

GS 5105/421.22
The Growth of the Church: Lessons from History/Missions History
Providence Theological Seminary/Providence College
Fall 2011
Syllabus
Instructor: Daryl R. Climenhaga

Course Description

This course is an exploration of strategies and lifeways from missionary history that have contributed to making Christianity the truly global phenomenon that it is today. 3 credits.

Objectives

This introductory course explores the history of Christian mission with the goals that:

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of the spread of the Christian church, which will serve as framework for continuing growth in their missionary sensitivity;
2. Students will identify basic strategies that the church has used in communicating the gospel to the surrounding world; and
3. Students will identify which of these strategies apply to the mission of the church today and will reshape them for their present situations.

Required Textbooks

There are three required texts:

Noll, Mark A.

2000 *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Pierson, Paul E.

2009 *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History Through a Missiological Perspective*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University.

Walls, Andrew F.

2002 *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of the Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

In addition, seminary students will read:

Yates, Timothy

2004 *The Expansion of Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.

The student will choose one other book giving missionary history from some specific perspective (examples: Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995; David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2003; Elizabeth Tucker, *Guardians of the Great Commission*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988). The student will work with a group of two or three people to research his/her area.

Assignments

1. Reviews of the texts by Noll, Pierson, and Walls (1,000 to 1,500 words for each text). Seminary students will also review the book by Yates. The reviews are worth 30% of the final grade.
2. Reading. Reading the reviewed texts earns a C. Reading the additional text earns a B. Reading an additional 300 pages (college: 200) earns an A. The student will submit a reading list of the additional reading at the end of the semester. The reading is worth 10% of the final grade.
3. A missionary history of the student's own church background (1,500 words – college; 2,500 words – seminary). The history is worth 25% of the final grade.
4. An integrative essay (1,500 words – college; 2,500 words – seminary). The essay should draw on all of the reading to indicate “lessons from history” that we derive from our study. The purpose of the essay is to show what the history of mission teaches us for the growth of the church today. The integrative essay is worth 25% of the final grade.

Research for the integrative essay will take place throughout the course. The class will divide into groups of no more than three people to study the area they are most interested in. There is class time available for reporting to each other what we are learning. Participation in these groups is one of the factors considered in the participation grade.

5. A final examination. This requirement may be replaced by an evaluation of class participation throughout the semester. Final Exam/Participation is worth 10% of the final grade. Note that participation includes both being active in class and completing assignments throughout the semester.

Note on Assignments:

I prefer to receive assignments as attachments by email. I will accept hard copies, if you prefer to hand them in that way; but emails are better. My email address is daryl[dot]Climenhaga[at]prov[dot]ca.

Evaluation/Grading: Credit for the course depends on completing all of the assignments satisfactorily. Failure to complete all the assignments may result in a failing grade, even if the average would otherwise be a pass.

Book Reviews	25%
Integrative Essay	25%
History	20%
Final Exam/Class Participation	10%
Reading	10%

Tentative Calendar

Sep 7	The First 16 Centuries	
14	The First 16 Centuries, continued	
21	Day of Prayer	
28	The Modern Missionary Era: Background and Beginnings	Noll Review due
Oct 5	Seminary Intrasession	
12	History as Biography Africa	
19	Asia	Pierson Review due
26	The Pacific Islands	
Nov 2	Reporting from the Groups	Yates Review due (seminary)
9	The Great Century: Summary and Lessons Edinburgh 1910: Shifting from “The Great Century” to the Uncertain 1900s	Walls Review due
16	Seminary Intrasession	
23	Reporting from the Groups	History due
30	From “Missionary Lands” to a “World of Christian Mission”	
Dec 7	Missions in the 21 st Century	Integrative Essay Due
14	Period available if needed	Final Exam Due