PurposE
The mission of the church in its many historical forms and current expressions is often imagined to be something it is not. It is sometimes idealized, with missionaries regarded as spiritual superheroes and certain historic figures achieving legendary status. It is sometimes demonized, with missionaries vilified as religious agents of colonialism. Some see missions as a hallmark of Christian faithfulness, while others have said the whole enterprise is inappropriate in the midst of religious plurality and cultural diversity and should be abandoned. These differing views all have their reasons, but sweeping judgments do not provide an adequate account of a subject that is complex and multi-faceted, and may overlook important learnings that might be gained by a more nuanced evaluation.

The purpose of this course is both critical and constructive. It will evaluate Christian missionary practices, such as the Residential Schools in Canada for instance, with interest in what was done, the outcomes that can be observed, and the theologies that motivated, shaped, or were used to rationalize missionary practices. This critical work is not an end in itself, but a starting point for exploring historical, biblical, and theological resources that help to imagine the church’s mission as a creative and constructive engagement with the worlds’ many cultures and contexts in ways that are faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

compeTence objeCtiveS
Students will be expected to learn and demonstrate the ability to:

• identify theologies of mission that have functioned in different eras of Christian history, with special attention to Residential Schools in the Canadian context.
• discuss the dynamics of intercultural and interreligious encounter, conflict, and transformation
• evaluate representative mission practices in theological terms
• interpret selected biblical texts as resources for a constructive theology of mission
• articulate an informed understanding of contemporary issues in Christian mission

format: The class meets for three hours a week over eleven weeks. The primary format will be lecture presentations including discussion raised by the student’s reading of required texts.

Prerequisite: TH500 – Introduction to Christian Theology
EXPECTATIONS/EVALUATION:

1. Class attendance and preparation of all required readings before class.

2. A one-page summary of the materials read for each class. This work should engage key themes found in the readings, and reflect on why they matter to the church’s theology and practice of mission. **It is due for the class for which the material is read.**

3. A research paper that explores and critically evaluates a specific example of Christian mission practice, either historic or contemporary, with particular attention to the operative theologies of mission involved implicitly or explicitly in the example chosen. Students should consult with the instructor about their choice of subject matter before beginning the project. A bibliography of at least ten sources beyond class reading should be included. **Deadline: end of term.**

REQUIRED READING


Selected articles and book sections, TBD

Students should purchase the required texts by Robert and Sanneh through Amazon or another online source. The Report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission is available for download at no cost.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


InterVarsity Press, 2018.