



Nazarene Theological Seminary

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MSS720 : Cross Cultural Communication of the Gospel Spring 2008

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Wednesday
9-12 am or by appointment

Catalog Description

A cross-disciplinary study of what is involved in adequate transmission of the gospel across cultures with insight and guidance from theological studies, missiology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, and communication theory.

Course Narrative & Rationale

In a globalized and changing world, ministry is cross cultural for the local pastor as much as it is for the career missionary. Communication and understanding the cultural dynamics of ministry is essential for anyone in ministry leadership. This course addresses cross cultural communication of the Gospel within the changing global context in which we live. Learning in community will be developed through readings, interactive dialogs, active involvement with individuals of other cultures and research projects.

Educational Assumptions

1. God's direction is essential for this class to reach its potential.
2. We will learn in the context of community. Appropriate ideas as well as doubts may be expressed and developed in a safe environment of mutual respect.
3. Students are valued not only as persons who have potential to learn, but also as persons who already have significant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the purposes of the course. Consequently, some of the course assignments will require cooperative efforts among students.
4. This is a graduate course. The quality of thinking, writing, speech, and class participation should reflect a graduate level quality. Higher levels of thought (e.g., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), writing style, spelling, grammar, as well as faithful attendance, consideration of fellow students and their ideas, and timely submission of assignments is expected.

Course Outcomes

Participants will:

1. Develop a learning relationship with individuals of a different “passport culture” than their own.
2. Read materials directly related to research and cross cultural interviews.
3. Explore cross cultural conflict and interpersonal relationships through reading and class discussion.
4. Be exposed to religious pluralism and how that affects the communication of the Gospel.

Required Texts & Course Materials

Endo Soshuko, Silence, Taplinger, 1980

Elmer, Duane. Cross Cultural Conflict

Newbigin, Lesslie, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, Eerdmans/WCC, 1989.

Course Assignments & Requirements

A. Complete assigned readings by the due date (see course map which will be handed out on first day of class) and be prepared to discuss them in class. Each student should write up a one page (single-spaced) summary each day that assignments are due. These will serve to raise issues, suggest applications, etc. for the discussion of the reading for the day. These assignments will be turned in at class time on the day they are due, and will not be accepted late since they will serve as a basis for class discussion. Students should be prepared to guide discussion for the day.

B. Cross Cultural Interviews

Note: Do not begin this assignment until instructions for cross cultural interviews has been given in class.

Each student will work on a project throughout the semester which will involve developing a relationship with two individuals who were born in a country different than yours or who have spent the majority of their lives in a country other than your “passport” country. One of these interviews must be with individuals who are not professing Christians. If you interview a family unit, this will count as one interview. These interviews could include (although are not limited to) the following:

- Individuals of a different faith (ejm. Islam).
- Immigrants such as Mexicans who although are professing Catholic Christians but who are not “evangelical” Christians.
- One of the individuals could be an African American or a Native American who is a nominal or non Christian.

This project will include the following steps:

- 1) Step one will be due February 20th. This step will include a brief description of the people you are going to interview and the dates of your

interview. Approval for you to continue with these individuals will be given by February 23rd. Upon approval, you will need to develop a prayer journal in which you will systematically pray for these three individuals daily throughout the course of the semester. You will also need to explain to the people that you are an intercultural studies student and would like to meet with them to learn about their culture and will need to meet with them once in February, once in March, and once in April.

- 2) Step two will be to read at least two chapters in “The Handbook of Interview Research” which relate to the type of interview you will be doing. This book is on hold at in the NTS library. You will need to prepare a one page overview of each of these chapters and come prepared to present this to the class on February 27th.
- 3) Step three will be due on March 14th. This step will include the interview of two persons who were approved in step one.

