding**

**B-Above Average**

**C-Average**

**D-Below Average**

**F-Unacceptable**

Students will also receive a failing grade for non-attendance and non-completion of assigned work.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING PAPERS**

* Submit all written work in electronic form through Course Connect or emailed to the instructor.
* Assignments should be in 8 ½ x11 sized page, double-spaced, 12 font in Times New Roman or an equivalent font style.  
  All quotations from texts must be cited using end or footnotes. Overuse of quotations will result in a lower grade.