MS 685 The Church Abroad: Cuba

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Purpose
The purpose of the trip/class is to expose participants to the work of the Holy Spirit in a cross-cultural setting with the hope that each person will develop a deeper understanding of the Cuban Church, as experienced through the Methodist Church in Cuba, and a greater passion for the mission of Jesus Christ into the world.

Course Description
The course is a short-term immersion experience into the so-called "mission field" as experienced through the Methodist Church in Cuba. The course, through prior reading and immersion into the Cuban experience, will expose learners to the historic, social, political, cultural and religious background of the people of Cuba. The trip will bring the participants into contact with the Methodist Church in Cuba, in full Holy Spirit revival. Learners will grasp the similarities and differences between the 18th Century Wesleyan Revival and the Wesleyan charismatic revival in the Methodist Church in Cuba. Participants will discover the contexts in which the church and religion interfaces with the 44 year Cuban Communist regime. They will hear the testimonies of Cuban Christians who find themselves daily giving their witness in a hostile environment. In spite of these challenges, the rate of growth of the church, and particularly the Cuban Protestant churches is the largest in Cuban history.

Course Highlights
• Explore the history, culture and religions of Cuba.
• Experience the practical aspects of life for the common Cuban people today.
• Worship with Cuban Christians in sanctuaries and house churches.
• Participate in their ministry/respond to their invitations to give testimonies and preach.
• Listen, reflect, and learn from the Cuban Church and the people.
• Develop a better understanding of what it means to follow Christ in an environment that is politically and traditionally hostile to the Christian faith.
• Encourage, support, worship, and pray with the faithful.

Educational Methods
The primary method of education will be a contextual learning in Cuba. Each learner will be an active participant in an unfamiliar environment. And out of this will come new insights and greater wisdom. The following methods will be utilized: lecture, reading, video, web searching on the internet, and written reflection.

Learning Goals: Competencies to be developed by the students
It is expected that learners completing this course will be able to:
1. Discuss the church in Cuba showing an awareness of its major streams, history, strengths and weaknesses, and methodology.

2. Discuss the major principles of the Cuban worldviews and ways of life and their implications for communicating the Gospel.

3. Communicate an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Cuban Church.

4. Communicate a basic understanding of the principles and strategies that are helpful for people wanting to develop ministry partnerships in this country.

5. Share a list of lessons that the US church can learn for the Cuban church, providing biblical commentary for each lesson.

6. Communicate reasons for the use of the short-term mission trips in the local church, and the skills and procedures that needed to organize and lead these trips.

**READING: Required Resources and Course Texts.**

The Required Resources are to be read **BEFORE** the trip. The balance of the pages due can be read after the trip.


**Cuba/Florida Covenant Task Force, Florida Conference United Methodist Church** (revised 2003)


**Russell, Gary.** *The Role of the Short-term and Church-based Ministries*. 40 minute audio tape counts as 30 pages of reading. On reserve in ATS libraries in Kentucky and Florida.


**READING: Elective Resources.** After completing the Required Resources, choose from the following to complete the 1200 page requirement.


**Campbell-Evans, Sally,** (1998), *People, Places, and Partnerships*. Worldwide Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church, USA. 43 pages.

**AUDIO:**

*Montes de Sión Praise Band.* Audio tape from the Marianao Methodist Church where Cuban Bishop Pereira is the pastor. 30 pages credit only. On reserve in ATS-F library.


**Websites:** (Up to 50 downloaded pages can be included in the page count.)

- www.cubaweb.cu- Official Cuban government website
- www.thecubannation.com- US based website with news and information about Cuba from many sources.

**Evaluation**

Your grade for the course will be based on your preparation before the trip to Cuba, your involvement in the cross-cultural experience, your completion of assigned readings and your papers. Each student will need to read 1,200 pages of material. The Required Resources listed above are to be read BEFORE the trip. The balance of the pages due can be read after the trip.

The following are written assignments due before and after the trip:

**A. Prior to the trip:**

1. A two-page essay on your expectations on the trip and why you feel called to participate on this mission trip.
2. Begin a Journal at least one week prior to the trip and continue the Journal during and at least one week after the trip (Suggestion for journaling found on p. 39, Appendix 16 of the Cuba/Florida Covenant Guidelines).

**B. After the trip:**

After the trip a reflection paper must be written and turned in. It should integrate your readings and your personal reflections and experiences while in Cuba. Attached to the paper should be the list of the books and other resources that you have completed. Show the number of pages for each resource. The paper must be typed in 12 point font, double-spaced and at least 5,000 words. Works cited or referred to in your paper should be noted in a formal footnote or informally in the body of the text. Your paper is due on **Wednesday, February 4, 2004** at 5:00 PM. It can be e-mailed as a Word attachment to Lrankin@flumc.org or mailed to Dr. Larry Rankin, P.O. Box 3767, Lakeland, FL 33802.

