

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Semester, Year	FALL, 2025
Course Title	GOSPEL, CHURCH AND CULTURE: MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD
Course Code	MISS 0782 1P
Date	From September 8, 2025 to December 1, 2025 Every Mondays
Time	From 11:15 AM to 2:05 PM
Delivery Format	IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The classes will be IN-PERSON on Mondays from 11:15 am to 2:05 pm.
Instructor	RYAN SEOW, PhD Email: ryan.seow@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Preparing missional leaders requires careful examination of the ideologies and cultural milieu of contemporary society. Examines the main features of postmodern culture, the meaning of faithfulness to the gospel, the good news of God’s salvation and the nature and mission of the church. The church’s witness and service to the world is studied not as one of the functions of the church but as its essential nature. Missional leadership takes seriously the calling of all God’s people to minister in every sphere of life as faithful witnesses to the gospel of salvation.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply an in-depth biblical-theological interpretation of the gospel.

2. Theologically examine the relationship between the gospel, the kingdom of God and the church.
3. Articulate the nature of the people of God as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God.
4. Analyze how culture shapes our understanding of the gospel, church, and ministry.
5. Develop categories and concepts for socio-cultural analysis of ministry and vocational contexts.
6. Identify major dynamics of Canadian culture, including an exploration of the meaning and implications of late/post-modernity for the church's witness and service.
7. Evaluate how the gospel and church can address a multiethnic, pluralistic culture.
8. Integrate theological insights with socio-cultural analysis in developing a theology to inform the church's response to its local context.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Newbigin, Lesslie. [*Foolishness to the Greeks*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Tizon, Al. [*Whole and Reconciled*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.

Van Gelder, Craig. [*The Essence of the Church*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000.

Selected articles posted on the course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca or accessed through the internet.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972. (ISBN 0-6712-1209-5)

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All assignments require careful completion of the readings in conjunction with consideration of their relationship to the ideas presented in the lectures. It is expected that students will complete the assigned reading **prior** to the scheduled lecture for the week.

Detailed information for each assignment including rubrics will be posted on the course resource page.

1. Modernity Paper: Due on Friday, October 24, 2025; 25% of final grade.

This is a 1250-word paper on the culture of modernity and its impact on the church. Papers will respond to the question, “What are the main features of modernity, and how do they impact the life and ministry of the church in your context?” Papers should demonstrate both an accurate and well-rounded understanding of the main features of modernity, and reflect critically on how these relate to the church’s ministry in one’s context.

2. Online Discussion Forums: Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10; 20% of final grade.

Online discussions are opportunities to critically reflect on the lectures and readings, share ideas with your peers, and benefit from the ideas presented by your colleagues. The aim is to make this a collaborative learning experience that functions as a prototype of how the church as the body of Christ is intended to operate.

NOTE: Posting to forums on time is crucial for facilitating discussion and giving your peers enough time to read and respond to your work. Posts submitted late will only be eligible for half credit (i.e. “D” grade).

3. Class Group Work Participation: Dates vary; 10% of final grade.

A portion of class time will be dedicated to work in groups. Group work provides an opportunity to engage the course material critically in collaboration with your colleagues. The purpose is to allow you to experience how our community’s cross-cultural and denominational backgrounds can help to broaden your perspective on areas where the gospel needs to challenge us, the church, and the society we live in. Credit will be assigned based on participation in these activities.

4. Final Integration Paper: Due on Friday, December 5, 2025; 45% of final grade.

This is a 3000-word final paper that integrates central ideas from the readings and lectures with your own ministry context. Papers should respond to the question, “What is the role of the church in communicating the gospel faithfully in postmodern culture, within your context?”

This paper is an opportunity to bring together the major themes in the course with your own understanding of how the church can communicate the gospel. Papers should integrate your proposed approach to ministry, reflection on your particular context and experiences, and the course material including all assigned readings.

Please refer to the course resource page for detailed information and the rubric for each assignment.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
1. Modernity Paper	Oct 24	25%
2. Online Discussion Forums	Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	20%
3. Class Group Work Participation	Various	10%
4. Final Integration Paper	Dec 5	45%
Total Grade		100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Assigned readings for each week are to be completed **before** class.

