HST and ICS’s Mission in DMin in Missional and Spiritual Formation

The faculty of HST/ICS view their work as integral to the university’s mission: to integrate Christian faith and practice with academic excellence. This mission is carried out not only in the classroom but also by involvement in numerous services to the church and the larger community. The HST and ICS are located in the College of Theology and Ministry, and are vitally engaged in its goals and tasks. The stated mission of the college is to help students deepen their relationship with God and to equip them for service in the kingdom of God.

The mission of the DMin program is to spiritually form servants who live missionally in the world and are capable of leading and training those in their spiritual care to fully participate in mission dei (God’s mission for creation).

Course Description

This course hopes to produce practicing theologians within a broad and deep imagination concerning the mission of God. Theology, in this sense, is not simply the deposit of answers to questions arranged by topics within a systematic compendium to be applied to the church and world in ministerial praxis. Rather, theology here is the pursuit of a living God who calls communities into the world of God’s concern. If God is active in relationship to the world, there should be evidence of that. It should, in some sense, be describable. This understanding of God makes theology a task, not simply a deposit or settled content from which strategic or practical directions are derived. Theology instead is an ongoing practice of discernment, requiring interpretation. As a practice, it requires a certain set of habits that form a particular engagement with the world. Theologians, under this definition, do not settle a content or system of doctrines and then attend to the world. Theologians participate in the life of God as they attend to the world in which God is active.

This work of interpretation demands close attention to the biblical testimonies regarding the nature and shape of God’s dealings with creation. And it requires careful consideration of the ongoing testimonies of God’s people through history, who through the practice of a particular way of life have come to confess God in ways that makes sense of their ongoing experience of the work of God in the world.

Your work as a missional theologian will begin and end in, with, for, and against the congregation. In our time together in July, we will consider the ongoing testimony of God’s people to understandings of God and world, including Trinity, eschatology, soteriology, and ecclesiology.

Course Readings

Darrell Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Eerdmans, 200)
Terry Veling, *Practical Theology: On Earth as it is In Heaven* (Orbis, 2005)
Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Fortress Press, 1994)

Other, supplemental readings will be required during our one week intensive time. They are listed on the course syllabus and will be provided on the course LMS.

Familiarity with course readings is expected for discussion during our time together on campus. Our intensive week in July will be primarily in seminar format where class members make presentations and begin discussions. We will feature each of the major readings during the week. You will have different responsibilities or class roles in relation to the readings. The roles are as follows:

Primary presenter: The PP writes a 5-7 page review of the work under consideration. The review should summarize the major argument of the book and make a few critical observations especially as to the books relevance for a missional theology. The review should be mailed to everyone in the course before we arrive for the intensive week. Each course participant will be expected to have read the PP paper before we discuss the work in class.

Secondary presenter: SP will write a 2-3 page response to the PP’s paper. How did the review help in our understanding of the work under consideration? What themes from the book might deserve more attention? The SP paper will be read in class (copies provided for each member). PP and SP will discuss before the class the work under consideration.

Discussion starter: DS will be prepared to invite the rest of the class into the discussion begun by PP and SP. What questions or issues have emerged in our reading of these texts? These questions or issues should begin to point us back to our ministry settings. How might this reading help us understand better what God might be up to in our congregations?

Discussion Sweetener: Some of our readings may have supplemental readings, shorter articles or essays, that might amplify our discussion of the book under consideration. DS should bring a 2 page summary of the supplemental reading and be prepared to makes suggestions in class about how this work might amplify our discussion.

Curator: The curator will come with two sources or artifacts that might have bearing on the discussion. One artifact should be “sacred” in nature. It might be a scripture reading or a prayer or brief devotional thought. The other should be an artifact from our broader context where the “sacred” might be a bit more indirect. It might be a movie clip or youtube video or song. These should all be brief. If you have something long that you want us to consider or know about, show us just a piece of it that gives us a sense of the whole. The curator can decide whether or not the pieces selected should come at the beginning of our time or at the end.
The more readings completed before class, the better class discussion will be. While students may not be able to complete all readings before class, it is expected that readings will be completed before Dec 5. This will be recorded through student reporting. The student should report what percentage of the readings they have completed (including the sweetener articles).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>95%+</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-94%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>80-84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 75%</td>
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Other Course Assignments

Pre-Course Appreciative Inquiry Interviews

The student will enlist 2-3 other participants to conduct 15-20 congregational interviews. Directions for who to interview and how to conduct the interviews will be provided by Dr. Love via video available through the course LMS. Signed consent forms will be required for all those participating in the interviews. The form will be provided. Hard copies of the interviews along with consent forms will be submitted on the first day of class. The interviews should be completed no later than June 30.

1. Tell me about a time when you were certain God was active in this congregation. What was happening? Who was involved? What was your part?
2. Tell me about a time when your congregation experienced reconciliation. What happened? Who was involved? Why was it successful?
3. Tell me about a time when your congregation was actively engaged with your community. What was happening? Who was involved? What was God’s part in this?
4. The Apostle Paul refers to Christians as those “who are being saved.” (1 Cor 1:18). How would you say your congregation is experiencing “being saved?” What is happening? How would you know it is happening?

Appreciative Inquiry interview reflection essay. Once the interviews are collected, you should assemble your team of interviewers and read the responses together. Take note of themes, surprises, omissions, questions, etc. With their input, write a reflection essay on the process and results.

