



**IN520: God's Redemptive Mission**  
**University of Dubuque Theological Seminary - August Residential 2019**

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**Course Description**

This four-credit introductory course for all incoming students helps prepare students for their seminary experience and ministry vocations by providing an orientation and overview of the mission of God down through the ages, and exploring what it means for the Church to participate in God's redemption of the world through Christ. The course focuses on the Triune God as a missionary God, the worshipping community as witness to the Gospel, and all Christians as apostolic members of the body of Christ. Furthermore, the course exposes students to practices which nurture a life of discipleship, intimacy with Jesus Christ, and attentive listening to the Holy Spirit, and unify prayer, study, and service as disciples of Christ Jesus in today's world. **Course Fee: \$25 per student for day retreat, August 12.**

**The student who is successful in this course will:**

1. Integrate theological learning, discipleship and formation.
2. Build a sense of spiritual community needed to sustain pastoral ministry for years to come.
3. Identify methods of cross-cultural transmission and transformation of Christian faith in the history of the missionary movement.
4. Recognize the changing context of world mission and its implications for mission structures and strategies today and live out the Gospel in wise and winsome ways.
5. Understand God's story of redeeming mission as shown in the canon of scripture and the history of the church, highlighting how immersion in the scriptures has influenced and continues to influence mission.

**M.Div. Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer, and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives.
2. Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church.
3. Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
4. Lead and nurture congregations to promote peace and justice in the public arena and encourage the witness and service of the church in mission to the world

5. Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

### **MAMC Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission to the world.
2. Adopt spiritual practices that nurture their personal lives as faithful disciples and witnesses.
3. Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness.

### **MACL Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures.
2. Articulate key theological affirmations of the church's theological tradition.
3. Apply a coherent philosophy of Christian leadership to a particular context.

### **Required Texts**

- Bible (NRSV)
- Miller, Donald. *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* - ISBN: 978-1400202980
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* - ISBN: 978-0802804266
- Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer* - ISBN: 978-0060665128
- Robert, Dana. *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* - ISBN: 978-0631236207
- Wright, Christopher. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* - ISBN: 978-0310291121
- Selected Readings as Assigned

### **Our Daily Schedule**

9:45am-11:00am	<b>Session 1</b> - Scripture with Dr. Huizenga
11:15am-12:50pm	Chapel & Lunch
1:00pm-4:30pm	<b>Session 2</b> - Mission with Dr. Lewis
4:45pm-6:00pm	<b>Session 3</b> - Formation and <i>Compline</i> with Dr. Forshey

### **Course Requirements**

In order to receive a passing grade, students must meet the following criteria:

1. **Buy your books** in advance so that you have them **before** preload begins, July 22.
2. **Pre-load Assignments** - These pre-load assignments will prepare you for our class sessions together. Pre-load written assignments must be posted/uploaded by their due date. Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted. If you need to request an extension, please email Susan Forshey, [sforshey@dbq.edu](mailto:sforshey@dbq.edu), no later than 24 hours before the due date. Late arriving books will not be an accepted reason for late assignments.
  - Introduce yourself on Moodle. Share one joy, one hope, and one prayer request in the designated forum on Moodle.
  - Read Donald Miller's *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*.
  - Using Miller's book as guide, reflect on the story that you are writing with your life, and that God is writing through your life.
  - Writing Assignment #1 – Your Story with God (900 words)** - Describe a specific story that God and you are currently "writing" with your life. We are all living stories of God's presence in the world. Upload it to the designated dropbox on Moodle by Monday, July 29, 11:55pm. Reflect on these questions:
    1. Describe the main character (you!) from God's perspective.
    2. Who are others woven into your story?
    3. What is the *inciting incident* (Miller) that set you on this story's path?

4. What is your hope for the ending of this particular story?
  5. What is a scripture story that bears resemblance or provides meaning for your story?
- Read Eugene Peterson's *Answering God*.
  - Writing Assignment #2 – Book Summary (900 words)** – Write a summary of Peterson's *Answering God*. Upload it to the designated dropbox on Moodle by July 29, 11:55pm. Use this outline to organize your summary:
    1. Summarize the main points of the book; use parenthetical page numbers for citations. *To summarize* is to accurately reflect back what the author says, rather than sharing an opinion about the author's ideas.
    2. Describe 1 question or concern that the book provokes in you for your relationship with God and your life of prayer. *How might you resolve this question?*
    3. Describe 2 important insights from the book for your relationship with God and life of prayer. *How might you implement these insights into your daily life?*
  - Read Wright's *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*.
  - Writing Assignment #3 – Book Review (500-600 words)** - Write a book review of Wright's book. Information about how to craft the review is posted on Moodle. Upload it to the designated dropbox below by Thursday, August 1, 11:55pm.
  - Read Newbigin's *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, chapters 6-11.
  - Watch the Lectures 1 and 2 by Dr. Lewis, posted on Moodle. (These are from an earlier class, so ignore the instructions for answering questions.)
  - Writing Assignment #4 – Defining Mission (500-600 words)** - Based upon the Newbigin chapters and the two lectures by Dr. Lewis, write a 2-page paper that answers the question: *What is God's mission, the "missio Dei," and how should it inform our participation in it?* Upload it to the designated dropbox on Moodle by Thursday, August 1, 11:55pm.
3. **Class Attendance:** Active participation in class, and in chapel, is required in order to build a rich learning community, and cultivate a habit of consistent personal and communal formation.
  4. **Daily Assignments:** Students must adequately demonstrate their understanding of the assigned reading materials by **completing reading assignments before class and written work as assigned.**
  5. **Post-load Assignment** - To be uploaded on Moodle by **Friday, August 30 at 11:55 pm. Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted. If you need to request an extension, please email Susan Forshey, [sforshey@dbq.edu](mailto:sforshey@dbq.edu), no later than 24 hours before the due date.**

