Theological Foundation of Mission  
RS 159  
Spring, 2008  
C Farhadian

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces Christian mission by surveying the biblical and theological foundations for mission, and the church’s interpretation and implementation of the task of spreading the gospel across cultural and faith frontiers. The methods, challenges, successes, and failures of Christian missionary activity will be considered.

REQUIRED TEXTS

3. Donovan, Vincent, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Orbis Books)  
5. Endo, Shusaku, *Samurai* (New Directions)  
7. Ngúgí, Thiongo, *The River Between* (Heinemann, Inc.)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

1. Newbigin, Leslie, *The Open Secret* (Eerdmans)  
2. Sanneh, Lamin, *Whose Religion is Christianity?* (Orbis Books)  
4. Sugirtharajah, R.S., *Voices from the Margins: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Orbis Books)  
5. Thomas, Norman E., *Classical Texts in Mission & World Christianity* (Orbis Books)

LEARNING GOALS

1. Christian Orientation: a) Encourage students to think “Christianly” and missiologically about topics within Christian mission, b) Invite the cultivation of Christian habits of integrity and self-reflection geared to addressing issues of justice and truth, c) Encourage students to engage the world as Christians, with nuance, sensitivity, and bold humility, d) Challenge students to think biblically about Christian mission.

2. Diversity: a) Gain an appreciation of cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity and the integrity of worldwide Christianity and Christian mission, b) To understand the worldwide nature of Christianity and the opportunities for Christian witness.
3. Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking: a) Encourage students to engage in multidisciplinary approaches to the study of the theology of mission in contexts, utilizing insights from religious studies, social theory, sociology and anthropology to illuminate Christian mission, b) Expose the helpful nature and limitations of various disciplinary approaches to studying Christian mission.

4. Research & Technology: a) Students will utilize appropriate technologies for research and writing pertaining to the course, b) students will become familiar with the Eureka computer program in order to download assignments, readings, and announcements.

5. Active Societal & Intellectual Engagement: a) Students will be invited to be active Christians in the world, engaging religionists for a wide variety of religious traditions, b) Students will gain confidence to speak and dialogue with people who follow various world religions, sympathetically, respectfully, and yet as Christian witnesses.

6. Written & Oral Communication: a) Student writing will improve over the course of the semester, b) Students will be encouraged to incorporate primary and secondary sources into well-written papers, c) Students will actively participate in class discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation (10%).

   This is a seminar-like course, and students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions. Throughout the semester, students will lead student discussions. There will be several signup sheets to organize student-led discussions.

   Attendance is mandatory and subject to the policies of Westmont College. Failure to appear for any examination will result in an “F” for that examination. Written documentation from a medical doctor must be obtained and promptly forwarded to the professor if poor health prohibits you from appearing for an examination. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period.

2. Three Book Reviews (30%). Each paper counts 10%. Papers will be graded on the basis of content, grammar, style, and presentation (see Grading Information below). Rules regarding plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Papers will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Write concisely and clearly.


   The second paper will be a 1500-word review of the book The River Between. After providing a summary of the book, consider the following questions: a) What does this book teach us about the relationship between Christianity and Kenyan culture? b) What topics regarding mission has this book raised for you? c) What are some questions you think need further exploration? d) How does this book challenge North American Christians?
The third paper will be a 1500-word review of either *Silence* or *Samurai*. After providing a summary of the book, consider the following questions: a) What does this book teach us about the relationship between Christianity and Japanese culture? b) What topics regarding mission has this book raised for you? c) What are some questions you think need further exploration? d) How do the themes of this book challenge North American Christians? e) Illuminate Endo’s Christology (view of Christ).

Note: Please use inclusive language (e.g., do not use “man” when you mean “both men and women”) in all your papers.

3. Presentation and Paper (20%). Each student will present a summary of and reflection on a life story from *The Testimony Project: Papua*. A sign-up sheet will be distributed. This exercise will give students the opportunity to apply Stephen Bevans’ theories of contextual theology to illuminate a particular case study. a) Briefly summarize the person’s life by describing their historical, social, and cultural context, b) What are the experiences or persons that most profoundly shaped the life of the person? c) What is the person’s theology – i.e., How do they see God? What do they say about God?, etc. d) What is the person’s source of strength? e) What are some similarities and differences between this person and your own life? Students will share their reflections with the class.

