



IN 782: Gospel in Context

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary | August 2025

3 Credits, letter grade only

Prerequisite: IN 520: God's Redemptive Mission

Instructors: Dr. Mary Emily Duba and Rev. Dr. Beth McCaw

Course Description

Wherever one does ministry, the character of the context shapes the forms of evangelism and mission that are viable, appropriate, and faithful. This course explores the work of contextualization—how the gospel is proclaimed and embodied contextually. This course includes an **immersion trip, August 8-11**, as well as classroom sessions to help students develop initial skills for exegeting contexts for Christian ministry. Building on a theological foundation, it considers how context is reflected in the forms of ministry and witness observed.

A \$200 course fee will cover meals and travel during the immersion and will be billed to students by the student accounts office. You return to your own lodging each evening through the weekend.

Course Learning Objectives

By participating fully in this class, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the universal promise of the gospel and its necessary particularity in cultural and communal embodiments.
2. Explain the theological basis for and practical importance of attention to context in Christian mission and evangelism.
3. Experiment with practices and postures for faithful Christian witness including humility, attention, curiosity, initiative, and collaboration.
4. Interpret the ways in which congregations live their understanding of the gospel in word and deed.
5. Design a plan for exegeting a context for Christian mission.

Required Reading

Scott Hagley, *Eat What is Set Before You: A Missiology of the Congregation* (Skyforest, CA: Urban Loft Publishers, 2019). ISBN: 978-1949625004

Choose one:

Eric Jacobsen, *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003). ISBN: 978-1587430572

Brad Roth, *God's Country: Faith, Hope and the Future of the Rural Church* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2017). ISBN: 978-1513801612

Additional selected readings posted to Moodle

Course Requirements

1. **Engaged Participation:** Conscientious attendance and participation in class sessions; vigorous attention, humility, curiosity, initiative, and collaboration during the immersion; and robust engagement with the assigned material.
2. **Preload: Hagley's Proposal paper**
See Moodle for assignment description.
3. **Preload: Jacobsen/Roth Contextual Theologies Paper**
See Moodle for assignment description.
4. **Context Journal:** Keep a daily written journal during the immersion trip for use in writing the final paper which contains: observations of the communities and sites you visit, notes on the way locals describe their community, descriptions of the forms of Christian community and ministry happening, summaries of how Christians give expression to their faith in that place, and indications of the ministry's relation to its broader community. In addition, reflect on: What did I experience emotionally and spiritually today? Where did I see God? This journal will not be submitted as such but will enrich group conversations and should inform the writing of your Gospel in Context Paper. A small, pocket-size journal for taking notes on site is recommended.
5. **Post-load: Gospel in Context Paper**
See Moodle for assignment description.

Assignment Grade Weights

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| Hagley Paper | 20% |
| Jacobsen or Roth Paper | 20% |
| Engaged Participation | 25% |
| Gospel in Context Paper | 35% |