Your report of these interviews should include:

- a) The interview questions themselves and how they were formed. Think through your questions well. Make sure that you are using “cultural intelligence” and that you are asking open ended questions which allow a person to freely express themselves.
- b) An overview of the interview itself.
- c) Your observations after the interview. This would include cultural observations about the person you interviewed as well as cultural observations about how you approached the interview. The goal of this interview is for you to learn something of the other person’s culture and values, especially related to their values of faith. The purpose of this interview is not to argue with them or to convince them of anything. This step is about their world view and culture. If appropriate, finish this interview, allowing the person to know that you are praying for them. Ask them if there is something specific that you can pray for between now and your next meeting.

This step will be due on April 11th. If you interview someone of another faith, your role is to learn about their faith and the individual’s perspective of their faith. If you interview someone who is a nominal Christian, your role is to learn what they think of God and faith. Again, your role is not to argue or change the person, but to listen and to learn. At the end of this interview, you will need to ask the person if it is alright if you can share your own experience in faith. If they answer “no”, that is fine, don’t force the issue. You will, however, need to go into this interview with a clear idea how you can share your own faith in a simple and yet clear manner.

- 4) Step four will be due on May 2nd. This step will include writing a research paper based on the previous steps, reading you have done for this class, as

well as further research you may need to do. This final written project will need to be 10-12 double spaced pages in length, and include the following elements:

- a) Section one should be a brief overview of this project.
- b) Section two will need to give an overview of each person that you have interviewed.
- c) Section three will need to include assumptions and perspectives that you have in relation to your role as a missionary in these interviews.
- d) Section four will need to include a cultural and theological analysis of the interviews:
- e) What did you learn about the persons and yourself in the process?
- f) What difference did it make that you were praying for this person throughout the semester?
- g) Section five will be a conclusion which will need to ask the question: "If I were a missionary amongst these type of people, what would be some ways that they could be affectively reached with the gospel?" This section should also include an honest evaluation of your interaction with these three people throughout the semester.

*note: for the benefit of the class, you will be asked to present an overview of your work to the class toward the end of the semester.

C. Final Project

Your final project will be a written paper of 10 pages (double-spaced) on a topic of your choice, which is directly related to the material of this course. Write a one page outline or one page summary of how you intend to develop the topic and submit to the class instructor by March 5th. The final due date for the completed project will be April 23rd.

Due dates for these assignments will be as follows:

Assignment	Due	Outcome ¹
Assigned readings	Daily	1,2,3,4,5
Cross Cultural Interviews	See schedule above	3,4
Final Project	April 23 rd	2,3,5

¹ See list of course outcomes on page 2 of syllabus.

Late Work

I do not accept late work except in cases of severe illness requiring extended hospitalization, a note from the dean, or a death in the family.

Course Grading

100-91: A 90-81: B 80-71: C 70-60:D 59 or Below: F

Grade Descriptions

A. Excellent

A to A- This is work that is outstanding in every way, exceptional, marked by accuracy, creativity, scholarship, and/ or integrative thinking combined with good style.

B. Good to Very Good

B+ to B: This is work that is very good, accurately done, reflecting a proper grasp of the material, and done with interesting style.

B to B-: This is work that is good, but tends towards inaccuracy and imbalance, is written in a flat and unengaging style, ideas are present, but not developed.

C. Fair

C+ to C: This is work that is marginally satisfactory because it is deficient in identifiable areas of accuracy, clarity, balance; ideas are vague and disorganized.

C to C-: This is work that is not far from being unacceptable, reflecting serious inadequacies in dealing with the material.

D. Unsatisfactory; Just Passable

This is work that has been submitted, but is not satisfactory. It has dealt with the material, but in such an inaccurate or incomplete way that it cannot be judged as acceptable work.

F. Failure

This is a grade assigned to a paper, exam, or course in which the student has not submitted the required work or who has so completely distorted the assignment that it bears no resemblance to what was required.

Assignment	Weight for course grade
Assigned Readings	40%
Cross Cultural Interviews	30%
Final Project	30%
TOTAL	100%

