

## **4MS621 URBAN MINISTRY AND CHURCH PLANTING**

Spring 2011

Professor: S. H. Larsen, D.Min., Ph.D.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*2 hours.* Develops a foundation for biblical, theological, and sociological framework for understanding urban ministry and church planting, together with practical skills designed incarnationally to engage actual urban settings. The course will meet for eight weekly three-period sessions, with two breaks during the semester to permit students to participate in two Team projects, reporting on them at the following class session. The culminating objective of the course is for students to design a strategy for developing an urban ministry plan for their own specific ministry context.

### **PROFESSOR OF RECORD:**

Sam Larsen is Professor of Missions Emeritus at Reformed Theological Seminary, having taught at RTS since 1998. He has had prior firsthand church-planting experience in urban contexts on three continents under World Presbyterian Missions and Mission to the World, and is also a retired Navy Chaplain, with a wide variety of ministry experiences in many global cities. His special areas of interest include cross-cultural discipleship and leadership development, ethnographic research tools, and globalization.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Course participants will demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Develop a grasp of the “big picture” of ministry in a global and increasingly urban ministry context, with an understanding of issues of globalization, contextualization, social change, modernity and postmodernity, semiotics, intergenerational dynamics, and issues of negotiated identity, worldview transformation, networks and mazes, as well as how such dynamics profoundly influence the practice of urban ministry. (Class lectures and readings)
2. Acquire an understanding of the city, and of how multi-family dwellings constitute a major unreached people group in most cities in the U.S. and around the world; acquire experience and basic skills for exploring, mapping, planning, incarnationally engaging, and assuring ministry continuity for a selected urban neighborhood, including key elements to developing a contextualized church planting strategy for the selected area. (Team projects)
3. Design a strategy for developing an urban ministry plan or plan for church-planting for the student’s specific ministry context (or for an alternative ministry setting, if approved beforehand by the instructor). (Course paper)

**REQUIRED READING:** (approximately 1000 pages total)

Conn, Harvey M., Manuel Ortiz, and Susan Baker, eds. 2002. *The urban face of mission: Ministering the gospel in a diverse and changing world*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing. (384 pp)

Keller, Timothy, and Allen Thompson. 2002. *Church planter manual*. New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church. (265 pp)

Stetzer, Ed. 2006. *Planting missional churches: Planting a church that's biblically sound and reaching people in culture*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing. (372 pp)

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

Hirsch, Alan. 2006. *The forgotten ways: Reactivating the missional church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press. (295 pp)

Lee, Jennifer. 2002. *Civility in the city: Blacks, Jews, and Koreans in urban America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (270 pp)

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:**

Students will complete the required readings and will submit a two-page (double-spaced, typed) interactive reflection paper on one of the required textbooks. (10%)

Students will be regular and prompt in class attendance and will participate in class discussions, integrating their own and others' experiences with assigned course readings, team projects, and class lectures. (20%)

Students will participate in two team projects outside of class. Team assignments will be made on the first day of class. Teams will report on their projects in the class session following the scheduled team projects. (20%)

Students will design a strategy for developing an urban ministry plan or plan for urban church planting for the student's specific ministry context (or for an alternative ministry setting, if approved beforehand by the instructor), and submit an 8-10 page course paper summarizing the need being addressed, the strategy and rationale, the resources (personnel, facilities, networks, funding, etc.) required, a projected timeline and milestones, supervisory support, and assessment criteria. A handout will be provided by the instructor on the first day of class spelling out the specific structure and contents of the course paper. (50%)

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Dr. Larsen is available outside of class by appointment and by e-mail ([slarsen@rts.edu](mailto:slarsen@rts.edu)).