

World Christians
Abilene Christian University
Fall 2010

BMIS 458.S2
3 credit hours

TR 9:30-11:00
Montevideo

How to contact me

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Please feel free to contact me if you have any difficulty with this course or with a specific assignment. Keep in mind that if you wait until the last minute, options for dealing with a problem may be limited. Coming to see me ahead of time makes possible greater flexibility.

About the course

Mission: The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The broad mission of the Department of Bible, Missions and Ministry is to provide biblical training, Christian spiritual formation, and a Christian worldview for every student in the university.

Purpose: The purpose of this class is to challenge and equip learners to become participants in God's mission, especially in a Latin American context. The foundation of this course is the conviction that the Bible is a missionary book from cover to cover, and that the God who reveals himself in the Bible is a missionary God. From the beginning God has been seeking, sending and saving. Those who want to please him must learn to imitate his "missionary" attributes. He wants all Christians to have the Great Commission written on their hearts, even those who do not go personally to serve as missionaries.

Audience: This course—offered only in the context of ACU's Study Abroad program in South America—introduces basic missions principles, and is open to students in all fields of study who have a concern for God's mission to the world. Because mission is a central concern of the church, all church members—and especially leaders—need to be well-informed about missionary work. In our increasingly multicultural world, all church members are likely to have opportunities for cross-cultural ministry, whether or not they are "full-time missionaries."

Course description: Topics to be addressed in this course include: the biblical basis of missions, the concept of culture—specifically Latin American culture, models of communication, methods of church planting and maturation, and the role of the church in mission.

Class Format: Learning activities include readings and class discussions as well as research—both academic and practical.

Required Textbooks: No textbooks are assigned, other than a Bible—which students should bring to class every day. Students will read from a variety of texts, some of which will be assigned, and some of which they will choose for themselves (see below).

Objectives

Competency <i>Learners will:</i>	Means of learning and assessment <i>Learners will:</i>
1. Develop a biblical understanding of mission as central to the nature of God and to the identity of the church.	1. Write personal reading responses and participate in class discussions.
2. Explore particular challenges and opportunities for mission in the Latin American context.	2. Research aspects of Latin American culture and contemporary religious life through reading and participant observation.
3. Distinguish between mission methods that encourage the growth of healthy churches, and methods that foster dependency.	3. Write personal reading responses and participate in class discussions.
4. Consider their own place in God's mission.	4. Become involved in the life and work of a congregation, and write a reflection paper at the end of the semester.

Requirements

I believe that my role as teacher is not so much to impart information as to facilitate learning. And learning does not occur without effort and involvement on the part of the students.

I hope that the variety of topics and assignment types will appeal to the diversity of interests and learning styles among class members. Every week, you should set aside five or six hours outside of class for completing the following learning activities.

1. **Religion in Uruguay research.** Each learner will be assigned a question to research concerning the religious background of Uruguay, and will write a response of about 750 words based on at least four sources (NOT Wikipedia). List your sources at the end of your contribution, using any standard style manual. It is not necessary to footnote every statement. Give the reference if you include a quotation, or if you cite the opinion of a particular person. Otherwise, I will assume that all your information comes from one or another of your listed sources. All the answers will be posted by Wednesday, September 8 in the same Google document. Before class on Thursday, September 9 all the students should read the entire document so that we will be able to discuss the findings.
2. **Reading responses.** Over the course of the semester learners will write 250-word responses to twenty (20) texts that deal with various aspects of ministry in a Latin American context.

For the purpose of this assignment, a text consists of a scholarly article or book chapter(s) of about 25 pages. (An article of at least ten pages may be counted as half a text.) Note that most Web pages do not qualify. From time to time the instructor will assign specific texts to be read in preparation for class discussions, and these texts count toward the total. Learners will select other texts on their own, according to their ministry interests. The texts should reflect a variety of perspectives: theology, culture and strategy. Each response should begin with a complete bibliographic citation and a brief summary of the main point of the text. The response must demonstrate that the student has read with attention and thought about the meaning of the text, but the bulk of the response should be analysis, application or interaction with the text rather than detailed summary. The instructor will create a Google document in which each student will post responses, and the instructor will check progress periodically. Students should post seven responses by September 29 and seven more by October 27, with the remainder due November 24.

3. **Participant observation.** Students will be divided into small groups and be assigned churches to visit (one Catholic, one Pentecostal). The group should visit one Sunday service and one mid-week service at both their assigned churches. They must also meet and arrange to interview one leader from each of the churches. Group members will work together to write descriptions of their visits and interviews, due October 5. See last page of the syllabus for suggestions and additional guidelines.
4. **Ministry experience.** Each learner should become involved with a protestant congregation while he or she is in Montevideo. This could be the El Chaná church, or another congregation of the student's choosing. Over the course of the semester the learner should spend at least five hours participating in some ministry of the church. Note that these ministry hours should NOT be the only involvement. The student should also attend services frequently and try to get to know members. The ministry hours may also be counted toward the service requirement of Latin American Studies (INTS 240). The student should send an email to the instructor by September 24 indicating how he or she intends to fulfill this requirement.
5. **Final project.** Learners will write a 2000-word essay to be submitted by November 30, including reflection on the personal ministry experience, evaluation of the congregation with which they were involved based on principles presented in the class, and suggestions about possible future ministry. They will share their observations during the time scheduled for the final exam for this class.

Grade

Teachers do not **give** grades; they record what the student has accomplished.

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Possible points</i>	<i>Letter grades are determined according to the following scale:</i>	
Religion research	100	630-700 points (90%)	A
Reading responses	200	560-269 (80%)	B
Participant observation	100	490-559 (70%)	C
Ministry experience	100	420-489 (60%)	D
Final project	<u>200</u>	Below 420	F
Total	700		

Policies

Academic Integrity: Cheating (including plagiarism) on any exam or assignment in this course will result in a grade of 0 (zero) on the assignment. See ACU's Academic Integrity Policy at <http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>.

Golden Rule: We are a learning community. Do not engage in any behavior that will keep you—or the people around you—from learning.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. If you miss class for any reason you may be assigned extra work to make up for the missed learning opportunity.

Summary of Key Dates

Wednesday, September 8	Religion in Uruguay research due
Tuesday, September 21	No class: Buenos Aires trip
Friday, September 24	Email proposal for personal ministry
Wednesday, September 29	Seven reading responses due
Tuesday, October 5	Group report on participant observation due
Tuesday, October 19	No class: Brazil trip
November 9, 11	No class: Free travel week
Wednesday, October 27	Seven more reading responses due (14 in all)
Wednesday, November 24	Remaining reading responses due (20 in all)
Tuesday, November 30	Final project due

Some assigned readings—there will be more later on.

By Wednesday, September 15

Ralph D. Winter, "The Kingdom Strikes Back: Ten Epochs of Redemptive History," and "Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions: Modern Missions." Both articles can be found in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd edition, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1999. You can read them online at:

http://www.uscwm.org/index.php/resources/detail_page/the_kingdom_strikes_back_ten_epochs_of_redemptive_history/

http://www.uscwm.org/index.php/resources/detail_page/four_men_three_eras_two_transitions_modern_missions/

Each counts as half an article toward your total of 20.

By Wednesday, October 13

Eugene Nida, *Understanding Latin Americans*, pages 3-79 (counts as 3 articles) plus one article that you find that deals with one of Nida's major themes.

By Wednesday, November 17

David Livermore, *Serving with Eyes Wide Open*, pages 43-98 (counts as 2 articles).

By Wednesday, November 24

David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, pages 1-60 (counts as 2 articles).

Participant Observation Report Guidelines

Each group will submit one paper, to which all members must contribute.

Part 1: Description of church services. For each church ...

- a. Brief description of what happened. If the two services were similar you can write a basic description and then note details that were different. Or you can describe one service in some detail, and then note how the other service differed (see next point).
- b. Compare and contrast the two services, both in terms of content and other factors, including setting, tone or purpose of the service.
- c. Observations about the people: demographics, manner of participation.
- d. This part of the paper should be 300-500 words (for each church).
- e. In addition, each group member should contribute one paragraph of personal reaction/reflection. What impact did the services have on you? How did you feel?

Part 2: Summary of the interview of a church leader.

- a. Brief description of the setting of the interview: how you met the leader and arranged the interview, where you met, etc.
- b. Synopsis of what you learned from the interview, including something about the leader and about the congregation. See suggested questions below.
- c. Suggested length: 200-400 words for each interview.

Part 3: Observations and reflections.

- a. Reflect on and compare the two churches that you observed. Possible questions: What ideas do your experiences suggest in terms of ministry in a Latin American context? What insights do you have into Uruguayan culture, the culture of Uruguayan churches, and the relation between the two? What questions were raised?
- b. General observations about the experience. What did you learn by going through this process? What were some of the challenges? What do you wish you could have done differently?

Suggested questions for the church leader interview—ideas to get you started

Ask about the leader's personal involvement. For example:

- How did you come to be part of this church?
- How long have you been associated with this congregation?
- What is your present position of leadership, and how long have you been doing it?
- What motivated you to become involved in this way?
- What are some of the rewards and challenges of your ministry?

Ask about the congregation. For example:

- How long has this congregation been here?
- What are some of the things that make this congregation unique?
- Who are the people that this congregation serves? Or what impact does the church have on the city/neighborhood?
- What are some of the challenges that the church faces?
- What difference does being in Uruguay make? How is the work of the church different here than it would be in another country, say Argentina or Brazil?
- What do you think will be different about this church five years from now?