1. Write 2-3 paragraphs giving your readers some sense of your ministry context. What would we have to know about your congregation to appreciate the responses to the interview questions?
2. What did you learn? What surprised you? What confirmed your hunches or intuitions about your congregation? What major themes emerged? What significant themes were missing? Be as specific as possible. In other words, make sure your reflections arise from the actual interviews.

3. What do the responses overall tell you about the congregation's imagination about God? Is God a major character in your congregational narrative? Do the responses betray a Trinitarian imagination? When God is seen to be at work, what is the context? Is it personal, communal, societal, global, ecological? In the imagination of those interviewed, what is God up to?

4. What questions do you have as a result of the interview? What would you like to know more about? What two or three questions should be the next ones you ask?

5. What hunches do you have about what God might be doing in the congregation? What makes you think this? How do your hunches line up with the interviews?

This reflection essay should be 10-12 pages. It is due one week before the start of class. Please email a copy to everyone in the class.

Final Course Project

The final project will be defined by the student based both upon the pre-course interviews and course content during the intensive week. Given what the student is learning, what is the next question about God that needs to be pursued? How would this question draw us more fully into God's missional intentions?

The project will be done in three steps:
1. Design the project and get input from Dr. Love and one other class member. (August 20)
2. Do the project. (Sept-Nov 15)
3. Write a reflection piece on the project (Dec 5)

While the project might involve any number of things, certain features must be present:
1. The project should feature some aspect of action->reflection->articulation.
2. The project should feature some form of communal/spiritual discernment.
3. The project should include some engagement with the Christian story (dwelling in the word, the teaching/interpretative tradition of the church, etc).
4. Ideally, the project will include some engagement with the broader ministry context.
5. The articulation piece of the project should form a “confession” of the group about the leading of God.

The final reflection piece will consist of five elements.
1. Why did you choose the particular focus of this project? Give a rationale that arose from both from the interviews and course materials. (3-5 pages).
2. Describe the project in detail. Tell what you are hoping to discover. (2-3 pages).
3. Describe your role as a practicing theologian. How do you understand that designation and how did that influence your particular participation in the project? (2-4 pages).
4. What did you learn? What surprised you? What themes emerged? What themes didn’t emerge? What part would you say God had in all of this? (4-6 pages).
5. What's next? What questions remain? How will you test the questions through action/participation? How will others be involved? (2-3 pages).
6. Attach the formal articulation piece.

Course Grade:

Readings will comprise 10% of the final grade.

Pre-Course assignment will constitute 20% of the student's grade.

Class participation, which includes all roles related to readings and participation in class discussion and includes the quality of writing presentations, will constitute 35% of the student's grade.

The final project will constitute 35% of the student’s grade.

Criteria for Evaluation of Paper:

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Style and organization</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Form, grammar, clarity of development, strong conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Clearly presented, subject fully treated, presented topic appropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Use of sources, documentation in paper, bibliography complete and appropriate</td>
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<td>Insight and application</td>
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<td>· Appropriate evaluation of history, insights gained from study, and the ultimate</td>
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value of the work – especially in one’s ministry context

Grading Scale:
A=93-100  C=70-83  F=59&below
B=84-92  D=60-69

Course Learning Objectives

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<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>How Delivered</th>
<th>How Assessed</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage theology as a practice around a rhythm of action-reflection-articulation.</td>
<td>Pre-course context work, course reading and lecture, final project</td>
<td>Pre-course paper, Class participation, Engaging course readings, final project.</td>
<td>Move student through a cycle of theological practice to establish a contextual/missional paradigm of theology</td>
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<td>Recognize and engage important themes and trajectories related to a missional theology</td>
<td>Pre-course readings, lecture, engagement of readings in class, final project</td>
<td>Class interaction, in class readings presentations, final project.</td>
<td>To conceive of missional as a thoroughgoing theological impulse related to renewal</td>
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<td>Appreciate local contexts as sources for theology</td>
<td>Pre-course assignment, course lecture and discussion, final project</td>
<td>Pre-course assignment, class discussion, final project.</td>
<td>Confessing God as active in the life of a local missional community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead groups in discerning the leading of a living God.</td>
<td>Pre-course assignment, course lecture and readings, final project</td>
<td>Pre-course assignment, class discussion, final project.</td>
<td>Realize the interpretative dimensions of theology within community</td>
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Academic Integrity Policy

Because Lipscomb’s primary mission is to integrate Christian faith and practice with academic excellence, integrity is important in this course. As your instructor, I will deal with each student fairly and honestly. As participants in the course of study, you are expected to do your own work on all assignments unless I indicate that collaboration is allowed on a specific assignment. Penalties for integrity violations will range from failure on the assignment involved to failure in the course. The instructor also reserves the right to report violations to members of the administration. For clarification, refer to the University’s Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy (see http://academics.lipscomb.edu/page.asp?SID=12&Page=822)
Course Schedule

Monday AM—Missional Theology
Discussion of Reflection papers
Opening considerations and definitions

Monday PM—Practicing Theologians

Tuesday AM—Trinity and Mission
Readings—Moltmann, Love Missio Dei article

Tuesday PM—Eschatology and Mission
Readings—Welker, Hunsberger pdf

Wednesday AM—Salvation and Mission
Readings—Wright, Love1 pdf

Wednesday PM—The Word of the Cross
Readings—Hall, Love 2 pdf

Thursday AM—Church, World, Gospel
Readings—Newbigin, Love 3 pdf

Thursday PM—Church, World, Gospel 2
Readings—Guder,

Friday AM—Refreshing the Questions and Final Course Project Review