

MISSIO DEI IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Fall 2017 3 SH

Sept. 29-30, Oct. 27-28, Dec. 1-2: 9am-5pm

Eastern Mennonite Seminary Southeastern Pennsylvania

Conestoga Mennonite Church

INSTRUCTOR: Emily Ralph Servant (emily.ralphservant@emu.edu, 215-586-3225), office hours before or after class or by phone/video chat, by request

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The mission of God is to reconcile relationships, heal brokenness, and bring wholeness and flourishing to all of creation. This course will provide opportunity to explore the multiplicity of ways in which humans partner with God in order to bring about the fulfillment of God's Dream for the cosmos. Some of God's mission is expressed in the reconciling work of Christ, the narratives of Scripture, and the Spirit's creation and ongoing re-creation of the people of God. Students will engage in celebration, critique, confession and creative envisioning in light of the Church's past, current, and future participation in God's mission. Students will be challenged to reconsider the good news in light of their mission and ministry contexts, in conversation with voices from both the center and the margins of the Church.

EMS MISSION:

Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares men and women to serve and lead in a global context. In response to God's saving grace, we educate students to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God's Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators and transformational leaders. The complete purpose statement can be found at <http://www.emu.edu/seminary/about/mission/>.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Have practice in the skills of interpretation, evaluating their contexts within the broader world and Church with wisdom and generosity, relating their experiences to the biblical story, and exploring how the Spirit might already be at work in their communities.
- Be further formed through the spiritual practices of mission—meditation and prayer, learning and asking questions, building relationships, embracing discomfort and failure—into mature missional practitioners in their ministry settings.
- Develop fresh ways of communicating and contextualizing the Gospel for their communities, discerning both the medium and the message, and learning how to present the holistic Good News in both word and deed.
- Experience personal transformation in their own encounters with the Gospel, reflected in an increased passion and motivation to join in God's mission and the ability to communicate the knowledge, skills, and practices they have gained over the semester to those they lead.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

- S.W. Green & J.R. Krabill (eds), *Fully Engaged: Missional Church in an Anabaptist Voice* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald, 2015).
- W. Shenk (ed), *The Transfiguration of Mission: Biblical, Theological & Historical Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1993).
- Most of the reading assignments for this class are posted on Moodle.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING :

Details for all assignments and grading rubrics are posted on Moodle.

Attendance & Participation (36 pts)

Students are expected to come prepared for every class session. This includes reading and reflecting on all assigned materials, meditating on/studying Scripture passages, and participating in class or small group discussions. An open, learning posture is expected; students are encouraged to listen well, ask questions, anticipate and respond to conflict with respect, and build community. **6 pts per class session**

Class Presentations (30 pts)

All students (including those auditing) will give three presentations over the course of the semester (one per weekend). These presentations will show an engagement with the student's context and provide an opportunity for the student to practice creatively communicating and teaching concepts from their ministry setting. **10 pts per presentation**

Conversation Posts (9 pts)

To facilitate a learning environment in which we all participate in asking questions, providing feedback, and prompting further reflection, each presentation will be followed by a Moodle discussion post. Each student will post a summary of their own presentation (due three days after class); once all posts have been made, students will respond to at least two other posts (due one week after class). **1 pt per discussion post**

Papers (21 pts)

Each for-credit student will write the content of their presentation into a paper (due Oct. 14, Nov. 11, Dec. 9). The purpose of these papers is to communicate their findings and to reflect on discussion board posts and the experience of learning and teaching. Each paper should aim for 1000-1500 words and include a combination of information and reflection. **7 pts per paper**

Annotated Reading Bibliography (4 pts)

All for-credit students will keep an annotated bibliography of class readings, including those specifically assigned and those chosen in research for class presentations and papers. The bibliography should include the title, author and publishing information, pages read, and a short summary of the content. The summary should be a minimum of 2-3 sentences and may include your response/lingering questions. **4 pts total**

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 29-30, 2017: The Imagination of God

Theme: Setting the foundation for *missio Dei* by exploring the biblical and historical story of mission.

Before Class:

- Read: September class packet, posted on Moodle
- Meditate on: Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-24, 14:15-23, 15:1-32
- Prepare: “My Context” presentation

Class Topics:

- Review syllabus
- Intro to the *missio Dei*
- Old and New Testament foundations for mission
- The Anabaptist experience of mission
- “Missional Church”
- Spiritual practices for mission
- “My Context” presentations

After Class:

- Post summary of “My Context” presentation on Moodle (due Oct 3)
- Post two responses to posts on Moodle (due Oct 7)
- E-mail chosen religion for “World Religions” presentation (due Oct 7)
- Submit “My Context” paper (due Oct 14)

October 27-28, 2017: The Holy Spirit in the World

Theme: Exploring the role of the Holy Spirit in world religions, culture, and mission.

Before Class:

- Read: October class packet, posted on Moodle
- Meditate on: Luke 11:1-13; Acts 2:1-47, 4:23-31, 11:1-18
- Prepare: “World Religions” presentation

Class Topics:

- The Holy Spirit’s role in mission
- Spiritual practices for mission, part 2
- The Church and the “World”
- Christ and culture
- Engaging world religions
- “World Religions” presentations

After Class:

- Post summary of “World Religions” presentation on Moodle (due Oct. 31)
- Post two responses to posts on Moodle (due Nov. 4)
- Submit “World Religions” paper (due November 11)

December 1-2, 2017: Jesus, Reincarnated

Theme: Engaging with the Church's response in contextualizing the Good News in word and deed.

Before Class:

- Read: December class packet, posted on Moodle
- Meditate on: Luke 1:46-56, 2:8-20, 4:14-21, 7:18-23, 24:1-53
- Prepare: "Good News" presentation
- Submit: Annotated reading bibliography (due Nov. 30)

Class Topics:

- Holistic witness
- Evangelism
- Vulnerability and risk-taking
- "Good News" presentations
- Class review and evaluations

After Class:

- Post summary of "Good News" presentation on Moodle (due Dec. 5)
- Post two responses to posts on Moodle (due Dec. 9)
- Submit "Good News" paper (due Dec. 9)

NOTICES:

Attendance Expectations: Students are required to attend class meetings of all courses for which they are enrolled unless excused for satisfactory reasons. Work missed by late entrance or absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the instructor. Excuses may be secured for sickness, funerals in the family and similar circumstances. Each faculty member is responsible for granting excuses. Students should not absent themselves from classes without clearance from their respective professors.

Academic Integrity: The responsibility to foster and guard academic integrity rests with all members of the academic community. A foundation of mutual trust is essential to the learning community. Any incidents of academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the work submitted and a "Record of Academic Dishonesty" filed in the graduate dean's office. Students are asked to meet with the professor (and other affected persons, where appropriate) to examine the effects of the dishonesty on others and to develop an accountability plan.

Special Accommodations Statement: If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, or has emergency medical information to share, please contact the instructor personally as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate equal educational opportunity. All information and documentation of the disability is confidential and will not be released without permission.

Title IX Notice: It is important for you to know that all faculty members are required to report known or alleged incidents of sexual violence (including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, stalking). That means that I cannot keep information about sexual violence confidential if you share that information with me. For example, if you inform me of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to talk to this office directly, Marcy Engle, Title IX Coordinator, can be reached at [540-432-4148](tel:540-432-4148) or marcy.engle@emu.edu. Additionally, you can also report incidents or complaints through our online portal at <http://emu.edu/safecampus/>.