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MB 780 Cross-Cultural Christian Discipling

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Cross-Cultural Christian Discipling

MB 780 January 9-20 (except for the second Monday, January 16, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), 2006 8:00-12:30 (3 hrs. credit). Room TBA. W. Jay Moon, Instructor. Office Hours: 3:00 – 4:00 PM (Tuesday – Friday) Email: Jay_Moon@asburyseminary.edu.

Catalogue Description: A study of the role of ritual process in the shaping of believers. Rites and ceremonies, especially initiatory rites, from a variety of religious traditions provide both models of the role of ritual in the formation and nurture of persons and models for discipling Christian converts, especially those from traditional religious backgrounds. Students will construct their own structures for the discipling task based upon the insights and models provided by the course.

Human Religion and the Discipling Task

The religious dimension of a culture provides its people with conceptions of reality and the means for maintaining the force and relevance of those conceptions. Features of a culture’s repertoire such as story, scripture, rites of passage, pilgrimages, worship traditions, social organizations, and other symbolic activities shape the worldview of its people. The cross-cultural study of religion examines the religious dimension of culture with a view to understanding its nature and function. The course assumes that religiousness is a universal aspect of human identity. It also assumes the tools and results of religious studies offer much to Christian discipling. Based on these assumptions, the course explores the relevance of some of the non-verbal forms typical of human religion for the process of discipling. Discipling here means forming persons as individuals and members of communities of faith into the image of God’s son. The course deals largely, but not exclusively, with non-verbal forms of discipling.

Goals:

1. The student will be able to represent accurately in responses to readings the following concepts:
   1.1 the function of religion in culture according to Zahniser (1997).
   1.2 an understanding of various means used to disciple people in various global contexts.
   1.3 the meaning of the ritual process as presented by Victor Turner (1971), including the concepts “rites of passage,” “liminality,” and “communitas.”
   1.4 dimensions of Mathias Zahniser’s (1997) case for the use of non-verbal means in Christian formation and disciple making such as traditional religious societies, modern theists, divine intimacy and ultimacy, cross-cultural discipling, split-level Christianity, the excluded middle, bonding to meaning, and syncretism.
1.5 A holistic approach to discipling that integrates various aspects of life such as physical/spiritual, oral/written, sensory/ideological, etc.

2. Students will be able to analyze a phenomenon of their own choosing according to one or more of these concepts.

3. Students will gain insight into the relation of discipling with symbols and rituals to syncretism and community development.

4. Students will gain confidence in their ability to apply this analysis to the task of discipling.

Note: The instructor hopes students will feel free to deal with the materials of the course critically. The analysis and application can be thought of in dialectical terms: the material examined in the seminar may be used to stimulate a more effective discipling process.

Common Readings:
The books can be purchased at the bookstore. The articles (marked *) can be found in the Asbury on-line database by logging onto: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommens/index.shtml

Use your student number to get access. Then, click on “ATLA Religion,” and search using the Author’s last name and the Title of the article (the first 3 words of the title are sufficient). Click on “View full text in GIF format” in order to view the full text article.

*Courson, Jim

Eliade, Mircea [Recommended reading but not required]

*Finn, Thomas M.

Gire, Ken

Padilla, C. Rene
   http://www.lausanne.org/lcwe/assets/LOP33_IG4.pdf

*Roach, Elizabeth M.

Turner, Victor

Zahniser, A. H. Mathias

4-MAT Reflections
You will prepare one 4-MAT Reflection for each assigned reading even when more than one chapter or more than one author is assigned. See the attached guidelines for preparing these reflections. With the exception of the first day, when your 4-MAT will be due by 5:00 p.m., your 4-MAT Reflection will be due at the beginning of the class session for which the readings you are reflecting on are assigned. This syllabus indicates in the schedule of class periods when readings are assigned to be discussed. Each of these reflection papers are worth 7% of your final grade for a total of 42%.

Class Presentation
Each student (or team) will be responsible for presenting a thirty-minute portion of a discipling procedure or event. This event or process will be the subject of the research paper identified in the following paragraph. Ideally, presentations will involve the class in acting out an important part of the discipling procedure.