The paper should:

1. Treat all topics listed in the Learning Goals section of the syllabus.
2. Discuss the implications of this phenomenon. Those born on the "mission field" (in this case Cubans) are moving to the country from which missionaries were sent to their homeland.
3. Communicate something about your personal experience in Cuba. How will your faith and ministry be impacted by this experience?
Late papers will not be accepted unless the student appeals to the professor and the professor decides that a situation has developed that is a true “emergency”.

C. Grading breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Completion and documentation of the assigned readings</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>Active participation and an eagerness to learn from our hosts, other team members and the leaders</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Timely submission of a paper that is well written, well documented, appropriate in length. It should provide thoughtful commentary on the topics listed as the Learning Goals for this course, and provide personal reflection on the student’s experience.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following grading scale will be used:

- 94-100 A
- 90-93 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 67-69 D+
- 63-66 D
- 60-62 D-
- 0 - 59 F

**Personal Impact Goals**
In addition to helping participants acquire greater knowledge about the church in Cuba and the related subjects mentioned in the Learning Goals section, it is hoped that God will use this course to impact students in the following ways. May God:

A. Expand our worldview and our understanding of God’s global family;
B. Give us an increased awareness of our need to hear the Good News from persons in other cultures and from new and recent Christian believers;
C. Increase our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to change persons in spite of apparently insurmountable barriers;
D. Give us a deeper passion for reaching those who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ;
E. Clarify our understanding of God’s missional call on our lives, and
F. Apply the lessons learned from the Cuban church in our ministries.

**Schedule**
A. **No later than November 1, 2003**, turn in the VISA DATA SHEETS for Cuban Religious Visas. **Turn them in to Dr. Rankin by e mail (LRankin@flumc.org), Fax (863 688-7233).**
B. Two orientation classes will be held **before** the trip. Tentative scheduled for **Friday, December 13 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm and Thursday, January 15 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm**, **just prior to departure to Cuba on January 9**. All participants are expected to be present for these meetings. Wilmore students can participate on V-tel.
The trip dates are Friday, January 9 through Monday, January 19, 2004 (depending on flight availability).

A final debriefing class will be held after the trip. Participants are expected to be present in Orlando and Wilmore (V-tel) for this time of sharing and celebration on Saturday, January 31, 2004 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Registration
- To participate you must register for MS6: The Church in Cuba and make a $250 deposit to your student account by November 1. Once this deposit is paid a plane ticket and a visa will be purchased with your name on it. You will be responsible for the visa ($110). The ticket may be partially refundable according to airline deadlines. You must fill out a Cuba Religious Visa Application and turn it in to Dr. Rankin (LRankin@flumc.org or Fax: 863 688-7233) by November 1, 2003. A form is found in the Cuba/Florida Covenant Guidelines, Appendix 4, p. 16. Forms will be sent as a bundle to the Methodist Church in Cuba for processing. Contact Dr. Rankin if you have any questions.
- Applicants must NOT be active or in the reserves or in the US Armed Forces. Cuban born students who are American citizens, who left Cuba PRIOR 1979 may apply as US citizens, Those who left AFTER 1979, must apply with a Cuban passport. And that process must begin immediately with the Cuba Interest Section in Washington DC.
- You must have a valid Passport that must not expire before June 19, 2004. If you do not have a Passport, complete an application immediately and overnight mail it to the Passport department per instructions on the application. Applications are available from many post office branches. You will need to send two “passport photos” and your birth certificate with the Passport application. Passport photos can be purchased at AAA and most photo shops.
- The class is limited to no more than 12 participants.

Cost
Total cost for the trip per person from Orlando is approximately $1,350.00 (was in 2002, to be adjusted) depending on changing airfares (This price includes the $250 deposit). This cost includes all travel, food, transportation, lodging, and tuition for MS6: Cuba. Register and pay for this class as you do any other ATS class. The deposit of $250 must be paid to your student account by November 1 with the balance due on January 2. Students needing financial assistance can contact James Loftin for information regarding possible scholarships.

Financial Aid
Students are encouraged to seek support from your home congregations and supervised ministry sites in addition to your own families. This is a class but it is also a mission trip. See James Loftin, Director of Missions-Orlando Campus, for other financial support.

Prayer Itinerary
A guide to facilitate intercession for the trip will be created by one or more of the students. This guide will be based on the trip itinerary and will include dates, times (as available), scriptures to be prayed for each day, special needs, and the names of each person in the class (focusing on one or more participants each day). Prior to the trip the Prayer Itinerary will be distributed to the seminary community and to the families, friends and churches of the participants. The students who prepare the Prayer Itinerary will receive some credit toward their required reading.