GORDON CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
FALL TERM 2008  
WM/TH 602 THEOLOGY OF MISSION  
Dr. Peter Kuzmic

Time Schedule: Wednesday evenings, 6:00-9:00 pm  
Place: AC240  
Office Phone: (978) 646-4085  
E-mail: pkuzmic@gcts.edu  
Course Website http://cams.gcts.edu/estudent/  (check here for files before class)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a theological introduction to missions. Students study the biblical foundations of *missio Dei* and the historical and contemporary paradigms of missions. Topics receiving attention include the relationship of socio-political involvement to evangelism, Gospel and culture, mission and development and the relation of Christianity to other religions. *This course satisfies the M. Div. World mission requirement.*

REQUIRED READING


(Visit class page on CAMS: http://cams.gcts.edu/estudent )

RECOMMENDED READING


**CLASS FORMAT**
Classes will consist of lectures, video presentations and their evaluation, plus student presentations and discussion.

**ASSIGNMENTS**
- All of David Bosch and Samuel Escobar and selected chapters in James Phillips are to be read carefully.
- The student is expected to be able to identify and define key missiological concepts. This competency will be tested through a class quiz.
- 10-12 page paper on a topic mutually agreed upon by student and professor.
- Each student should write a book review (2–3 pages) of one of the books from the recommended reading list. See the attached description for a written report.
- Each student should write a personal mission statement entitled “My Missionary Credo”.
- Each student individually (or as part of a group if approved by the Professor) shall make a class presentation on one of the theological mission paradigms based on Bosch’s book *Transforming Mission* or a topic and/or missiological/regional issues based on *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*.

**GRADE DETERMINATION**
- Paper 35%
- Book Review 20%
- Personal Mission Statement 25%
- Presentation/Class participation 20%

TOTAL 100%

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**REGISTRAR’S OFFICIAL FALL SEMESTER DATES**
- Class Dates: September 8 - December 5
- Reading Weeks: October 13-17, November 10-14
- Exams: December 10-12
- Last Day for Written Work: December 16
The Making of a Critical Review

Adapted from J.M. McCrimmon, Writing with a Purpose, Houghton Mifflin, 1966.
Many thanks to Gordon Fee and Gary Bekker for their insights on this matter.

**Purpose and Substance of the Critical Review**
The critical book review is an evaluation, never a book report or digest. That is, the goal of a good review is the critic’s judgement. Your success (i.e. grade) depends primarily upon how convincing your arguments are for this evaluation and not on your judgement itself.

The essence of most good reviews can be divided into three categories: interpretation, technical analysis and judgement.

**Interpretation** deals with the author’s purpose for writing book. *What does the book set out to do? What do I want to remember about this book?*

**Technical analysis** describes the techniques by which the author selects, shapes, and presents his or her materials. *How does the author go about fulfilling his or her purpose?*

**Judgement** is the critic’s appraisal of the book’s purpose and methodology. The critic’s judgement is not only the capstone by the main goal of a review since it deals with significance and success of the book. When formulating your judgement, ask yourself, *How effective is the author’s treatment of the topic? What new questions do I have on this topic? How significant is the book in its purpose and achievement? What implications does this book have for life and ministry?*

A good review does not let this three-part approach become obvious. The finished product should be a finely honed essay.

**Preparation**
There is no substitute for careful reading and writing. The critic who skims a book and/or writes haphazardly is doomed to failure (or at least a “C”). Indeed, most critics find it indispensable to take notes. Your notes can include a selection of quotes from which you may choose when writing your review. However, your review should not be a chain of quotes. Instead, use quotes to indicate emphasis or provide rationale for your judgement.

When reading, take special note of the preface and opening paragraphs. In a great majority of cases, the purpose and sometimes the organization of the book are revealed there. However, be careful that any judgements made early in the reading process remain open to modification until the whole book has been carefully read.
Writing
Organization and presentation of the review is entirely up to the critic. However, keep in mind at all times your obligation to the reader(s) and your overall judgement of the book.

The opening paragraph is the most difficult to write. The overwhelming temptation is to plunge right into the final judgement. While this might be appropriate on certain occasions, it most often yields a dearth of material just when the review should be building to a climax. Other options for the opening paragraph include an introductory statement on the author, a quotation that summarizes the purpose of the book, or a summary of the problem that the author is discussing.

Always write a critical review with the reader(s) in mind. In most cases, you should not be writing for the professor but for fellow students who have not yet read the book. Your review is meant to help them make judgements as to whether the book would be worthwhile to read.

Your final draft should be 2-3 pages. Be sure to include the bibliographic information for the book, written in proper style, at the top of your paper so readers may find the book themselves.

Common Weaknesses
1. Using too much of the review to explain the action or content of the book. This is a digest (book report) and not a review.
2. Reviewing parts of the book while neglecting the whole. Parts may be criticized in relation to the whole, but criticism outside the context of the whole book is poor scholarship.
3. Digressing upon your personal views on a subject rather than the merits or demerits of the book.
4. Failure to provide adequate rationale for judgements made.
5. Conveying to the reader a sense of prejudice that makes the reader believe the evaluation to be biased and unfair.

Usefulness of Critical Reviews
Finally, learn to read critical reviews yourself. See the more popular ones in Christianity Today or Eternity. More technical reviews are found in Journal of Biblical Languages, Evangelical Quarterly, and Scottish Journal of Theology. You will learn about books in your field of interest.

Even if a critical review is not a class assignment, writing short reviews for all the books you read will allow you to build a file of resources for papers, sermons, and lectures. If a piece of writing merits your time, it also merits a careful, analytic reading. Do yourself a favor and put your analytic thoughts into writing for future reference.

PK/ahd
August 2002