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MB 720 Cross Cultural Communication of Christianity

George G. Hunter

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Syllabus

Course: MB720 W1 (SP 2009)

Title: Cross Cultural Communication of Christianity

Hours: 3.00

Published: Yes, on 02/06/2009

Prerequisites:

None

Department: Behav. Sciences/Ministry

Faculty: Dr. George Hunter



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Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Tuesday from 1:00p to 3:45p in M304.

Maximum Registration: 20

Catalog Description: Studies in the literature of inter-cultural communication, with attention to understanding cultural contexts and barriers, with applications to Christian witness across and within cultures. Meets with MS645 on the Wilmore Campus.

Objectives:

MB 720 Cross Cultural Communication of Christianity

MS 645 AND MB 720 **Cross Cultural Communication of Christianity**

Spring Semester, 2009

School of World Mission and Evangelism,

Asbury Theological Seminary

Instructor: George Hunter

I. Course Description:

"Studies in the literature of Intercultural communication, with attention to understanding cultural contexts and barriers, with applications to Christian ministry and witness across, and within, cultures."

II Course Objectives:

1. To understand some of the known dimensions of the communication process, with application to intercultural contexts.

2. To understand some of the known features of "culture," and the influence of cultural contexts, in communication and human relations.
3. To understand what is known, essentially, about the variables, the dynamics and the process of Intercultural adaptation and communication.
4. To understand a number of Intercultural Communication theories which are especially useful to the cross-cultural servant or advocate.
5. To prepare, through simulations and context-specific studies, for cross-cultural service, ministry, and witness.

III Required Textbooks for all students (MS 645 AND MB 720) in the order of assignment.

1. Storti, Craig. The Art of Crossing Cultures, second ed. Intercultural Press, Inc., 2001.
2. _____. Figuring Foreigners Out. Intercultural Press, Inc., 1999.
3. Hunter, George G. III, The Celtic Way of Evangelism. Abingdon Press, 2000.
4. Nydell, Margaret K. Understanding Arabs, fourth ed. Intercultural Press, Sept. 2005.

Additional Required Textbooks for MB 720 students (optional for MS 645 students).

5. Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckman. The Social Construction of Reality. Doubleday @ Company, 1967.
6. Nida, Eugene. Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith, rev. ed. William Carey Library, 1990.

Additional Required Readings for both MS 645 and MB730 (will be available for purchase in a packet of readings at the ATS Cokesbury bookstore.

1. Milton J. Bennett, "Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity."
2. Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall. "Key Concepts: Underlying Structures of Culture", from Understanding Cultural Differences. Intercultural Press, 1990.
3. Herbert Blumer. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method, pp. 1-21.

NOTE: Doctoral students who take a qualifying examination in the "Mission in Cultural Context" major will also be responsible for being conversant with the several foundational texts of Edward T. Hall. (See Bibliography)

IV. Optional Books on Specific Cultures

Intercultural Press (<http://www.interculturalpress.com>) has an extensive series of books on specific cultures and/or nations. IF you choose (below) the research paper option #4 -- writing on a particular culture, one of these books would give you a marvelous start. Since the instructor could not anticipate which of these books to ask the bookstore to stock, it will be necessary for you to order the book early enough to meet your research needs.

You can peruse their series by accessing their website. When I recently accessed that site, they featured 37 books on a wide range of culture and cultural regions (So, for instance, the book on East Europeans has individual chapters on Romanians, Hungarians, etc.)

V. Assignments and Requirements for the Course:

The instructor expects the student to accept responsibility for his/her own learning. This responsibility will normally be exercised through:

- a. Each member's regular attendance, involvement, and (especially) contributions within the course's periodic seminar format.
- b. Thorough reading (and rereading) of all assignments.
- c. Periodic submission of one page (no more!) reflection papers on some of the assigned reading (See class schedule below).
- d. Submission of a research paper by noon Friday, May 16.
- e. Completion of the final exam—90 minutes, (two hours for English-second-language students). Date and time to be announced.

A grade for the course will be awarded through an appraisal of the student's final exam and the research paper -- with slightly more weight given to the exam, and (quite secondarily) to the instructor's appraisal of the student's attendance, participation, and contributions in the course.

