

**Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary**  
**MISSIONARY ANTHROPOLOGY**

IM-667 (3 Units)  
Fall 2005 (Sept. 1 to Dec. 15)  
Thursdays 6:00-9:00 p.m.  
Professor: Mark D. Baker, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Tues. 9:00-11:00 & Weds.  
1:30-3:30

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course focuses on how missionaries can learn from anthropologists and why it is crucial for them to do so. Students will be exposed to basic insights and tools and then apply them through observing various cultures by reading, video, lectures, and on-site ethnographic work. The potential missional importance of these activities will always be at the forefront.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through this course students will be able to:

- observe the missional value of ethnographic study
- carry out an ethnographic field research project
- become familiar with basic anthropological categories and use them to aid in understanding cultures we will observe during the course
- understand their own culture better, which will enhance transformational ministry in this culture as well as facilitate a lower degree of ethnocentrism in cross-cultural ministry
- become familiar with a model of incarnational cross-cultural communication and ministry
- understand the fundamental issues of the relation of gospel and culture.

**Degree and Program Objectives**

1. To obtain tools and insights to enhance cross-cultural living and cross-cultural ministry.
2. To be equipped for a deeper engagement with local and global mission.

**COURSE TEXTS**

Comaroff, Jean & John. *Of Revelation & Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. I. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991.\*

Lingenfelter, Sherwood. *Transforming Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Baker Books, 1998.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood, & Marvin Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Baker, 2003.

Shenk, Joseph, ed. *Kisare: A Mennonite of Kiseru*. Eastern Mennonite Mission, 1984.\*

\* On reserve at the library

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Sept. 1           **1 Introduction to the Course**

Sept. 8           **2 Gospel and Culture**

Preparation: Read Lingenfelter, *Transforming*, Chap. One, 11-22.

- Sept. 15      **3 Gospel and Culture, cont. & Reciprocity**  
 Preparation: Read Baker & Wagner, "Reading Romans in Hurricane Devastated Honduras," 367-377 and list implications for missionaries.  
 Read Lingenfelter, *Transforming*, Chap. Two & Five, 23-50, 83-106.
- Sept. 22      **4 Ethnographic Method**  
 Due: Ethnography preliminary site proposal and Response Essay to *Ministering Cross-Culturally* Part I.
- Sept. 29      **5 Ethnographic Method, cont. and Communication**  
 Preparation: Read Lingenfelter, *Transforming*, Chap. Three & Four, 51-82.  
 Due: Final site proposal and thematic question.
- Oct. 6        **6 Field Trip: Participant Observation**  
 Preparation: write interview questions for your ethnography project.
- Oct. 13      Module Week - No class
- Oct. 17      Field notes due (Mon.)
- Oct. 20      **7 Classification, Kinship, Status, and Roles**  
 Preparation: Read Lingenfelter & Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 91-101.  
 Read Lingenfelter, *Transforming*, Chap. Six & Seven, 107-146.
- Oct. 27      **8 Observing a Culture**  
 Preparation: Read Comaroff, 126-169
- Nov. 3       **9 Imagining Transformation & Conflict and Peacemaking**  
 Preparation: Complete "Imagining Transformation" assignment and read Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture*, 147
- Nov. 10      **Individual Meeting with Professor to Discuss Your Ethnographic Project** (No class; make appointment to see professor)
- Nov. 17      **10 Missionaries and Culture: Learning from Outsiders**  
 Preparation: Read Comaroff, xi-xv, 1-13, 32-85, 170-251, 309-314 and write a book review
- Nov. 24      Thanksgiving - No Class
- Dec. 1       **11 Missionaries and Culture: Learning from an Insider**  
 Preparation: Read *Kisare*, 13-150

- Dec. 8           **12 Incarnational Mission**  
Preparation: Read Lingenfelter, *Transforming*, Chap. Nine, 167-182.  
Due: Field notes and Response Essay Part II due
- Dec. 15           **13 Student Presentations**  
Due: Final paper

