

# Discerning the Contexts of Ministry (CM)

*Course descriptions and scheduling are subject to change by administrative decision. See course offerings booklet for current offerings. Some courses will be offered on a two- or three-year rotation.*

## **CM 523 Comparative Monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, Islam (3 SH)**

This course is an introduction to the Abrahamic traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. An entire semester and more could easily be devoted to each religion alone, so the topics covered will be highly selective, not comprehensive. We will give special attention to the term "monotheism" and to Jewish and Muslim concerns about the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus. We will also attend closely to issues in political theology in hope of better equipping students to be critical observers of world events as they are portrayed in the media.

## **CM 533 Urban Ministry Through Multiple Narratives (3 SH)**

Jeremiah's summons to "seek the peace of the city" animates this interactive course. Students will engage the complex interweaving stories that comprise the urban context and urban ministry. Students will examine how the Scriptures and Christian communal practices can offer Christ's healing, hope and transformation to individuals, communities, institutions and structures within the urban context. This course will challenge students to hold together word and deed, reflection and action, evangelism and social justice, practices and divine interventions, in a setting that threatens the integration that is so vital for the shalom of individuals, families and neighborhoods in the city.

## **CM 538 Global Christianity (3 SH)**

This course will examine the history, missionary dynamics and current changing demographics of the Christian church worldwide. Beginning with several biblical reflections, the study will trace the expansion of the Christian movement, explore the impact of the Western colonial encounter, highlight growing efforts to embrace contextualized forms of the faith, and examine case studies of specific issues facing the church in different parts of the world. Students will have the opportunity to explore regional developments in diverse geographical settings or examine in more depth particular issues of special interest to them, such as interfaith conversations, role of women in the church, worship trends, or the witness of the church in word and deed.

## **CM 542 Psychology of Religious Experience (3 SH)**

Many seminary courses examine theological perspectives of various realities. This course takes a unique vantage point on spiritual and religious realities by examining them from a psychological perspective. Topics considered include spiritual and religious experience in childhood and adulthood, death, conversion, mysticism, and prayer as well as social and political dimensions of faith experience. A central dimension of the course is the sharing of faith vignettes by members of the class. Opportunity is also given to explore the cultural dimensions of religious experience.

## **CM 572 Cross-Cultural Integration Seminar (1 SH)**

This seminar is designed for mature students who have had a significant amount of cross-cultural ministry experience prior to enrollment in the seminary. It provides a setting where they can think reflectively and critically on the strength and struggles of those past experiences for the purpose of achieving important insights and personal growth. The seminar meets the cross-cultural requirement in the MDiv program for those with significant prior experience.

## **CM 613 Cross-Cultural Experience (3 SH)**

This seminar involves at least three weeks of immersion in a cultural setting distinctly different from one's past experience. This includes interaction with religious, social, cultural, political, economic and commercial groups and their leaders. The basic goals of the seminar include becoming a learner at the feet of the people of this community, acknowledging that they alone know what their world is like. Approaches to learning in this seminar emphasize the methodology of "participant observation" with careful attention to personal reactions and responses to one's experiences through journaling and group reflection. Special attention is given to how the Christian gospel is communicated and expressed in that setting and how it engages the realities of that world. The particular characteristics and requirements of a given seminar vary depending on the particular setting and who is leading the seminar. The seminar does not assume other-than-English language capability, but learning the basics of another language is sometimes a part of what we learn through participant observation. Descriptions of specific cross-cultural seminars offered are circulated each year.

## **CM 614 Cross-Cultural: Places, People and Prayers**

The study tour, "Places, People, and Prayers," offers you a rich and multi-faceted introduction to the land, which has been home—and holy—to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike for thousands of years. Day by day we will visit important biblical sites: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron, Beersheba, Masada, the Dead Sea, Nazareth, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee, and more. And we will relive the story of Jesus as we walk the land that Jesus walked. But there is much more to the Holy Land than ancient stones. We will engage in regular People to People Conversations, putting us in touch with the many and varied voices of the Holy Land: Christians, Jews, and Muslims; Israelis and Palestinians. Through it all we will join our voices in prayer. Regular times of reflection, a daily service of Evening Prayers, a Shabbat service in a synagogue, and Sunday worship with Palestinian Christians will nourish our spirits along the way. Our tour will end with a retreat in Tiberias, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

## **CM 621 Evangelism: Living to Tell (3 SH)**

Learning to survive, thrive and make a contribution in a cross-cultural context and exploring how the Christian gospel is faithfully communicated and expressed in varying cultural contexts are the twin objectives of this course. The biblical concept of incarnation is taken as a biblical model for understanding the nature, scope and limits of contextualizing the Christian faith in various cultural settings, applying the perspectives and tools of cultural anthropology. Students learn to apply the research discipline of participant observation to learning about another cultural community, giving special attention to how the gospel is communicated and expressed there.

