

1-1-2005

MS 645 Cross Cultural Communication of Christianity

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

Fall Semester, 2005
 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 witness across, and within, cultures."

II Course Objectives:

1. To understanding 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 edition. 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 Edition. 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 on line; click on the ESJ icon.)

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, and looking under "Culture Guides." When I recently accessed that site, they featured 37 books on a wide range of cultures and cultural regions (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 Monday, December 12
- e. Completion of the final exam the week of Dec. 12-16; 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 Monday, Dec. 12;

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 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 cultural anthropologist (such as Margaret Mead), or an important Intercultural communication theorist (such as E. T. Hall), or a missiologist (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 any 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's 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--including 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, but not on the inside pages. The accepted form for all papers is Campbell, with the one variation that the instructor will accept footnotes, or endnotes, or parenthetical citations with a "Sources Cited" section at the end. (Just be consistent.) Your effective writing style is important in academic writing; you should be very familiar with Strunk and

White's The Elements of Style.

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.

Guidelines for occasional ONE PAGE reflection papers on the readings:

Submit, at the beginning of the class session, a one page reflection paper. These papers may help the instructor to perceive the quality of reading, to shape part of a class session, and to identify questions and issues for discussion. 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.

September 6: Orientation to the Cross-Cultural Communication of Christianity

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

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 presentation from your paper.

September 13: Intercultural Differences and Our Responses

1. "Barnga" simulation.
2. Three minute class presentations from Storti's Art of Crossing Cultures.
3. Video: "Bridging the Culture Gap"

September 20: Discovering Your Cross-Cultural Strengths and Weaknesses

1. "The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory"
2. Video: "Managing the Overseas Assignment"

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.

September 27: Discovering Your “Stage” in the Development of Intercultural Sensitivity

1. Submission of one page papers from Bennett.
2. Video: “Better Together Than A-P-A-R-T:” 62 minutes
3. Three minute class presentations from Bennett.

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.

October 4: Edward T. Hall, the “Pioneer” of Intercultural Communication studies.

1. Submission of one page papers from 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 Storti, Figuring Foreigners Out. Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class.

October 11: Theories for Informing Cross-Cultural Communication

1. Submission of one page reflection papers from Storti..
2. Three minute presentations from the Storti reflection papers
3. Theoretical Perspectives for Intercultural Communication
4. Video: “Wealth, Innovation, Diversity: Putting Our Differences to Work in the Twenty-first Century.”

Assignment for next week: All students read Blumer’s chapter summarizing the “Symbolic Interactionism” perspective; MB 720 students read Berger’s Social Construction of Reality. Write one page reflection paper and prepare to present in class.

October 18: Deeper Theory: Social Construction and “Symbolic Interactionism”

1. Submission of one page reflection papers.
2. Presentation: “Social Influence and ‘Symbolic Interactionism’
3. Video clip from the film “Nell.”
4. Class presentations and/or discussion.

October 25: Case Study in Intercultural Conflict

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.

November 1: A “Celtic” Case Study: Learning from an Ancient Cross-Cultural Mission.

1. Video: “St. Patrick: The Man, the Myth.”
2. Class presentations from the ancient Celtic movement.
3. Presentation: Enduring insights from the mission begun by Patrick.

Assignment for next week for MB 720 students: Read Nida’s Message and Mission, and submit a one page reflection paper.

November 8: Introducing the World’s Largest Culture.

1. Thematic Explorations in Chinese Culture
2. Video: “Chinese Cultural Values: The Other Pole of the Human Mind.” 60 minutes
3. Three minute presentations from the reflection papers.

November 15:” (Re)Introducing the Culture From ‘Across the Pond.’”

1. Thematic Explorations in European, British, and English Cultures
2. Video: “Welcome Home, Stranger.”

November 22: Reading Week: No Class.

For next week: Read the fourth edition of Nydell’s Understanding Arabs.

November 29: Understanding Arabic Peoples—part one.

1. Guest Lecturer, Dr. Matt Zahniser: “Varieties of Muslim Religion,” part one.
2. “ “ “ “ : Varieties of Muslim Religion,” part two.

Assignment for next week: Prepare a one page reflection paper from your reading of Nydell, and be prepared to present. Identify one, two, or three themes from Arabic culture and/or Islam and, interfacing with those themes, suggest one, two or three approaches that would be involved in contextually sensitive Christian Witness.

December 6: Understanding Arabic Peoples—part two.

1. Class presentations: Distinct themes in Islam and Arabic culture.
2. Class presentations: Possible Approaches in Christian Witness with Arabic Muslims.

Assignment suggestion: In preparing for the Exam, you may prepare, bring, and refer to during the exam, a one page/one side handwritten **crib sheet!**

December 8: Term Papers due in Hunter’s box in the ESJ School office at HIGH NOON!

Monday December 12: Final Exam, 8:00-10:00 AM

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