

## **SYLLABUS: IC 1615-01: READING THE AUDIENCES**

Luther Seminary

Fall 2013

### **PROFESSORS**

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**TIME AND LOCATION:** Tuesdays, 6:00-9:00 pm; Gullixson 103

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a study of the patterns and structures of community life that influence the task of confession and proclamation of the gospel among diverse audiences. Resources in the cultural and social sciences and philosophy are explored for theologically interpreting persons, institutions, and locations for the sake of confessing and communicating the gospel. Attention is given to the use of these resources in Christian interpretation of western culture and the early twenty-first century North American situation.

### **COURSE GOALS**

- To engage the challenges of leading Christian communities in a pluralist culture
- To gain sophistication in attending to the everyday life of particular people, congregations and communities
- To grow in the capacity to name God's ongoing work in the midst of the everyday life of particular people, congregations and communities
- To develop a working Trinitarian theology of mission for a specific community in its context

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **Character and habits:**

- Faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Curiosity and imagination for learning about persons, institutions, cultures, and contexts
- Recognition of the role of one's own biases in the process of study
- Trustworthy and respectful behaviors when engaging persons and cultures

#### **Attitudes and beliefs:**

- Passion for communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Anticipate and respect differences in the values and faith commitments of others
- Recognize the value of learning through living dialogue
- Appreciate and empathize with different ways of life

#### **Knowledge bases:**

- Awareness of the need for mission in this new era of mission
- Basic framework for a working Christian theology and its implications for mission
- Ways to interpret a community using demographic and other sociological tools
- Relationship between the theology of church and Spirit and insights from congregational life
- Relationship between the theology of Christ's saving work and a systematic view of missional leadership

#### **Skills:**

- Recognize the frame of reference of particular communities when communicating the Gospel

- When joining a community, gather a sense of the place by attending: that is, deep listening
- Listen, think, live, and speak in the context of diverse cultures
- Learn to use the life perspectives of a culture imaginatively

### **EVIDENCE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING AND PROFICIENCY**

- Ability to relate theology (doctrine of God) with ecclesiology, understanding of ministry, and approach to church leadership
- Competent use of demographic, ethnographic, and other sociological tools in the interpretation of an actual ministry and its community
- Use of scriptural, confessional and theological resources in interpreting the mission of a congregation or other ministry
- Ability to recognize and account for one's own biases in interpreting a culture or community
- Sensitive and nuanced interpretation of the cultural dynamics of an actual faith community, ministry or population group

### **APPROACH**

This course introduces students to the challenges and possibilities of leading Christian communities in mission in a pluralist world. To do that, we will engage in discerning local theologies—we will listen to God by dwelling in the Word; we will listen to tradition and history; to personal and communal experience; to culture and society. We will assert, decide, and act with the intention of answering one underlying question: *What might God be calling the church to be and do in mission in the world in this particular time and place?*

Students and instructors will be co-learners and conversation partners in a process of discovery and ongoing transformation. Therefore, students will be expected to bring their own experiences, knowledge, and informed insights to the conversation. New material and resources—which include theology, congregational studies, cultural anthropology, history, ethnography, and sociology—will be presented by the instructors in a combination of assigned readings and interactive presentations. A valuable part of this course will be the life and history of real congregations or ministries and their communities or neighborhoods. Using a combination of projects and papers, students will be given the opportunity to develop their own theological imaginations; to acquire and use demographic and sociological tools for the sake of mission; and to begin articulating their own understanding of what it means to be leaders in a missional church in this new era.

### **LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Lectures and Readings
- Discussion
- Group Project
- Two Papers

#### **Lectures and readings**

To prepare for the lectures, read through assigned readings carefully. Handouts of the presentations from most of the lectures will be posted on MyLutherNet.

#### **Discussion Group**

Each student will be assigned to a discussion/project group for the purpose of responding to and interacting with one another around the readings, course topics and project. In this course, students are co-learners collaborating together in the process of discovery and interpretation, much as ministry leaders are co-learners and collaborators with team members in their congregation or other ministry setting. The group process is itself a valuable means of learning and growth as a leader.

### **Group Project**

Students will be assigned to their group during the first week of class. As a group of colleagues, students are to choose a congregation or ministry to use as the focus of an exercise in reading the audience(s) of a specific context. The results of this exercise will be presented by the group to the class. Details on the project will be distributed in a separate handout. **Due: November 19.**

### **Course Papers**

Each student will submit **two essays** (of at least 2,000 words each; essays can be longer than the minimum word limit). We are looking for critical and creative reflection in your essays—thinking that reflects how you are integrating what you have learned from the readings, lectures, discussion, and group project. Each essay must have a thesis and all points must relate to demonstrating or fleshing out that thesis. They need to demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings. Students are expected to follow the style for term papers found in the Luther Seminary Style Guide (on the library website). **Late papers will not be accepted.**

- **Paper One:** Drawing explicitly on course readings, presentations, and the discussion so far, offer a working theology of congregational mission in a pluralist world. Why and how are local churches called to engage their surrounding neighborhoods in light of the triune God's mission? **Due: October 8.**
- **Paper Two:** Drawing on all that you have learned in the course so far, develop a theology of mission for the congregation/ministry you studied in your group project. If you are an MDiv student, assume that you have been called to serve this congregation/ministry as its lead pastor and you are committed to leading it through a mission renewal or deepening process. If you are an MA student, assume that you have taken a staff position in this congregation/ministry and have the opportunity to be part of a team that is leading this renewal process. This paper ought to emerge from the careful listening and attending represented by the group project and consist of your imaginative proposal of how to lead this congregation to take its next faithful step.