A Research Paper
Each student or team of students will produce a standard research paper of between 20 and 25 pages, including notes and bibliography. The paper will present a proposal for a discipling event or process making use of a model growing out of the seminar. Careful attention will be given in the evaluation to form, following the standards set in Slade, 11th. ed. (1999) or any later edition of Slade. Structure will also be important with attention given to thesis statement, use of sources, and the organization of the argument. Papers will be due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 25, 2006. The evaluation of the in-class presentation will be averaged with the evaluation of the final paper to equal 50% of the final grade. In the case of team presentations, all members of the team will receive the grade assigned to the paper and the presentation.

Class Participation
In order to make the most of the learning experience, it is important for each student to attend and participate in the class activities. This is worth 8% of the final grade.

Evaluation Summary
Grades for the course will be based on the following:

  8% Class Participation
  42% written responses to the reading assignments
50% oral report in class and the research paper.

Late assignments will result in a grade reduction and little or no feedback from the instructor.

Class Schedule by Days

Classes meet daily from January 9 through 20 from 8:00-12:30, except for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 16. The assignments have been made under the assumption that students are not taking other classes, engaged in independent studies, or working full time during the time of this class. All assignments, unless otherwise indicated, are to be completed before the date on which they are listed in this syllabus. These represent the theoretical meat of the course.

1. Introduction to Discipling with Symbols and Ceremonies
   Monday 9: Introduction to the course: modern theists and traditional religious people. Theological background: The ultimacy and intimacy of God. A working definition of religion applicable to the process of Christian discipling. Read Zahniser 1997, chapters 1-5 and respond using a 4-MAT and turn in by 5:00 p.m. today to my email on First Class.

2. The Nature and Function of Symbols
   Tuesday 10: Symbols as models of and models for Christian formation. Turner 1995, chapters 1 and 2; Zahniser 1997, chapter 6. Have a 4-MAT on this reading ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session today.

3. The Rite of Passage Ceremony: The Bonding Potential of Liminality
   Wednesday 11: The nature and function of a rite of passage. Discipling with the rite-of-passage structure. Turner 1995, chapters 3-5; Zahniser 1997, chapters 7 and 8; Finn 1989; Courson 1998. Have a 4-MAT on this reading ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session today. I suggest you base your 4-MAT on Turner and refer to Zahniser, Finn, and Courson as examples of concepts by Turner.

4. The Discipling Potential of Periodic Festivals and Pilgrimage
   Thursday 12: The application of the rite of passage structure to space and time. Turner 1995, chapter 5; Roach 1988; Zahniser 1997, chapters 9 and 10. Have a 4-MAT on this reading ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session today. Again, base your 4-MAT on Turner and use Zahniser and Roach as examples of Turner’s concepts.

5. A Theology of Discipling with Symbol and Ceremony
   Friday 13: The problem and potential of syncretism. A Trinitarian approach to holistic discipling. Zahniser 1997, chapters 11, 12, and Conclusion; Padilla 2005. Have a 4-MAT on this reading ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session today. I suggest you base your
4-MAT on Zahniser, referring to a summary of Padilla as it is relevant to the discussion.

6. **Monday 16: Classes will not meet. This is to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., martyr for the liberation of his people.** We make up for these four missed hours in various ways.

7. **Windows of the Soul**

   **Tuesday 17:** Exploring various ways that God’s search for us and our search for God intersect. The impact of orality vs. literacy, as applied to learning preferences. Read Gire (entire book). Have a 4-MAT on this reading ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session today.

8. **Student presentations.**

   **Wednesday-Friday January 18-20:** Each student, or student team, will present a cross-cultural discipling method and model to the class. Examples of religious structures relevant to cross-cultural discipling include Qur’an Recitation (Islam), The Village as Microcosm and Macrocosm (the Dogon of W. Africa), Mandala (Buddhist meditative diagram), Messianic Synagogue (Contextualized discipling), and Ashram (Hindu retreats).

9. Bibliography: **The bibliography in Zahniser (1997:221-230) will serve as a bibliography for the course.**

**References Cited**

Grunlan, Stephen A., and Marvin K. Mayers


Hiebert, Paul G.


Kraft, Charles H.


