Critical Issues in the Christian Mission to Muslims

WM 747

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Fall, 2009    Tues/Thurs 10:45-12:15
Instructor: Paul T. Martindale, D.Min.

Course Description:
This course explores the major contemporary issues confronting those in ministry to Muslims. Emphasis will be given to showing how these issues can interfere with effective Christian witness and the development of Biblical strategies for communicating the gospel in an Islamic context. We will analyze and discuss contemporary strategies which have been developed to contextualize the gospel for Muslims. Major topics include contextualization, church-planting, Islamic theology, approaches to Muslims, radical Islam, post-modern Islam, and principles of witness.

Required Reading, Textbooks:

Required Reading, Articles:
To be provided by separate list on the first day of classes.

Recommended Books:


Riddell, Peter G. and Peter Cotterill. 2003. *Islam in Conflict, Past Present, and Future.* InterVarsity Press, Leicester, UK


**Requirements of Course:**

1. **Internet Research Project**

   There are a number of internet sites where Muslims are promoting various visions of Islam. You will find a number of videos on YOUTUBE for instance done by Muslims in fairly media-savvy ways. For this project you will find 20 Muslim sites (or sites where Muslims are present like YOUTUBE). You will analyze them by the following criteria:
   a. What are the strengths or attractive features they are promoting about Islam? Do you find these potentially attractive for your generation?
   b. What audience do you think they are trying to appeal to? How successful do you think they are?
   c. How sophisticated do they seem in their use of media? What features do they use well or do they use poorly?
   d. What response are they getting in blog comments on the site? Who is responding? Are they Christian, Muslim, Atheists, etc?
   e. How are the Christians responding to the Muslim on the blog? Would you characterize their responses as nonexistent, positive, negative, hostile, etc?
   f. Based on the above criteria how would you construct a website to reach Muslims? What would be your target audience, what kinds of media would you use, what topics do you think would appeal to Muslims, etc.

   Choose one or two blogs run by Muslims which invite responses and respond to them over a period of one month. Keep track of any responses to your comments. Then, choose one of the following:
   a. Write a paper giving your analysis on at least 8 of the websites you studied and discuss all five points above (a through f). The paper should be from 8 to 10 pages in length doubled-spaced in 12 pt type. Websites should be identified as www.youtube/myvideo/ etc.
   b. Or, instead of a paper make an 8 minute video which you would upload to YOUTUBE. The video should incorporate the elements listed above (a through f) and a copy of the video will be submitted on a DVD. We will also view any videos made in the class during the last 3 classes.

   The paper or DVD video will be due on October 28th. Late papers or DVDs will receive an automatic 10% penalty until Nov 25th after which they will no longer be accepted.

2. **Critical Issue Reflection Paper**

   Choose one critical issue which you think could present a significant obstacle to the church, Christian workers, or your future ministry with Muslims. Identify the Biblical and ministry implications which this issue presents. Identify any methods or strategies which have been employed to address this issue and list the strengths and weaknesses of each one.
In a paper of no more than 10 pages describe how this issue is significant for the national church and Christian workers, what the implications are, your analysis of strategies being used to address this, and any ideas you would have for developing a culturally-sensitive yet Biblically faithful method or strategy for dealing with this issue. The paper should be double spaced using 12 pt. type. It should be 8 to 10 pages in length with a cover sheet listing your name, mail box #, title of course, and title of the paper. Use endnotes to cite sources for your paper and include a Bibliography listing all sources cited in the paper. Any of the critical issues listed as one of the lecture topics may be used. The reflection paper is due on Dec 11th. Late papers will receive an automatic 10% penalty until December 18th after which the paper will no longer be accepted.

3. Final Exam

There will be a final exam covering the lectures and readings in this course. The final exam will occur between Dec. 14th and 18th as listed on the Registrar’s schedule.

4. Reading of Textbooks and Articles

On the last day of the semester, December 18th, you must submit your reading list documenting all reading you completed for the course. It must be turned in by 5 p.m. Late submissions will be penalized 10% and will not be accepted after 5PM on December 18th.

5. Attendance

Perfect attendance is encouraged and will greatly enhance your ability to perform well on the exams and comprehend the daily readings. In consideration of the rest of the class, please TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES during the instructional period.

Grading

- Reading of assigned texts and articles: 25%
- Internet Research Project: 20%
- Critical Issue Reflection Paper: 25%
- Final Exam: 30%

The Grading Scale used in this class is as follows:

- A+, 100-97; A, 96-94; A-, 93-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80;
- C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; F, 0-69

Review of Key Dates:

- Oct 12-16: Reading Week
- Oct. 28th: Internet Research Project Due
- Nov 9-13: Reading Week
- Nov 26th: No Class, Thanksgiving
- Dec 11th: Critical Issue Reflection Paper
- Dec. 18th: Reading Report due
- TBA: Final Exam (see Registrar’s Office)

Course Schedule of Topics:

- 9/15: Intro to course. Islamic forms and meanings.
9/17 Root causes of Muslim Resistance to the Gospel. Intro to the theological and other barriers. Theological nature of Islam.
9/22 The Cultural context of Islamic societies, values, orientations, influence of 7th century Arabian culture, patriarchal societies. Honor and Shame orientation.
9/29 Views of Islam and how our view of Islam impacts our approach to Muslims.
10/01 C1-C6 Contextualization. Historical and Biblical Issues.
10/06 Doctrine of Sin and Humanity in Islam.
10/08 Partnership with Nationals. Avoiding Dependency.
10/13 Reading Week, No Classes
10/15 Reading Week, No Classes
10/20 C1-C6 Contextualization. Theological and Ethical Issues.
10/22 The Scriptures in Islam & Christianity. Corruption, abrogation, reliability, & use of the Qur’an in witness with Muslims.
10/29 Crucifixion of Christ in the Qur’an. Responding to Muslims on this point.
11/03 Muslim Objections to the Son of God doctrine. Explaining Christology to Muslims.
11/05 Spiritual aspects of Christian mission to Muslims. Folk Islam, spirit world view, deliverance, how the rescue dimension of the gospel appeals to this worldview. Presenting the Kingdom of God to Muslims.
11/10 Reading Week, No Classes
11/12 Reading Week, No Classes
11/17 Church planting in a Muslim context. Goals, strategies, discipleship, what is a church, church-planting movements, etc.
11/19 Revelation in Islam and Christianity.
11/24 The challenge of Radical Islam in the world today.
11/26 No Class, Thanksgiving Day
12/01 Islam in America.
12/03 The new Reformers in Islam today, their appeal in a post-modern western context, how “new” Islam is morphing and contextualizing itself into our context, and the challenges we will face in the coming years.
12/08 A Contextualized Christology for Muslims and what our message to Muslims should be based upon research from MBBs.
12/10 Extra class if needed