06M518 - MISSIONS
Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall Term, 2014
Professor: Samuel H. Larsen, D.Min., Ph.D.
(rev. 5/21/14)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

2 hours. An introductory course in missions history and anthropology for cross-cultural workers that surveys theological foundations, historical events, personalities, and trends, theories, and anthropological tools in order to develop an appreciation and understanding of the task of bringing the Gospel across cultural and ethnic boundaries. The course includes introductory units on the Christian encounters with both Buddhism and Islam, together with a biblical and anthropological approach for engaging cultural values and worldviews with the Gospel.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will demonstrate the following understandings, motivations, and skills:

1. Students will be able to trace biblical and theological foundations for missions.

2. Students will be able to identify key historical events, personalities, and trajectories of the missionary enterprise.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of important missiological theories and strategies as they have historically influenced and currently influence missions.

4. Students will show a grasp of basic tools for intercultural communication and cross-cultural ministry.

5. Students will demonstrate an introductory awareness of issues and worldviews that have arisen in the course of Christianity’s encounter with the major world religions of Buddhism and Islam.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (1566 pp)


RECOMMENDED READING:


Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. (581 pp)


**COURSE ASSESSMENT:**

1. Class participation (includes attendance and contribution to class discussions): 20%

2. Research paper (12-15 pages) on a topic previously approved by the professor: 40%
   (due Thursday, December 4, 2014)

3. Take-home final examination (open book preparation only, closed book written essays - no collaboration permitted): 40%  (due Thursday, December 4, 2014)

**NOTE:** Spelling and grammar of written submissions (other than the take-home final examination, which cannot be checked by another person to edit it) must be accurate and will be taken into account in course assessment. Format must comply with the standards of Reformed Theological Seminary. Submissions which are submitted late will be reduced one letter grade for each week or partial week beyond the date due. Course work turned in after December 4, 2014, will not be accepted without an extension granted in accordance with RTS/Washington’s academic policy.

**Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 44 and RTS Washington Student Handbook)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)
OFFICE HOURS:

Dr. Larsen is available before or after class by appointment and may also be contacted by e-mail (slarsen@rts.edu).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The course is structured in a 3-weekend format. Classes meet for three weekends (Friday evening and Saturday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. as scheduled) during the Fall semester, 2014, at the RTS/Washington campus. (Students are encouraged to interact with one another and with the professor during class breaks.)

(Note: This course is taught on a graduate level. Readings are supplemental to the Lectures and provide either background or amplifying viewpoints or information. Lectures do not necessarily reprise all the readings, nor are they scheduled with a corresponding list of particular pages in assigned texts. Required Reading must be completed by the end of the course.)

Intended Class Lecture Schedule (may be adjusted):

Session I: Toward a Biblical Theology of Missions: Seeing the Big Picture

Session II: Missions on the March: Pentecost to Charlemagne.

Session III: Special Lectures.
- Echoes of the Gospel in First Century Christianity’s Encounter with Buddhism.
- Conversion of the Vikings.

Session IV: Missions on the March: Crusades to Reformation and Counter-Reformation

Session V: Missions on the March: Moravians, Missionary Societies, and the “Old Age of the Modern Missionary Movement”

Session V: Mission Strategies and Critiques:
- Venn/Anderson/Nevius Method.
- Homogeneous Unit Method.
- Unreached Peoples Strategies.
- International Partnerships/Teams.
- Next Generation Missions

Session VI: Special Lectures.
- Christianity’s Encounter with Islam
Session VIII: Globalization and Contextualization in Missions:
   Dynamics, Trends, and Issues;

Session IX: Exegeting Culture and Worldview:
   Bringing the Gospel to Bear