The Research Paper: (Choose one) Due Friday, May 15;

1. A Report (with Analysis and any warranted Critique) of the approach of a Cross-cultural Christian advocate -- contemporary (such as Vincent Donovan, or Don Richardson, or Bruce Olsson) or historic (such as St. Patrick, or Augustine of Canterbury, or William Carey) to people of a different culture or subculture -- based primarily upon his/her writings, recordings, etc., and an interview where possible. Suggested length: 12 to 15 pages, plus (perhaps) an appendix to include a verbatim of the interview and a photocopy of any brief writings or transcripts upon which the report is especially based.
2. A report (with Analysis and any warranted Critique) of the major intercultural communication theories and insights of an important culture anthropologist (such as Margaret Mead), or an important Intercultural communication theorist (such as E. T. Hall), or a mission anthropologist (such as Eugene Nida, Paul Heibert, or Charles Kraft). Suggested length: 12 to 15 pages.
- 3 A Case Study (with Analysis and any warranted Critique) of a Christian mission, a church, or a movement, of the past or present, that has communicated the faith cross-culturally and raised up an indigenous church. If you study a present day project, employ observation (if possible), relevant historical analysis, and (especially) interviews with first generation converts, and also with leaders most responsible for the communication of the message. Suggested length: 12 to 15 pages plus any appendix.
4. A research paper on a culture in which the student has special interest in communicating Christianity's gospel. The student may focus at a of four "levels" of culture, i.e., a "macro-culture" (such as Germanic culture), a culture (such as German culture), a more specific culture (such as German-speaking Swiss culture), or a sub-culture or "micro-culture" (such as German speaking Swiss "Night People"). One prerequisite for a choice, obviously, is available sources.

[One outstanding introductory source for many cultures is the nine volume Encyclopedia of World Cultures (G. K. Hall & Company, 1994). Each volume focuses on a cultural region of the earth, complete with histories and descriptions of many specific cultures, with maps, bibliographies etc. The respective volumes focus as follows:

- Vol. 1: North America
- Vol. 2: Oceania
- Vol. 3: South Asia
- Vol. 4: Europe
- Vol. 5: East and Southeast Asia
- Vol. 6: Russia, Eurasia, and China
- Vol. 7: South America

Vol. 8: Middle America and the Caribbean

Vol. 9: Africa and the Middle East

The Encyclopedia of World Cultures is based upon an even more comprehensive source: the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). HRAF' articles focus on many specific cultures -- such as the Highland Scots in Europe, the Iban people of Malaysia, the Maasai people of East Africa, the Tzeltal tribe in Mexico, the Iroquois people in the USA, or Chinese-Americans in the USA. Each article is a lengthy secondary source that includes a bibliography for scholars who want to know more, with a brief description of what is covered in each article or book in the bibliography.

A complete edition of HRAF that covers hundreds of cultures is available, on microfiche, at The University of Kentucky's main library. Asbury Theological Seminary's library is now subscribing, over a 15-year period, to the newer HRAF edition as it is published on CD ROM. The first several CD ROMs already published, and available, include many cultures—such as those mentioned above.

Our library tells me that we can now access the HRAF information on many cultures by surfing the Internet. You will need to use a computer on campus to access the HRAF articles, and you will need your 10 digit number at the bottom of your ATS ID to access the data. Our colleagues in the library's information commons office (extension 2233) will be glad to give you the current steps for accessing this marvelous source.

The student should be alert to opportunities to interview people from the target culture. The student's paper should emphasize, say, the six or eight most important cultural themes that characterize the culture and/or are the most essential for the cross-cultural Christian advocate to understand and engage, with insights regarding the possible communication of Christianity to the culture's people. (The instructor may illustrate this approach in one or two class presentations.)

In any of the four options for your paper, take care to demonstrate your mastery of the relevant categories, terms, issues, and principles of intercultural communication theory. Present your paper typed, in a manuscript cover or strongly stapled (not loose or with paper clip), with your name and SPO Box # on the front. The preferred form for all papers is Turabian; the instructor will accept footnotes, or endnotes, or parenthetical citations with a "Sources Cited" section at the end. (Just be consistent.)

In-class presentations:

For several sessions, the instructor will expect ONE-PAGE single-soaced reflection papers on the reading assigned for the week. You may find the following guidelines useful: For those sessions, submit your paper to the instructor at the beginning of the class session. These papers help the instructor to facilitate an appropriate range of topics for class presentations, as well as helping him to perceive the quality of reading and reflection. You might write each paper in terms of some of these categories:

1. State the Thesis (or one of the Main Ideas) of the reading.
2. Suggest its implication(s) for the practice of cross-cultural ministry.
3. Raise a Question that may warrant discussion in the class.
4. State, and explain,, some specific insight that may inform your ministry.
5. If you have a case, experience, or "war story" that would illustrate this point, include that--extending to page 2 if necessary.

*IF POSSIBLE, bring a copy of each one page paper for each person in class.

We MAY use class time for THREE-MINUTE oral presentations from the papers.

Course Outline

(Subject to Modification)

Class sessions will vary in their manner of presentation. While some sessions will feature some version of the traditional lecture, others will be devoted to processing readings, others will involve brief presentations by students, and others will feature videos that dramatize intercultural communication themes or project the viewer into cross-cultural contexts. Some class sessions will feature case studies or simulations, which permit the kind of redundancy-based "over learning" that develops effective cross-cultural communicators.