Each student will write a 1000-word paper using one of Bevans’ models of contextual theology to analyze the individual’s theology (be clear in your paper about which model you will use). The paper will be graded on the basis of content, grammar, style, and presentation (see *Grading Information* below). The paper is due on the day of the class presentation.

4. Two Examinations (40%). The Midterm and Final examination will each count 20% of your course grade. Examinations will be straightforward attempts to evaluate students’ mastery of basic missiological concepts, including the biblical and theological foundation for mission, and students’ ability to integrate and articulate those concepts coherently. Remember to take a bluebook to class.

**GRADING INFORMATION**

Grading criteria include correctness, completeness, precision, depth, grammar, presentation, and coherence of your answer. The importance of the argument is also important in evaluating papers. The following is a brief explanation of how I distinguish among grades.

100-90%: Superior work that involves something more than mere competence. This work entails depth of analysis, imaginative insight, careful synthesis of the material, and an attention to detail that hints at a nuanced and subtle analysis. This level work requires superb grammar, presentation, and content.

89-80%: Good work that is solid, on target, and competent. It does not mislead. This level work states the important points and explains them adequately and competently. Work at this level attends carefully to the assignment, fulfilling each component of it. In examinations this requires answering the question in full. In papers it means exploring a carefully delineated topic or text as carefully and as fully as space allows.
79-70%: Acceptable but flawed work. This work may be flawed in different respects: missing the target, not quite seeing the point, misunderstanding what the question asks for, struggling for clarity. The work still demonstrates a grappling with the material and ideas in a plausible manner. In examinations, such work may make ambiguous points or use imprecise terms and concepts. Such work typically does not construct arguments well or misses some crucial points implied in the question. This level of work still evidences a general sense of the issues and a capacity to think about them. This level essay frequently is quite short in length.

69-60%: Unacceptable but passing work. This work usually demonstrates only a rudimentary awareness of the issues or problems, but even this is often confused by acute writing difficulties or an inattentiveness to the question. This level essay is typically quite short.

59-50%: Unacceptable and unpassable work.

**INSTRUCTION FOR PAPER formatting**

1. In the upper right-hand corner type your name, the date, the course number, and the number of words in the paper. Never use a cover sheet.
2. Two lines down, centered, type the title of your paper.
3. Use the Times New Roman 12-point font.
4. Set your line spacing to double.
5. Use one-inch margins on all sides.
6. Place page numbers in the lower center of all pages except the first.
7. Italicize book titles and non-English words (no need to underline)
8. Staple the assignment (if more than one page) in the upper left-hand corner.

**OTHER**

1. Westmont College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify Disability Services and then notify me within the first two weeks of class.
2. *Written documentation* from a medical doctor or Student Health Services must be obtained and promptly forwarded to the professor if poor health prohibits you from appearing for an examination. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period.
3. Lectures may not be recorded, unless with the permission of the professor.
4. Please bring relevant texts to class.
5. Please check Eureka for handouts to be downloaded.
6. I encourage anyone who has questions about a test, paper, or grade to make an appointment to see me.
   - Office: Porter Center 10
   - Office hours: Monday & Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or by appointment
   - Email: farhad@westmont.edu
   - Phone: x7094
7. The professor reserves the right to revise the syllabus at any time.
8. The professor reserves the right to fail anyone who does not fulfill the course requirements.
# READING SCHEDULE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>T Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan. 10</td>
<td>Th Our Contexts: Social &amp; Religious Autobiography</td>
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<td>➢ Begin reading Bosch, <em>Transforming Mission</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td>T Biblical Foundations: Missionary Documents</td>
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<td>➢ Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 13:6-9; Revelation 7:9-12</td>
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<td>➢ Bosch, 1-55</td>
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<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>Th Matthew: Mission as Disciple-Making</td>
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<td>➢ Bosch, 56-83</td>
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<td>➢ Bible reading: <em>The Gospel of Matthew</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>T MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY – no class</td>
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<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Th Mark: Mission as the Disclosing of the Hidden Messiah</td>
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<td>➢ Bible reading: <em>The Gospel of Mark</em></td>
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<td>➢ Bosch, 84-122</td>
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<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Th Mission in Paul</td>
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<td>➢ Bosch, 123-178</td>
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<td>➢ Bible reading: <em>Romans</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>T Film: <em>The Mission</em></td>
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<td>➢ BOOK REVIEW #1 DUE: <em>Christianity Rediscovered</em></td>
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## I. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION

### Feb. 7

Th Models of Contextual Theology: Methodological Issues

➢ Bevans, chapters 1-3

➢ Student-led class discussion
6 Feb. 12 T Models of Contextual Theology: Six Models
   ▶ Bevans, chapters 4-6
   ▶ Student-led class discussion

Feb. 14 Th Models of Contextual Theology: Six Models
   ▶ Bevans, chapters 7-9
   ▶ Student-led class discussion

7 Feb. 19 T PRESIDENT’S HOLIDAY – no class

Feb. 21 Th MIDTERM EXAMINATION

III. ISSUES OF GOSPEL & CULTURE

8 Feb. 26 T Issues in Gospel & Culture
   ▶ Handout: Andrew Walls, “Convert or Proslyte.”

Feb. 28 Th Gospel & Culture (I)
   ▶ Film: The Gospel According to the Papuans (France)
   ▶ Read website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papua_New_Guinea

9 Mar. 4 T Gospel & Culture (II)
   ▶ Film: Peace Child (USA)
   ▶ Class discussion
   ▶ Handout: Don Richardson, “Peoples with Strange Customs,” Eternity in their Hearts.
   ▶ View map: http://www.westpapuaaction.buz.org/Map.htm
Mar. 6   Th   Case Study: West Papua
- Handout: Farhadian, *Comparing Conversions among the Dani of Irian Jaya*.
- Review website: http://www.westpapua.ca/
- Read website: http://www.acmica.org/pub_westpapua.html
- View map: http://www.westpapuaaction.buz.org/Map.htm

10 Mar. 11   T   Student presentations from *The Testimony Project: Papua*
Amelia Jigibalom, Obed Komba, Willem Rumsarwir, Helena Matuan, Uma Markus Kilungga, Nicholas Jouwe, Benny Giay, Octovianus Mote

Mar. 13   Th   Current Issues in Christian Mission: Class Discussion

Book Discussion: *The River Between*
- BOOK REVIEW #2 DUE: *The River Between*

11 Mar. 18   T   SPRING BREAK

Mar. 20   Th   SPRING BREAK

IV. ELEMENTS OF AN EMERGING MISSIONARY PARADIGM

12 Mar. 25   T   Mission as the Church-with-Others & Mission as *Missio Dei*
- Bosch, 369-393
- Thomas, 81-112
- student-lead discussion

Mar. 27   Th   Mission as Mediating Salvation & Mission as Quest for Justice
- Film: *War of the Trees* (Zimbabwe)
- Bosch, 393-408
- Thomas, 122-153
- student-led discussion
13 Apr. 1  T Mission as Evangelism & Mission as Contextualization
   ➢ Film: Selections from *The Tailenders* (USA)
   ➢ Bosch, 409-432
   ➢ Thomas, 154-184
   ➢ student-led discussion

Apr. 3  Th Mission as Common Witness & Mission as Witness to People of Other Living Faiths
   ➢ Bosch, 457-467, 474-489
   ➢ Thomas, 223-242, 262-280
   ➢ student-led discussion
   ➢ BOOK REVIEW #3 DUE: *Silence or Samurai*

14 Apr. 8  T RESEARCH & READING – no class

Apr. 10  Th Mission as Justice & Solidarity
   ➢ Film: *Sudan: The Hidden Holocaust*
   ➢ Bosch, 432-447

15 Apr. 15  T Film: *The End of the Spear*
   ➢ Begin reading Newbigin’s *Foolishness to the Greeks*

Apr. 17  Th The Gospel & Western Culture (I)
   ➢ Newbigin, 1-64

16 Apr. 22  T The Gospel & Western Culture (II)
   ➢ Newbigin, 65-150

Apr. 24  Th CONCLUSION

**FINAL EXAMINATION**
April 28 (Monday), 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Note: Final Examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements