Course Description

The centrality of Jesus’ mission as Israel’s Messiah and Savior of the world explains the centrality of missions for the early church: all the authors of the various New Testament books, perhaps with the exception of James and Jude, worked as missionaries at one point. The course thus explores not one among many issues relevant for understanding the New Testament, but a central reality of the church in the first century. We will study the impetus, the character, the scope, and the goals of the missionary work of the early church as it is presented in the New Testament. We will focus on historical presuppositions, geographical realities, cultural and religious contexts, communicative strategies and the content of the early Christian mission, integrating historical, social, rhetorical, exegetical, and theological approaches to the study of the New Testament texts, with occasional queries into the ecclesiological and missiological significance of the missionary work of the early church for the church in the 21st century.

Course Objectives

- Students will be able to understand the realities of the early Christian mission in terms of the strategy and tactics of the first missionaries of the church.
- Students will be able to survey the history of the church in the first century in terms of key turning points and in terms of the church’s geographical expansion.
- Students expand their knowledge of the world of Second Temple Judaism and of the Greco-Roman world as the context for an authentic understanding of the New Testament.
- Students will consolidate expertise in the study of the New Testament, as they encounter various approaches to New Testament exegesis.
- Students will be able to articulate the centrality of Jesus, the crucified Messiah and Savior of the world.
- Students will understand the relevance of cultural and social realities for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Students will be able to articulate the centrality of Jesus, the crucified Messiah and Savior of the world.

Course Preparation

Since this is a reading course, more reading material than usual will be assigned. The required reading will be over 2,000 pages, which does not include reading for the research paper. Students will engage the material they read on CAMS, in meeting sessions, and in their research paper.

Students are required to interact with each other on CAMS. This can involve posting and interacting with questions from fellow students, commenting on difficult biblical texts, on
provokative interpretations, or on challenging insights. Students should identify possible
discussion topics for the meeting times.

Students will meet for at least six hours to discuss the reading material with the professor (for
times and dates see below). Students prepare for these meeting times by (1) reading the required
material for that meeting, (2) taking notes on the reading, (3) interacting with fellow students on
CAMS, (4) formulating discussion questions and contributions to the discussion.

**The course will begin with the Cooley lectures January 17–18, 2012**, with the following topics:
1. Paul in Athens: Temples, Philosophers, Aeropagus Council Members, and Paul’s Mission; 2. Paul in Caesarea: Governors, Trial Defense, and the Centrality of Jesus’ Resurrection. Students living reasonably close to Charlotte are expected to attend these lectures. Students who are not able to attend will engage the lectures through DVDs that will be produced.

**Course Requirements**

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments. The successful completion of these assignments will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and outside of class. These hours are distributed across the various course assignments as follows: Lecture 1: 2 hours; Lecture 2: 2 hours; reading and note taking: 70 hours; on-line collaboration: 30 hours; research paper: 36 hours. More specific descriptions of the assignments are given later in this syllabus.

**Course Outline and Reading**

The course has four sessions, related to four meeting times. Students need to have read the required reading indicted for each sessions, and taken notes, before we meet. The notes for each session must be emailed to the professor (use PDF format).

**First Session:**
*Mission in the Old Testament, in Second Temple Judaism, and in Jesus’ Ministry*


**Second Session:**
*The Missionary Work of the Twelve*


**Third Session:**
*The Missionary Work of Paul*

Fourth Session:
Perspectives on the Challenges and on the Message of the Early Church’s Mission

Schnabel, Early Christian Mission, 1489–1588

Research Paper

Students will write a research paper of ca. 5,000 words (including footnotes and bibliography), demonstrating work in the required texts, primary sources (including the biblical text), commentaries, monographs, and journals. The SBL Handbook of Style should be followed for style, bibliographical citations, and abbreviations. Students should choose a topic from the following list:

1. Jesus as a missionary in Galilee
2. Jesus and Herod Antipas
3. Jesus and the sinners
4. The significance of Pentecost
5. Stephen as a missionary in Jerusalem
6. Philip as a missionary in Samaria
7. Peter and the church in Jerusalem
8. Peter as a missionary in Caesarea Maritima
9. Peter as a missionary after AD 42
10. The origins of the church in Rome
11. Paul’s mission to Nabatea and Syria
12. Paul’s mission to Southern Galatia
13. Paul’s mission to Macedonia
14. Paul’s mission to Achaia
15. Paul’s mission to Spain
16. Paul and his coworkers
17. Peter and Paul: Conflict or cooperation?
18. Paul and James: Conflict or cooperation?
19. Paul and other religions
20. Was Paul a cross-cultural missionary?
21. Paul and ethnic identity
22. Paul and missionary contextualization
23. Paul and Graeco-Roman society
24. Paul’s missionary communication and rhetoric
25. Paul and the Jewish people
26. Paul and conversion
27. Paul and politics
28. Thomas and an early Christian mission to India
29. The origins of the church in Egypt
30. Early Christian eschatology and missions

Course Assessment

Student Participation in lectures, meetings, on CAMS: 20% of grade; student notes of required texts: 20%; research paper: 60%.
Select Bibliography


Barrett, Charles K. *Jesus and the Word and Other Essays*. PTMS 41. Allison Park: Pickwick, 1995


Dunn, James D. G. *Beginning from Jerusalem*. Christianity in the Making II. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009


Scott, James, M. *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Early Jewish Background of Paul's Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians*. WUNT 84. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995

**Atlases and Maps:**

Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more breaches, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancellation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work,” as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work

Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.