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MB 770 The Indigenous Church

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MB 770 The Indigenous Church

Fall 2006

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00:-4:00, or by appointment

Course Description:

This is an **advanced** course for students with a solid foundation in missiological anthropology. The format will therefore reflect the advanced standing of the students by giving you a larger share of the responsibility for the course. There will be considerable discussion of material being read for which you must always come well prepared, some lecturing, some films, and a significant amount of time given to student presentations of research papers. The focus of the course is on the relationship between Christianity and culture. We will explore how this can engender indigenous churches, or result in syncretism or “Split-Level” Christianity in both Western and non-Western cultures around the world.

Objectives:

1. To expand your understanding of the relationship between Christianity and culture from an anthropological perspective.
2. To gain a greater appreciation of the complexity and diversity of humankind as social and cultural beings.
3. To gain a greater appreciation for, and understanding of, your own cultural beliefs (Christian and other) and practices.
4. To further develop critical thinking, analytical writing, oral communication, and cooperative learning skills.

Required Texts:

David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*
Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ethnic Identity and Christianity*
Lamin Sanneh (1989) *Translating the Message*
Robert Schreiter (1985) *Constructing Local Theologies*

Basis of Student Evaluation:

Attendance/Participation	25%
Activities	20%
Presentation	15%
Ethnographic project	10%
Research Paper (including activities)	30%

Assignment of final grades:

100-90 = A/- 89-80 = B+/- 79-70 = C+/- 69-60 = D+/- 59-0 = F

Grade meaning:

Following the guidelines set out in the Asbury Seminary catalog, I define the grades in the following manner:

A	Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
A-, B+	Very good work. Very strong, significant achievement of course objectives.
B	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives.
B-, C+	Above acceptable work.
C	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives.
C-, D+	Below acceptable work.
D	Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives.
D-, F	Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Incomplete Work (from the Asbury Catalog):

The official end of each term is 4:00 p.m. on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.

If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND ASSIGNMENTS

My basic teaching philosophy is that greater understanding takes place through **active** rather than passive learning. Therefore, lecturing will be kept to a minimum in this course, while **active participation** will be expected and rewarded (see the [criteria](#) used to evaluate your participation). Your participation will be utilized in the following ways:

1) **Regular participation in class discussions.** Each student will be expected to come to class ready to discuss the readings/topic of the day. In order to participate in this way you must a) come to class, b) have read and done the assignment(s) for the materials assigned for that class session, c) think, and d) speak!! I expect *all* students to come to class so prepared. Attendance and participation account for **25% of your grade**. See below for [discussion guidelines](#) and how I will [evaluate](#) your participation.

2) Discussing the [activities](#) described in the syllabus that are related to the readings. These activities are meant to help you think about and apply the various concepts we'll be

covering in class. **All activities must be submitted to me electronically by 5:00 p.m. on the Sunday before the class session in which they will be discussed.** Since these are meant to facilitate discussion for that particular session, and I need time to read them over in preparation for class, **no late activities will be accepted**, unless you have a legitimate excuse (e.g., illness, family emergency) and I am notified beforehand. The activities account for **20% of your grade**. See [below](#) for the criteria used to evaluate your activities.

3) Conducting and analyzing a short ethnographic project among a local church that primarily serves a non-Anglo population. Through this project you will get a better understanding of how members and leaders have established an indigenous church in the American cultural setting.

4) Presenting your case study research to the rest of the class. Your analysis of the case study will deal with issues related to the indigenization of the church in a particular cultural context. You must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the course material in your analysis. You will be given **one hour** for your presentation and subsequent class discussion. Be creative!

My second basic teaching philosophy (which is actually a subcategory under the first) is that **YOU are responsible for what you learn in this course**. MY responsibility is to facilitate that learning (thus the structure of the course, selection of reading materials, etc.). You can get as much or as little out of the course as you wish (of course, you will be evaluated accordingly). I see the class as a place where we are all co-learners (yes, me too!), and, therefore, dependent upon one another. **Your active participation is essential** to the proper functioning of the class!

Exams:

There will be no exams in this course. Instead, you will be evaluated on how well you have learned the materials through the activities you submit, class participation, and through your presentation/paper. The final paper should be between 20-25 pages, double-spaced. Please put your name and address in the upper right hand corner. See [below](#) for more information regarding assignments related to the research paper and how the paper will be [evaluated](#).

Plagiarism and Other Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism, defined in the Faculty Handbook (p. 83) as “the presenting of another’s ideas or writings as one’s own”, and cheating of any form are serious offenses and will result in an F for the assignment or the course.

RESEARCH PAPER

In addition to the materials covered in class, you will be conducting research throughout the semester on a particular case related to issues of contextualization, translation, and the indigenization of the church. There are several activities related to this task that you will submit on specified dates. The activities are as follows:

- 1) Research proposal (due Sept. 19).