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Response Essay to *Ministering Cross-Culturally Part One*** Write a personal response to this book. (This is not a critical review of the book. The assignment focuses on you as a reader of the book.) This should include how you felt as you read about approaches to life that contrast yours. Which of the six tensions is most difficult for you to deal with, why? What did you learn about yourself as you read? How do you imagine this will be helpful to you in ministry? Include within the essay or in a separate section a positive statement about each of the 12 orientations in the book. Two pages, single-spaced. *Due Sept. 22.* Do the questionnaire in chapter two **before** you read chapters three through nine.

**Response Essay to *Ministering Cross-Culturally Part Two*** Throughout the semester take note of examples of the orientations and, preferably, tensions between the orientations, that Lingenfelter describes in this book. Describe at least four examples, and reflect on how you understood and/or experienced these situations differently because of the book and the course. One and one-half to two pages, single-spaced. *Due Dec. 8.*

**Imagining Transformation Essay:** How might an encounter with Jesus Christ transform the Tswana society? That is a question best answered in conversation with people of the culture as they actually encounter the reality of the Reign of God in the life of their community. Reading 45 pages about Tswana society does not qualify one to give an answer. Since, however, missionaries have too often envisioned the transformation of another culture through the lens and framework of the missionary's culture, it is a good exercise to attempt to try to imagine transformation of a different culture in terms of that culture rather than simply imposing our culture on the new converts. Write a *three to four page double-spaced* essay that communicates what a transformed Tswana society might look like after encountering Jesus and experiencing the redeeming presence of the Holy Spirit. Focus your essay on three to four areas of Tswana society. Do not just say, "they will be more caring" or "there will be more equality," but illustrate those qualities through specific concrete examples of the changes you imagine. Within the imagined "picture you paint" of a new Tswana society include some elements of the culture that you do not view as in conflict with the Reign of God, and also be sensitive to the fact that you may need to describe new ways of fulfilling the functions of some aspects of the society that you have changed or eliminated. You will be graded on how well you are able to what is described above in a way that is authentic to the Tswana society. It is imperative that this assignment is finished before class on *Nov. 3*; late papers will be graded down by 50%.

**Critical Book Review:** In the first third of your review describe the thesis and main arguments of the Comaroff's book. In the second third offer a critical analysis of the book. In the final third describe an implication for mission that is brought to light by this book (3 pages, double

spaced). It is imperative that this assignment is finished before class on *Nov. 17*; late papers will be graded down by 50%.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC PROJECT**

Students will use various anthropological research methods to explore another culture. This project will allow you to experience and learn more about another culture and gain experience in using an ethnographic approach that can be utilized in future mission settings. The project will be based on 15 hours of field research which will include at least four site visits.

**1. Preliminary Site Proposal - Sept 22** Choose a cultural setting from a culture different from your own. Contact a community leader and ask for permission to do this project. Provide the name and location of the setting of your study; describe your contact person's relation to the setting and list the four dates you have arranged for site visits. It will be graded as "acceptable" or "needs improvement," and must be revised until it is acceptable. If handed in late points will be deducted from the grade for field notes.

**2. Final Site Proposal and Thematic Question - Sept 29** Briefly describe the culture and the history of the people at the setting you have selected. Articulate a thematic question which will guide your project. With some modification this will become the introduction to your paper. From one to one-and-a-half pages--no more. It will be graded as "acceptable" or "needs improvement," and must be revised until it is acceptable. If handed in late points will be deducted from the grade for field notes. On a separate sheet hand in your final site proposal.