McCurdy, David W., James P. Spradley, and Dianna J. Shandy

Storti, Craig

Woodley, Randy
4-MAT Reflection Papers

Note: If you cannot bring yourself to read instructions, at least read sections (a) and (c) below. They are the sections people generally get wrong. These instructions are adapted from Dr. Donald Joy and Dr. Mathias Zahniser

A 4-MAT reflection, named for Bernice McCarthy's 4-MAT system (McCarthy 1987), consists of two single-spaced typed 8 1/2 x 11 pages. You will use 12 point font and the margins will be 1 inch all around. You can print the pages front and back if you wish. The first page must contain one heading, while the second page contains three. When laid out next to each other they will look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Name</th>
<th>Concrete Stories/ Memories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Summary</td>
<td>Evoked by reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection Expressed in Questions

Action: What I Must Do with what I learned?

1st Page:
Abstract Summary
Here are some guidelines to help you get a better grasp of the four elements in the 4-MAT system:

(a) **ABSTRACT: Reader’s Digest Summary.** Simply summarize the content of the assigned reading in your own words. Avoid just indicating the topics. There should be NO personal commentary or attempt to evaluate the content of the materials. Just summarize what the author or authors say. Include as many of the key concepts and ideas as you can. Strive to be both comprehensive and intensive. Your summary should be stylistically correct, coherent and clear. The abstract should be one single-spaced page in length. Sorry, no type fonts below number 12 please! Some assignments include more than one chapter and some more than one author. Summarize the whole reading assignment. The readings are all related, so you can integrate the readings into one summary on page one. By this I mean that some readings may illustrate the material in other readings or modify it in some way.

Remember that meaning making requires first that you transform the reading materials into your OWN words. Effective "note taking" is more than capturing another person's words; it requires transforming a communication into your own language and symbols. Use explicit and visible QUOTE marks to identify the author's words. All other written material not clearly cited should be your own constructions and abstracted summaries of what you read.

(b) **CONCRETE STORIES and MEMORIES EVOKED BY READING: Get Vulnerable!** Describe one or two personal experiences which reading this material reminded you of. Here is your chance to be a storyteller. Tell it here in “first person,” describing action, quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. Be as specific and concrete as you can, including who, what, when, where details. Make sure, however, that your personal anecdotes are clearly grounded in the concepts of the reading assignment. The “Concrete” section should not exceed half a page.

If you can connect what you are reading and hearing with what you have previously lived or observed, you will be profoundly changed by the class. If you cannot connect the semester with past and present personal realities, you will never be able to teach or use what you are learning with any conviction and effectiveness.

(c) **REFLECTION EXPRESSED IN QUESTIONS: What questions popped up** as you read this material? Keep a rough note sheet at hand as you read so you can write them down. Then simply list three or four of them. Your questions may be
critical or grounded in spontaneous curiosity or naive yearning for solutions. Make sure, however, they relate directly to the MATERIAL CONTENT of the reading materials NOT to the experience(s) you have just described in b. This section should take up about one fourth to a third of a page.

(d) ACTION: WHAT I MUST DO WITH WHAT I LEARNED. So What Are You Going to Do about it? All ministry related learning MUST lead to acts of ministry—whether through transformation of your inner person or your acquiring of useful knowledge or skills. Here describe what you simply must DO if you keep faith with what you have now discovered as a result of reading this material. Ideally, your actions will comply with the acronym SMART. They will be **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and achievable within a given Time frame**. For example, “For the next month during my quiet time, I will meditate on a symbol called forth by my Bible reading.” Do not report reflective responses like “I need to learn or read more about Christian symbols.” This section should comprise one fourth to one third of a page.

Application reflections.

Although some of the readings originate from social science and religious studies, each reading assignment has been selected with the conviction that the material relates to Christian ministry in any cultural context. Part of your task is to apply the reading material to the life of the church and the practice of Christian ministry in your anticipated or actual setting. For this reason, it is important that the reflections on the second page of your 4-MAT INTEGRATE with what you have already experienced in ministry. For example, you may have given leadership in youth retreats without realizing they have the essential structure of a rite of passage or pilgrimage. Taking this important integrative function of your reflections seriously will prevent you from simply making "off the cuff" responses. I have specified the length of these application reflections partly to nudge you in the direction of selecting the most essential dimensions of the reading material. You may not include any commentary or evaluation on page one of your 4-MAT Reflection because one of the most basic tasks of ministry involves accurate discernment of what others are saying. Always understand the Other before reflecting and responding. Page one will therefore contain only a summary in your own words of what the authors of the reading material have written.

McCarthy, Bernice