February 10: Orientation to the Cross-Cultural Communication of Christianity

1. Distribution of the Syllabus, introducing the course.
2. Introduction to what we mean by "Communication" Presentation
3. Introduction to what we mean by "Christianity!" Handout
4. "Bridging the Culture Gap" Video

Assignment for next week: Read Storti, The Art of Crossing Cultures. When you come to class, submit your one page paper (see guidelines above) and be prepared to give three minute oral presentation from your paper. In your paper, 1) summarize Storti's most essential points AND 2) expand upon and/or reflect upon ONE essential point. In your oral presentation, emphasize that one essential point.

February 17: Orientation to "Culture," Cultural Differences, and Our Responses

1. Introduction to what we mean by "Culture." Presentation
2. "Barnga: A Simulation Game on Cultural Clashes."
3. Three minute class presentations from Storti's Art of Crossing Cultures.

February 24: Discovering Your Cross-Cultural Strengths and Weaknesses

1. "The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory" (class handout)

(If you ever want to use the CCAI self-assessment booklet in training others, it is available, in quantity, for \$6.50 each from Vangent Human Capital, Inc. tel. 1-800-922-7343.)

2. Reflecting from "The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory"
3. Video: "Managing the Overseas Assignment"

Assignment for next week: Read the E. T. Hall chapter, "Key Concepts: Underlying Structures of Culture." Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class—IF we have time.

March 3: Edward T. Hall, the "Pioneer" of Intercultural Communication studies.

1. Perspectives on the Contribution of E. T. Hall.

2. Video: "International Business Practices: Hidden Dimensions." 40 minutes
3. Three minute class presentations from the Hall reflection papers.
- Assignment for next week: Read Bennett, "Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity." Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class
- March 10: Discovering Your "Stage" in the Development of Intercultural Sensitivity
1. Video: "Better Together Than A-P-A-R-T." 62 minutes
2. Three minute class presentations from Bennett.
- Assignment for next week: Read Storti, Figuring Foreigners Out. Write a one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class
- March 17: Theories for Informing Cross-Cultural Communication
1. The EMOTIONAL Factor in Intercultural Communication Hunter
2. Video: "Wealth, Innovation, Diversity: Putting Our Differences to Work in the Twenty-first Century." 62 minutes
3. Three minute presentations from the Storti reflection papers Hunter
- Assignment for next week: All students read Blumer's chapter summarizing the "Symbolic Interactionism" perspective; MB 7: students read Berger's Social Construction of Reality. Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class.
- March 24: Deeper Theory: Social Construction and "Symbolic Interactionism"
1. Presentation: "Social Influence and Symbolic Interactionism" Hunter
2. Video clip from the film "Nell."
3. Class presentations and/or discussion.
- March 31: Reading Week; no class.
- April 7: Case Study in Intercultural Conflict Atanasov
1. Video: "A Different Place"—part one
2. Class processing the "Different Place" experience
3. Video: "A Different Place"—part two
- Assignment for next week: Read Hunter's The Celtic Way of Evangelism. Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class. Suggest focus: Identify a theological insight that helps to inform cross-cultural ministry and/or a communication principle you saw reflected in the Celtic Christian mission.
- April 14: A "Celtic" Case Study: Learning from an Ancient Cross-Cultural Mission.
1. Video: "St. Patrick: Apostle Of Ireland." 62 minutes
2. Question: What, in the video, might **not** accurately portray what Patrick did?
3. Presentation: "A Celtic Approach to Evangelization." Hunter
4. Presentation: "A Celtic Approach to Formation." Hunter
5. Class presentations from the one-page reflection papers from The Celtic Way of Evangelism.
- Assignment for the next two weeks: Read Nydell's Understanding Arabs, and prepare a TWO-PAGE reflection paper, and be prepared to present in class. Identify two or three themes from Arabic culture and/or Islam and, interfacing with those themes, suggest two or three approaches that would be involved in contextually sensitive Christian Witness.
- April 21: Characterizing Chinese Culture
1. Presentation
2. Video
3. Reports from Nydell's Understanding Arabs
- Assignment for next week for MB 720 students: Read Nida's Message and Mission, and submit a **six page** reflection paper.
- April 28: Characterizing English Culture
1. Presentation
2. Video
3. Reports from Nydell's Understanding Arabs
- May 5: Toward Understanding a Culture's Worldview and Its Possible Transformation
- May 12: A Contemporary Case Study in the Cross-Cultural Communication of the Gospel
1. Video: "The Tailenders."
2. Class responses, reflection, and critique.
- Notice!** In preparing for the Exam, you may prepare, bring, and refer to during the exam, a one page/one side handwritten **crib sheet!**
- Friday, May 15: Term Papers due in Hunter's box in the ESJ School office at HIGH NOON!
- May 18-22: Exam Week, date and time to be announced.

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