**3 & 4. Field notes - Oct. 17 (Mon.) & Dec. 8** Should include: your thematic question and a list of interview questions you are using; a log listing visits, interviews, phone calls, etc. (date and length); actual field notes ("condensed account," does not have to be neat); expanded account (typed or neat include date, time, place); journal (recommended, not required); analysis/"brainstorming" (not required for first set). You will be graded primarily on the ethnographic research you are doing (quality of observations and use of methods), as reflected through your notes, and secondarily on the quality and content of the notes themselves. The first set of field notes should reflect at least one third of your 15 hours of field research and should include notes from at least one formal interview. This will allow the professor to give you feedback on how to improve or modify your questions. Note that all field work must be completed before Dec. 8.

**4. Final paper - Dec. 15** Use material from your field notes to present a description of your cultural setting that allows you to articulate an answer to your original question. Be careful that your final paper communicates significant emic perspectives along with your etic analysis. The final paper *is not* meant to be a summary of all of your field notes. The grade for this paper is not a grade on the project as a whole. You will be graded on how well you select and analyze material from your notes and organize it in a logical way to answer your thematic question. Total length should be 10 to 12 pages. Students may turn in a draft of the paper on Dec. 8 or earlier if they would like to receive the professor's input before they write the final draft. It must be a "best draft" not a rough draft. Two model papers displaying different approaches are on reserve in the library, ask for "manuscript by Dan Martens" and "manuscript by Darren Duerksen."

**5. Class presentation - Dec. 15** The above paper is a report on your findings, not on how you obtained the findings. The class presentation, however, is an opportunity for you to reflect on the project itself. Include personal reflections on the experience and evaluation of the methods you used. Maximum time for presentation ten minutes.

**Attendance** is included as part of the class participation grade. To get an “A” in this category you must have perfect attendance and make significant contributions to class discussion. An “A-” will be given to those with perfect attendance and good participation or to those with one absence and significant participation. Two absences will place a student in the “B” range; participation will determine whether it is a high or low “B.” Three absences could move the student in to the “C” range. Four or more absences place the student at risk of receiving an “F” in class participation, but also at risk of having their course grade lowered a full letter grade or of automatically failing the class. Students may talk to the professor about ways to partially make up for absences. Note that “significant participation” refers to quality of participation not just quantity.

### **Academic Policies:**

MBBS academic policies are described at [www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies](http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies) . These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar or Academic Dean.

### **Assignment policies for this course:**

1. Students are expected to submit assignments on time; if they are late they will be graded down one grade level (a B+ becomes a B). It is especially crucial that the “Imagining Transformation” essay and the “Critical Book Review” are done before class, and it would be unfair to do them after class. Therefore they will be graded down 50% if handed in late.
2. All written work should have one inch margins and Times Roman 12pt font, double-spaced unless stated otherwise.
3. All assignments may be printed on scrap paper.

### **Grading Scheme:**

Attendance and class participation 10%; Response Essay Part I 5%; Response Essay Part II 5%; Imagining Transformation Essay 10% Book Review 15%; Ethnographic Project 55% (Field notes 17% each, Paper 16%, Presentation 5%).

As stated in the MBBS academic policies/grading a “B” is the baseline grade. A “B” means the student is doing satisfactory work. The “B+” or higher grade indicates that the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. The “C” grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level. I will write a letter grade on your assignments. In my grade book each letter grade will be given a numerical equivalent (B+ = 3.33; A- = 3.67). At the end of the semester your numerical average will determine your final grade based on the following scale:

- 4.00 to 3.83 = A
- 3.82 to 3.5 = A-
- 3.49 to 3.17 = B+
- 3.16 to 2.83 = B etc.

## APPROXIMATE COURSE TIME INVESTMENTS

Class sessions (13 x 2.75 hrs. = 35.75)	36 hrs.
Assigned reading (652 pages @ 2min/p = 21.7 hrs.)	22 hrs.
Response Essays	6 hrs
Comaroff assignments	12 hrs.
Ethnographic project logistics	6 hrs.
Ethnographic field research	15 hrs.
Writing and summarizing field notes, meeting with prof.	23 hrs.
Ethnographic proposal, paper, and presentation	15 hrs.
Total	135 hrs.