Drawing on what you have learned throughout the entire course, write **three separate papers** (double-spaced, standard format):

- Scripture (500-750 words)** - Select a Scripture passage studied in one of the morning sessions. This should be a passage that brought you new insight, more energy, and/or a deeper understanding of God's mission in the world. Write a 500-750 word essay that explains: (1) what you heard in the text and in our discussion, (2) how it connects with your own story, and (3) what you think God is saying to you in your own context.
- Mission (1500-2000 words)** - We have been exploring how the Good News of the Gospel has "gone global" and how it finds a home in every culture and context. As ones who dwell in the story of the crucified and risen Christ, we are called to participate in the reconciliation of the world through bearing witness to Christ, in word and deed. To do so in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways, one must seek signs of God's presence already at work, listen and learn about the cultural values and world views of the community, and understand the "bigger questions" they are asking. Then, one must ask oneself, "what is the Good News of the Gospel in this context?"

With this in mind, take a close look at your own community. Assess the religious context and identify a group or religious community not your own. Collect some background information on this group by consulting local sources about its history in the community, its membership, its passions and activities, and its relationships within the larger community. Then plan a visit or two so that you can interview one or two of its leaders or members, seeking to understand who they are, how they see God and how they see themselves in the eyes of God, and what, in life, matters most to them. Show curiosity and care for all those you meet, without seeking to proselytize. Friendships are jeopardized when people simply become “missionary projects.”

Then, in 1500-2000 words, summarize in the first half of the paper what you have learned about this community, their most essential values, their understanding of God and of the world, their concerns and challenges, their joys and sorrows. What does their religion (if they have one) mean to them? How do they express it? What questions keep them up at night? In the second half of the paper, reflect on what you think God is doing here and how the Gospel might speak into this context. What would be “good news” for one living in this community? How might it best be received? Conclude with a word or two about how God might be asking you to further engage with ones in this community.

- **Formation (600-700 words)** – Write a prayer to God, speaking directly to God, about your life of discipleship and this coming year in seminary. Explore the readings, class practices, and formation lectures, for what insights and ideas they provide you for experiencing God’s steadfast love and sharing from that abundance. Keep in mind and heart that we are often our own worst critics, so imagine how God looks at you with love and grace, even when challenging us to live holy lives.

### Assessment and Grading

Final grades will be assessed as follows:

1. Pre-Load: 30%

2. In Class participation and written work: 40%

3. Post-Load: 30%

A+ = 100-97%

A = 96-93%

A- = 92-90%

B+ = 89-87%

B = 86-83%

B- = 82-80%

C+ = 79-77%

C = 76-73%

C- = 72-70%

D+ = 69-67%

D = 66-63%

D- = 62-60%

F = 59% or below

### Administrative Information

1. Late policy – Postings and papers must be completed when assigned. Exceptions to this policy may be made with *prior* permission of the professors.
2. Plagiarism – Please consult the current UDTs Student Handbook, [www.udtseminary.net](http://www.udtseminary.net), choose “Current Students,” then “Student Handbook” for definitions and consequences.
3. Inclusive Language – Every effort will be made to use non-gender specific language. Please refer to the current UDTs Student Handbook (see #2 above) for a more thorough explanation.
4. Academic Support – Students needing tutoring, writing assistance, or other academic help should contact the professor or make arrangements with the Academic Success Center at (563) 589-3262.
5. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement – Any student with a disability that might affect his/her performance in this course should consult with the professor and the campus ADA officer (Megan Ruiz, [mkruiz@dbg.edu](mailto:mkruiz@dbg.edu), (563) 589-3757) by the second week of class. All such consultations are confidential.
6. Subject to Change Clause – This syllabus, course calendar, and other attending documents are subject to change during the semester.