- a. This should include the site you've selected, reasons why you chose this site, and a brief statement on the social/cultural context of the site. You should also conduct a quick review of our library resources to make sure there is enough information available for you to adequately research the site.
- 2) Bibliography (due Oct. 3).
 - a. You should list the bibliographic sources that seem the most relevant for your research. You may need to use library loan to obtain some of these sources.
- 3) Annotated bibliography (due Oct. 31).
 - a. Writing up a brief summary of each book/article you've used for your research.
- 4) Outline (due Nov. 14).
 - a. You will submit an outline of your research paper. This will help you think through the structure of your analysis.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING YOUR RESEARCH PAPER

1. Mechanics:
 - The paper is free of typos.
 - The paper contains no formatting errors (e.g., margins, spacing).
 - The paper has met the specifics for length and pages are numbered.
2. Execution:
 - The introduction lets the reader know where the paper is going by clearly stating a thesis and the main points to be covered.
 - The body has well-developed paragraphs that relate back to the thesis.
 - The body stays "on track" and holds the reader's attention.
 - The conclusion pulls the essay together by drawing reasonable and well-stated conclusions based on the evidence presented in the essay.
3. Discretion:
 - Statements made by the author are supported by good evidence and argumentation.
 - Sources of information are cited in the text.
 - There are adequate sources consulted to do justice to the subject matter.
4. Analysis:
 - The paper demonstrates significant insight into the collection and analysis of data.
 - There is a good balance between description and analysis.
 - There is enough information presented to adequately analyze the case being presented.

5. Synthesis:

The author demonstrates a significant understanding of concepts from the course.

The author demonstrates a significant ability to apply the concepts from the course to a particular case.

ACTIVITIES

There are activities that accompany all of the readings which are to help you interact in some way with the material and prepare for class discussion. Where I have indicated in the syllabus schedule that you are to do a **Reading Analysis** you should include the following:

- 1) **Write down the author's thesis** (i.e., the main point the author is making-- why did he/she/they write the article?).
- 2) **List the important information** the author gives to support his/her/their thesis (this helps you understand the *structure* of the argument).
- 3) **List any new terms/concepts** that were presented in the reading and give a brief definition. If you can't find a definition in the text, look it up (this will help you increase and improve your vocabulary, as well as increase your comprehension of the argument)
- 4) **Write your personal critique**—what are aspects of the argument you agree with? Why? What are aspects you disagree with? Why? What are questions you have that come out of the reading(s) that you would like to address in class (try to come up with at least 3-4)?
- 5) **How does the reading relate** to the topic of the course? How does it relate to other readings/films/ issues covered in the course thus far?

All 5 components should be addressed in your reading analysis.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ACTIVITIES

3 = Demonstrated excellent effort on the assignment. Very well thought out and clearly articulated ideas. Demonstrated insightfulness and an excellent understanding of course materials.

2.5 = Demonstrated very good effort on the assignment. Well thought out and clearly articulated ideas. Demonstrated insightfulness and a very good understanding of course materials.

2 = Demonstrated good effort. Ideas are, in general, well articulated. Demonstrated a good understanding of the course materials.

1 = Demonstrated a minimal amount of effort. Ideas are, in general, not well developed or articulated. Does not demonstrate a very good understanding of course materials.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSIONS

- I. Pre-class preparation.
 - A. Complete reading(s) and activities. These will form the basis for in-class discussions.
 - B. Look over readings searching for terms and concepts that you don't understand. Look them up and try to find out what they mean.
 - C. Prioritize questions and issues you want to discuss in class.
- II. Class discussion.
 - A. Define and review terms and concepts that are unclear.
 - B. Set your agenda: what specific ideas are of interest to review, discuss, and/or challenge.
 - C. What questions arose during discussion?
 - D. Application: in what ways can you relate the ideas discussed to your own lives and experiences and to the mission context?
- III. Types of roles in a discussion group.
 - A. **Positive:**
 1. Keeps discussion moving and tries to get others to participate (gatekeeper).
 2. Presents or adds meaningful information or asks appropriate questions.
 3. Seeks clarification.
 4. Applies points under discussion to other situations.
 5. Uses appropriate humor.
 - B. **Negative:**
 1. Does not participate in discussion (verbally or non-verbally).

2. Too opinionated or talkative.
3. Uses inappropriate humor.
4. Impairs meaningful discussion by leading off into tangents.
5. Comes unprepared (should have stayed home).

CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE YOUR PARTICIPATION

- I. Learning Productivity: Quality of performance and contribution to discussions and assignments.
- II. Learning Attitude: Help in creating learning conditions that are enjoyable, stimulating, and productive (positive working relationships with others).
- III. Guidelines for evaluation of productivity and attitude:
 - A. Initiative, self-reliance, curiosity, originality.
 - B. Planning, follow-through, flexibility, punctuality.
 - C. Judgment, sensitivity, cooperation.
 - D. Accuracy, clarity.
 - E. Leadership in discussions.
- IV. Grade Characteristics:

A = frequent AND meaningful discussion contributions, obviously well-read and prepared.