Week 1: *Introduction: What is Culture?*

Week 2: *The Culture of the Early Church*
The Christendom Era

Readings: Newbigin, [Foolishness to the Greeks](#), Chapters 1&2

Week 3: *Modernity I*

Readings: Newbigin, [Foolishness to the Greeks](#), Chapters 3&4; Selected Articles

Week 4: *Modernity II*

Readings: Newbigin, [Foolishness to the Greeks](#), Chapters 5&6; Selected Articles

Week 5: *Postmodernity I*

Readings: Selected Articles

OCTOBER 13 THANKSGIVING MONDAY (NO CLASS)

Week 6: *Postmodernity II*

Readings: Tizon, [Whole and Reconciled](#), Introduction & Chapters 1-3

Week 7: *The Gospel and the Kingdom of God*

Readings: Tizon, [Whole and Reconciled](#), Chapters 4-5

Week 8: *The Nature of the Church*

Readings: Van Gelder, [*The Essence of the Church*](#), Chapters 1-4

Week 9: *The Ministry of the Church*

Readings: Van Gelder, [*The Essence of the Church*](#), Chapters 5-7

Week 10: *Mission and the Church*

Readings Tizon, [*Whole and Reconciled*](#), Chapters 6-8

Week 11: *Reconciliation and Mission*

Readings: Tizon, [*Whole and Reconciled*](#), Chapters 9-11 & Conclusion

Week 12: *Vocation and Ministry in Daily Life*

Communicating the Gospel in the Contemporary Canadian Context

Readings: Selected Articles

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Michael. *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium*. Toronto, ON: Penguin, 1998.

Adeney, Frances S. *Women and Christian Mission: Ways of Knowing and Doing Theology*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015.

Bauckham, Richard. *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

Bauman, Zygmunt. [*Liquid Modernity*](#). Cambridge: Polity, 2000.

Bevans, Stephen B. *Community of Missionary Disciples: The Continuing Creation of the Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2024.

_____. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

Bevans, Stephen B., and Roger P. Schroeder. *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011.

Bibby, Reginald. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Stoddart, 2002.

Bolger, Ryan K. *The Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

*Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.

*Branson, Mark Lau, and Alan J. Roxburgh. *Leadership, God's Agency, and Disruptions: Confronting Modernity's Wager*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021.

Branson, Mark Lau, and Juan F. Martínez. *Churches, Cultures, and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.

Chilcote, Paul Wesley, and Lacey C. Warner. *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Clapp, Rodney. [*A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*](#). Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996.

Cormode, Scott. *The Innovative Church: How Leaders and Their Congregations Can Adapt in an Ever-Changing World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

Goheen, Michael W. *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Goheen, Michael W., and Timothy M. Sheridan. *Becoming a Missionary Church: Lesslie Newbigin and Contemporary Church Movements*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.

Grenz, Stanley J. [*A Primer on Postmodernism*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Guder, Darrell L. *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.

_____. *Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Harvey, Barry. [*Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World*](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Heath, Joseph. *The Efficient Society: Why Canada is as Close to Utopia as it Goes*. Toronto, ON: Penguin, 2001.

Hiebert, Paul G. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.

Hunsberger, George R. *The Story That Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Hunsberger, George R., and Craig van Gelder, eds. *Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Iyer, Pico. *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home*. Toronto, ON: Random House, 2000.

*Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kraemer, Hendrik. *A Theology of the Laity*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. [Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada](#). New York, NY: Routledge, 1990.

Lyon, David. [Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Postmodern Times](#). Oxford, UK: Polity, 2000.

Myers, Bryant L. *Engaging Globalization: The Poor, Christian Mission, and Our Hyperconnected World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.

Nelson, Gary V. *Borderland Churches: A Congregation's Introduction to Missional Living*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2008.

Newbigin, Lesslie. [The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission](#). Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

* _____. [The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York, NY: Harper, 1951.

Okesson, Gregg. *A Public Missiology: How Local Churches Witness to a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020.

Pickard, Stephen K. [Liberating Evangelism: Gospel Theology and the Dynamics of Communication](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Posterski, Don, and Gary Nelson. [Future Faith Churches: Reconnecting with the Power of the Gospel for the 21st Century](#). Kelowna, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1997.

Roxburgh, Alan J. *Joining God in the Great Unraveling: Where We Are and What I've Learned*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021.

_____. *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World: The New Shape of the Church in Our Time*. New York: Morehouse, 2015.

Sampson, Philip, Vinay Samuel, and Chris Sugden, eds. [*Faith and Modernity*](#). Oxford, UK: Regnum, 1994.

Samuel, Vinay, and Chris Sugden, eds. *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*. Oxford, UK: Regnum, 1999.

Sanneh, Lamin O. [*Religion and the Variety of Culture*](#). Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996.

Sanneh, Lamin O. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009.

Sedmak, Clemens. *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.

Sider, Ronald J. *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.

Smith, C. Christopher, and John Pattison. *Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014.

Stassen, Glen, D.M. Yeager, and John Howard Yoder. *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996.

Sunquist, Scott W., and Amos Yong, eds. *The Gospel and Pluralism Today: Reassessing Lesslie Newbigin in the 21st Century*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.

Van Gelder, Craig, ed. [*Confident Witness-Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Van Gelder, Craig, and Dwight J. Zscheile. *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.

* _____. *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011.

Walls, Andrew F. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

*Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.

Zscheile, Dwight J. *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.

****An asterisk marks books of major importance for the topic.***

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from “A+” to “A-,” from “B” to “C+”). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete (“I”) may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of “F” will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports courses with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).