Beginning with an understanding of the church's missional call, suggest concrete steps for a congregation to attend to its missional identity. Steps ought to include:

- A grounding point in scripture offering an imaginative language world within which to engage. What scriptural root metaphors for missional identity are present in the congregation's life (i.e., baptismal waters, well, ark, bread, sanctuary, etc.)?
- A grounding point in theology or the tradition generally building on the scriptural framing. This should be a key theological doctrine or locus (i.e., priesthood of all believers, communion, death/resurrection, etc.) that has imaginative resonance for the people of the congregation.
- A description of how to understand your role and identity as a pastor/staff member. Frame this biblically and theologically.
- A proposed process for engaging the congregation, including the various roles needing to be taken up within the congregation and in relation to the community/context.

**Due: December 12**

### **GRADING:**

Students should review the relevant pages of the current catalogue regarding the seminary grading policies. Grades will be determined by successful completion of all aspects of the course. Be sure to note the policy regarding incomplete grades.

Grading Breakdown:

Paper One: 30%

Group Project: 30%

Final Paper: 30%

Class Participation: 10%

**POLICY ON COMPUTER USE IN CLASS:**

Students are welcome to use laptops or tablets in class for purposes integral to the course, such as taking notes or visiting relevant websites that might be referred to in a lecture. Out of respect for one another, for the instructors, and for the church we are called to serve, please do not use laptops for non-course related activity during class.

**REQUIRED READINGS****Books**

Bliese, Richard H. and Craig Van Gelder, eds. *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution*, with a foreword by Mark S. Hanson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005).

Keifert, Patrick. *We Are Here Now* (Eagle, ID: Allelon Publishing, 2007).

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

Roxburgh, Alan and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006)

**Articles on E-Reserve (through MyLutherNet):**

Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Eerdmans, 1998), chapter 4.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "Perichoresis: An Old Magic Word for a New Trinitarian Theology," in *Trinity, Community and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wesleyan Theology*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2000), 111-126.

Van Gelder, Craig and Dwight Zscheile. *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Baker Academic, 2011), 1-40.

Winter, Ralph. "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission." *Missiology* 2:1 (January 1974): 121-139.

**Suggested Reading (on Reserve or E-Reserve):**

Ammerman, Nancy T., and Carl S. Dudley, *Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing and Adapting in Changing Communities* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

Simpson, Gary. "No Trinity, No Mission: The Apostolic Difference of Revisioning the Trinity," *Word and World* 18:3 (Summer 1998): 264-271.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

Session 1: September 3

**Introduction to the Course**

Session 2: September 10

**A New Apostolic Age**

Required reading: Roxburgh/Romanuk, xv-78 (Chps 1-4)

Session 3: September 17

**A New Apostolic Age, cont.**

Required reading: Moltmann, "Perichoresis"

Suggested reading: Simpson

➔ **GROUP PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT Due**

Session 4: September 24

**A New Apostolic Age, cont.**

Required reading: Newbigin, 1-55 (chps 1-5)

Session 5: October 1

**Ecclesiology and Context**

Required reading: Newbigin, 56-120 (chps 6-8); Winter

Session 6: October 8

**Ecclesiology and Context, cont.**

Required reading: Newbigin 121-89 (chps 9-10)

➔ **PAPER ONE Due**

**October 15: Reading Days, no class**

Session 7: October 22

**Ecclesiology and Context, cont.**

Required reading: Bliese/Van Gelder, 1-70 (chps 1-4)

Suggested reading:

Session 8: October 29

**Missional Ecclesiology**

Required reading: Bliese/Van Gelder, 71-137 (chps 5-7)

Session 9: November 5

**Missional Ecclesiology**

Required reading: Guder, chp 4; Van Gelder/Zscheile, 1-40 (Intro and chp 1)

Session 10: November 12

**Leading in Mission**

Reading: Keifert, *We Are Here Now*, 21-94 (chps 1-4)

Session 11: November 19

**Project Presentations**

Required reading: Keifert, *We Are Here Now*, 95-150 (chps 5-7)

➔ **GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**November 26: No Class, Thanksgiving break**

Session 12: December 3

**Leading in Mission, cont.**

Required reading: Roxburgh/Romanuk 79-124 (chps 5-6)

Session 13: December 10

**Leading in Mission, cont.**

Required reading: Roxburgh/Romanuk 125-206 (chps 7-11)

➔ **PAPER TWO Due Thursday, December 12**