

IN 782: Gospel in Context

August Term 2017

August 7-18, 2017

3 Credits, letter grade only

Prerequisite: IN 581: Theology of Mission & Evangelism or IN 520: God's Redeeming Mission

Sec. 1: Urban Immersion: Dr. Christopher James, cjames@dbq.edu

Sec. 2: Rural Immersion: TBD, 589-3691,

Course Description

Wherever one does ministry, the character of the context shapes the forms of evangelism and mission that are viable, appropriate, and faithful. This course explores the work of contextualization—how the gospel is proclaimed and embodied contextually. This course includes a brief **immersion trip, Aug. 11-15**, either to a rural location or an urban center (Madison, WI), as well as classroom sessions to help students develop an initial skill at reading contexts for Christian ministry. Building on a theological foundation, it considers how context is reflected in the forms of ministry and witness observed. Cost per person for the immersion, to be billed to students by the student accounts office, is \$300.00. The prerequisite is Theology of Mission and Evangelism (IN581) or God's Redeeming Mission (IN520) and priority is given to seniors for choice of immersion context. However, final section assignments for all will be determined by the instructors.

Student Learning Objectives

By participating fully in this class, students will:

1. Be able to recognize that the Gospel is always proclaimed and incarnated within particular cultures.
2. Begin to read the important dynamics – e.g. historical, social, political, geographical, spiritual – that enter into the context of the visited location.
3. Apply the theological foundations for incarnational mission learned in IN581 or IN520 to the cross-cultural immersion experience.

M.Div. Curricular Goals

1. Evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity.
2. Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
3. 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.

MAMD Curricular Goals

1. Develop, implement, and assess strategies for missional living in a specific cultural context.
2. Adopt spiritual practices that nurture personal lives as faithful disciples and witnesses.
3. Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness.

Required Reading for All Students (to be read BEFORE the first class)

Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered (25th Anniversary Edition)*
Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*

Required Reading for Sec. 1 Only: Urban Immersion

Eric Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith*
Selected articles

Required Reading for Sec. 2 Only: Rural Immersion

Lawrence Farris, *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry*
Shannon Jung, et. al., *Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come*

Course Administrative Information

- 1) A grading penalty will be assessed on all late work unless a legitimate reason for tardiness exists. Please consult with professor before missing due dates.
- 2) All work must be a student's own. You are responsible for adhering to the Seminary's policies on academic honesty. The most recent Student Handbook details important information on plagiarism on page 101.
- 3) At the Academic Support Center on the second floor of Myers Library, there are writing tutors who are able to help you with writing issues and problems you may encounter working on assignments for this course. Please make use of this service provided free of charge by the University.
- 4) Americans With Disability Act (ADA) Statement: A student who has a disability that may affect his/her performance in this course should consult with the instructor and the campus ADA compliance office, in confidence, by the second class session. UD's ADA compliance officer is Megan Ruiz, at the Academic Support Center, ext. 3722.
- 5) This syllabus, course calendar and other attending documents are subject to change during the term.
- 6) The Drop date for this course is Tuesday, August 8, 2016.
- 7) Failure to attend class or participate in all aspects of the immersion may result in a requirement to repeat the course.

Course Requirements for August-Term 2017

1. **Conscientious attendance, vigorous participation, and reading of the texts and selected articles.**
2. **Pre-assignments, due July 30, 2017**
 - Read Donovan's *Christianity Rediscovered* and Sedmak's *Doing Local Theology* and write a 3-5 page (1200-1500 words), double-spaced paper that makes connections between Donovan's ministry among the Masai and the work that Sedmak calls "doing local theology." Submit via Moodle.
 - Complete the Basic Values Questionnaire (Lingenfelter) and bring it to class on 8/8.
3. **Section Context Paper, due Wednesday, August 9, 2017, 11:55pm:** Write a 3-5 page paper on the section readings assigned, highlighting key ideas and noting the questions the reading has raised for you to pursue further in your context immersion.
4. **Immersion Journal:** Keep a daily journal during the immersion trip for use in writing the final paper which contains: observations of the context of each site visited, the nature of the ministry involved, notes on the way locals articulate their faith, and the impact on the community. In addition, reflect on: What did I experience emotionally and spiritually today? Where did I see God? *This assignment will not be submitted in full, but will enrich group conversations and should inform the writing of your Gospel in Context Paper.*
5. **Gospel in Context Paper, due August 31, 2017:** Drawing on the journal, discussions, and your readings, write a 10-12 page paper in three equal sections. In Section One you will offer a robust description of the context (Describe key aspects of the culture, values, norms, material environment, personal and community narratives and experiences, social dynamics, contemporary challenges, "the human situation," etc.). In Section Two you will articulate the local theology that you witnessed among Christians in this context (How do they understand the meaning of the gospel in their context and embody this in their way of life and forms of ministry? What are the themes or sources in Scripture and Tradition that anchor this understanding and practice?) In Section Three you will propose concrete practices for spiritual and missional discernment that are contextually appropriate and reflect core principles highlighted in the course (If you were to relocate to a similar context, what habits and practices would you use to learn the culture, discover the contextual meaning of the gospel, and discern the Spirit's missional invitations?).