B = good contribution to discussion, obviously well-read and prepared.

C = regular class attendance but no obvious effort to VOLUNTARILY participate in class.

D = Should have stayed home!!

F = Did!!!

WATCHING MOVIES AND VIEWING FILMS

Several films are included in the material of this course to give you a chance to identify more closely with a variety of experiences and ways of life. However, **more than just passive attention is required**, for you will also be expected to sharpen your ability to observe and to relate these observations to the conceptual and theoretical structure of the course. This may sound like a tall order. It is! Developing the **skills of sensitivity and thoughtful perception** are basic to a liberal arts education in general, and to anthropology specifically. Observation is one of the primary tools of anthropologists in their observation of other cultures. You will find that films will give you just the slightest glimpse into the problems and rewards of anthropology. The films will also provide you with the opportunity to increase your sensitivity to the world around you as well as give you a notion of cultural differences.

Here are a few **things to bear in mind while you are viewing the films** which will enhance your viewing experience:

1) Seeing a film obviously permits no interaction between you and the subject of your observation, usually an important aspect the anthropologist's field experience. However, the film makers have had to establish considerable rapport with the "star(s)". ***What effect do you think the process of making the film has had on the people who participated?***

2) In using films as a source of primary data, you will be faced with a dimension of fieldwork that anthropologists and sociologists avoid as much as possible--***third hand information and interpretation***. First, the material you view in films has been selected by film makers who are obviously interested in aesthetic aspects of the film as much as the ethnographic or sociological reporting of information. Second, the narration usually includes a certain amount of interpretation. As you are watching ***skepticism is in order!*** Look for the evidence which the film makers are using and evidence in the films that may run counter to the narration. A good rule of thumb is be skeptical of the narration except where it is verified by the visual presentation.

3) ***Film makers usually have a particular theoretical model*** that they are using while filming. As you watch the film ask yourself what the film maker's model is, and what alternative interpretations could you make using different models?

As you view a film, think of both the theoretical orientation and the particular event being portrayed. In this way we will then be able to engage in informed discussions about these film.

SCHEDULE

Week 1—September 5

Topic: COURSE INTRODUCTION; THE CULTURE CONCEPT

Week 2—September 12

Topic: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

Reading: Hesselgrave and Rommen, Parts 1& 2 (pp. 1-126)

Activity: Reading analysis

Week 3—September 19

Topic: PERSPECTIVES ON, AND APPLICATIONS OF, CONTEXTUALIZATION

Reading: Hesselgrave and Rommen, Parts 3 & 4 (pp. 127-257)

Activity: Reading analysis

Research Activity: Research proposal due

Week 4--Sept. September 26

Topic: THE TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN THE JEWISH, GENTILE, HELLENISTIC, AND WESTERN COLONIAL CONTEXTS

Reading: Sanneh, Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-129)

Activity: Reading analysis

Week 5—October 3

Topic: VERNACULAR TRANSLATION IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS

Reading: Sanneh, Chapters 4-7 (pp. 130-238)

Activity: Reading analysis

Research Activity: Bibliography due

Week 6—October 10

Topic: LOCAL THEOLOGY AND CULTURE

Reading: Schreier, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-74)

Activity: Reading analysis

Week 7 – October 17

Topic: CHURCH TRADITIONS, POPULAR RELIGION, AND SYNCRETISM IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL THEOLOGIES

Reading: Schreiter, Chapters 4-7 (pp. 75-158)

Activity: Reading analysis

Week 8—October 24

Topic: ETHNIC IDENTITY PART 1: BASIC CONCEPTS AND THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Reading: Hicks, “Introduction: Problems in the Study of Ethnicity”;

Pachau, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-94)

Activity: Reading analysis on both readings

Week 9—October 31

Topic: ETHNIC IDENTITY PART 2: THE MIZORAM OF NORTHEAST INDIA AND THE BASQUES OF SPAIN AND FRANCE

Reading: Pachau, Chapters 4-6 and Conclusion (pp. 95-175)

Activity: Reading analysis

Research Activity: Annotated bibliography due

Week 10—November 7

Topic: LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Activity: Ethnographic project

Week 11—November 14

Topic: PRESENTATIONS

Activity: Work on presentation

Research Activity: Research paper outline due

Week 12 – November 28

Topic: PRESENTATIONS

Activity: Work on presentation

Week 13 – December 5

Topic: COURSE SUMMARY

Activity: What have been the key concepts you've learned in this course? How do they apply to the establishment of indigenous churches? How do they apply specifically to your own ministry interests?

Week 14 – December 11-15 FINALS

FINAL PAPERS DUE ELECTRONICALLY THURSDAY, DEC. 14 BY 10:00 A.M.