## **CM 631 Churches and Social Transformation (3 SH)**

This course focuses a vision for congregations of the faithful at work with God in the world on the urgent moral and social crises of our times. While churches are widely seen as frequent defenders of establishment injustices, their potential for effective, focused moral witness against the major ills of human society is often overlooked. Their proven track record of work to reduce human misery, to minister to the poorest and persons most at risk is an important history to be retrieved and critically evaluated. We will direct our critical attention to Christian churches during Civil Rights Era, and their legacies, in hopes that we will be inspired to engage Christian communities in the ongoing quest for social justice today.

### **CM 640 Topics (1-3 SH)**

This course allows an in-depth engagement with a particular setting within the broad field of ministry settings.

### **CM 643 *Missio Dei* in Cultural Context (3 SH)**

This course calls and equips participants to join in the drama of God's mission in the world, as ambassadors of the New Community forming in response to the work and teaching of Jesus Christ. Every human culture is a context for this awareness of God's activity. We review the many diverse shapes the Gospel has taken in order to be intelligible across many social settings and historical epochs. The God who becomes incarnate among us is passionate about engaging human cultures.

### **CM 651 Women and Men in Scripture and Church (3 SH)**

This course is a study of biblical and historical perspectives on the roles and relationships of women and men within the community of faith. The focus of the course is a study of the biblical (Old Testament/New Testament) and historical (early church onward) evidence which addresses the roles of women vis-a-vis men within the life of the Jewish and Christian faith communities. The study culminates in consideration of the implications of these biblical materials for the life, work and worship of the contemporary church. This course is open to persons with or without previous courses in Hebrew or Greek.

### **CM 653 Spirit World and the Global Church (3 SH)**

This course will explore the biblical foundations of the spirit world and trace how these understandings have been both applied and challenged throughout the history of the Western Church. From there we will examine how the conversation is expanding as Western Christians encounter spiritual realities present in the rapidly growing churches of the global south (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Particular themes also treated will include: the Pentecostal appeal among struggling social classes, the language of "spiritual warfare" and peace theology, and case studies of North American congregations and church leaders dealing with difficult "hard cases" involving spiritual dimensions.

### **CM 654 Race and Religion in America (3 SH)**

In this course we will explore the inter-related nature of racial, religious, and national categories of Identity. We will enhance our understanding of race, nation, and religion through engaging histories of cross-racial, cross-national, and cross-religious encounters in North America. In our efforts to understand the braided realities of these categories of identity, we will use a socio-historical approach while keeping the present in mind. Our purpose is to discover ways that racial, religious, and national histories haunt our lives, churches, and communities in the present.

### **CM 724 Racial Healing and the Blue-Eyed Soul (3 SH)**

Racial healing has been a focus of Christian communities since the Civil Rights Movement, but the Christian response has largely focused on the affects of race on people of color and subsequent interpersonal efforts at reconciliation. This seminar will use literary and autobiographical texts to illumine the affects of racial whiteness on collective and individual identities in US American life. In the U.S. racial hierarchy, the white race is assumed to be the default racial identity category and those persons who identify with it often consider race to be the possession of people of color rather than themselves. In this way, racial whiteness has functioned largely as an invisible, yet powerful, social and political discourse that has implications for white people and people of color. Recently, white invisibility has stabilized the power and privilege of white hegemony. In other epochs whiteness has functioned more visibly as the apogee of racial identity and has operated for most of its existence as the normative category of identity, so that today, even in its invisibility, whiteness is assumed as the normative racial designation for American identity.

## **Denominational Studies**

A course or courses on the history, theology and/or polity of the student's denomination may be either required or encouraged. For Master of Divinity students who are members of the Mennonite or United Methodist churches, required courses are listed below. Master of Divinity students who are members of the Church of the Brethren or Brethren in Christ Church are required to take a course or courses offered by the denomination. Students from other denominations are encouraged to do a directed study on the history, theology and/or polity of their faith tradition. Master of Arts in Church Leadership students with pastoral interest are encouraged to take a denominational studies course.

### **CM 663 Mennonite Faith and Polity (2 SH)**

This course covers 1) the history of MCUSA polity formation from the time the denomination was formed from two previous Mennonite denominations (2002), 2) the contents of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the Membership Guidelines, the roles of the Executive Board, the Constituency Leaders Council, and the area conferences, and the current conversations about membership in the area conferences; and 3) processes of credentialing of leaders within MCUSA.

## **United Methodist Studies**

The seminary has developed a partnership arrangement with Wesley Seminary in Washington D.C. to cooperatively offer courses in United Methodist studies. At minimum the following two courses will be offered between the two seminaries.

### **CM 670 United Methodist Studies I (3 SH)**

This course begins with the early history of the Wesleyan movement in England, draws on John Wesley's sermons and journals, and considers the ways Methodist organized for practical life within their churches and for their mission in the world. It will lay the framework for the ways that the particular Methodist gifts and graces in ecclesiology, theology, and practice, have interwoven throughout the first centuries of the movement.

### **CM 680 United Methodist Studies II (3 SH)**

This course follows the story as Methodism becomes a worldwide movement. Through selected resources from The Book of Discipline, from contemporary scholarship in Wesleyan theology and theological method, students will examine the core of United Methodist belief, and review the doctrinal expectations of candidates for ordination in the United Methodist Church. The course will include contemporary questions in United Methodist polity in the 21st century.