

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

IS-520 (3 units)

CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

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Delores Friesen, PhD
David Rose, PhD
Jon Isaak, PhD
Budi Hartano, TA

dfriesen@mbseminary.edu
drose@mbseminary.edu
jisaak@mbseminary.edu
teflon88@yahoo.com

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course involves a three-stage process. First, the “encounter” of diverse cultures, social classes, and models of Christian ministries in Los Angeles and Fresno. Second, the “exchange” of ideas, stereotypes, and perceptions. Third, the “embrace” of cultures and ministries. The course is an intensive experience, combining site visits, community living, interviews, debriefing, group discussion, reading, journaling, and integrative writing. It provides a rich context for self-examination and ministry preparation.

Note: The students in IS-520 (Cross-Cultural Encounter) meet as a cohort along with the students in MF-520 (Cross-Cultural Counseling) to jointly share this experiential learning course. Each group, however, has its own syllabus.

II. SCHEDULE AND COURSE CONTEXT:

January 5-13, Session #1 - CCE/C - Los Angeles (1.5 units)

January 14-20, Session #2 - CCE/C - Fresno (1.5 units)

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

A. To develop vision, understanding, and appreciation for the cultures, diversity, and opportunities that grace God’s people in an urban context.

B. To provide a different learning context for students through an intensive and diverse exposure to a variety of church/ministry/counseling/social service agency models in Los Angeles and Fresno. The context for the course also includes a diversity of participants which brings a range of personalities, perspectives, and ministry experiences to this “school on wheels.” This adds to the richness of our learning together.

C. To focus skill training and resourcing in five primary areas: evangelism, discipling, urban church planting/growth, counseling, and cross-cultural communication.

D. To learn through an experiential model of education, beginning with praxis and moving to theory, with a careful assessment of the theology that shapes each aspect of ministry (i.e., what is the theology of church, leadership, structures/systems, and lay involvement, embodied in this particular ministry?).

E. To discern, analyze, assess, and personalize basic principles of ministry in the urban

context. This means journaling and group processing are integral part of the course. Assignments for the course will be reflective, analytical, personal, integrative, and application oriented.

IV. MBBS PROGRAM GOALS: This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program in that it will help the student to:

A. Awaken and nurture a “heart for the city” as demonstrated by Jesus, noting both the beauty and challenges of diverse cultures, ministries, and religions (MBBS desired outcome #1: *Demonstrate commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus in Christian community*).

B. Engage in the hermeneutical task of analyzing, synthesizing, and engaging contemporary church, culture, and world issues from a biblical theological perspective (MBBS desired outcome #2: *Articulate commitment to a biblical theological Christian perspective*).

C. Nurture healthy interpersonal relationships and effective communication patterns in the context of the learning cohort, giving special attention to assessing the significance of cultural context for interpreting the Bible within and across cultures (MBBS desired outcome #3: *Interpret diverse cultural contexts of ministry using theological perspectives integrated with social scientific approaches*).

D. Develop and practice skills in sound cross-cultural engagement, dialoguing respectfully, witnessing effectively, serving and leading faithfully, relating appropriately and sensitively across cultures, religions, and special populations (MBBS desired outcome #4: *Practice skills in pastoral and educational leadership*).

V. REQUIRED TEXTS:

Elmer, Duane. (2002). *Cross-Cultural Connections*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity. ISBN: 0-8308-2309-3.

Fadiman, Anne. (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. ISBN: 0-374-52564-1.

Fuder, John, ed. (1999). *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community*. Chicago: Moody. ISBN: 0-8024-9100-6.

Shenk, David W. (1995). *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Society*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald. ISBN: 0-8361-9006-8.

Note: Cross-Cultural Encounter (IS-520) students are encouraged to consult their Cross-Cultural Counseling (MF-520) classmate’s text by McGoldrick (ed.), *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (1996), for additional questions, ideas, and suggestions in dealing with various cross-cultural settings.

VI. ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Due before the course begins

1. Read the Elmer textbook and write a three-page review. After summarizing the thrust of the book, identify and elaborate on five ideas that you found most helpful as you prepare for this cross-cultural encounter. Due on January 5 to Prof. Jon Isaak.

2. Read the Shenk textbook and write a six-page review. Compose a paragraph summary for each chapter. Include one "I wonder..." statement/question in each paragraph where you articulate an idea you would like to pursue. Due on January 5 to Prof. Jon Isaak.

3. Begin reading in the Fadiman text and Fuder text. Assignments related to these texts are due during the course, but students often find it difficult to find time to read during the course. Try to do as much of the required reading before the course as possible.

B. Due during the course

1. Keep a daily journal. Write a one-page reflection/insight on your experience and learning from the day's encounters in the presentation, reading, and interaction with people. This is not so much a "travelogue" of what you did, but of what happened to you in the process. What troubled you? What surprised you? Where did you see God at work? Please purchase a spiral-bound notebook and use it for your journaling.

Session #1 journaling is due on January 12 to Prof. Jon Isaak. It will be returned to you in time for the start of Session #2.

Session #2 journaling is due on January 19 to Prof. David Rose.

2. Participate actively in group discussions, debriefing, and ministry evaluations. Engage presenters with respectful and thoughtful questions. Be a constructive member of the cohort. Your participation score reflects the instructors' assessment of your contribution.

3. Read the Fadiman text and write a two-page personal response to the issues raised by this narration of a Hmong family's experience in an American culture. What have you learned? How might your leadership/ministry be shaped by what you encountered in this book? Due on January 15 to Prof. Delores Friesen.

4. Read the Fuder text and focus especially on the chapters listed below which are coordinated with our ministry visits. Please be sure to provide evidence in your daily journal of having read the chapter(s) for that particular day.

January 5 Chapter 3 - A Case for Wholistic Ministry (55-72)
 Chapter 4 - A Philosophy for Urban Ministry (73-86)
 Chapter 6 - Becoming an "Insider" (109-124)

January 7 Chapter 11 - The Use of Arts in Urban Evangelism and Discipleship (171-186)

January 8	Chapter 8 - Ministerial Formation in the African-American Community (141-154) Chapter 9 - The Role of Preaching in the African-American Community (155- 168) Chapter 5 - Promoting Racial Reconciliation (87-105)
January 9	Chapter 23 – Reaching the Homosexual Community (371-384)
January 10	Chapter 15 - Incarnational Ministry in the Latino Community (245-260) Chapter 19 – Missions in Reverse (309-324)
January 11	Chapter 18 – Bridging the Gap to Islam (295-309) Chapter 20 – Restoring Dignity to the Homeless (327-346)
January 12	Chapter 17 - Outreach to the Jewish Community (275-294) Chapter 16 - Reaching the Chinese Community (262-274)

5. Complete evaluations of the ministries we visit. Forms will be provided. Please complete the assessment on the same day while impressions are current and fresh. This feedback is helpful for assessing each ministry's contribution to the program and whether changes are needed for the next year's course.

C. Due after the course is completed

1. Write a 12 to 15-page integrative paper exploring and analyzing the various issues experienced and studied during the course. Where have you changed and how will your leadership/interactions be different because you participated in the cross-cultural encounter? This is an integrative paper, not a research paper. Structure your paper as follows.

Begin your paper with a description of your own worldview/cultural system. Include relevant religious, ethnic, racial, family system, and class data about your own particularity.

In the second and largest part of your paper interact with three cultural, religious, or social groups that you have encountered during the course. Describe the group and discuss the salient points of similarity and difference from your particularity. Cite relevant material from the required readings. Conclude each group analysis by listing and elaborating on ways that you would now connect and interact with the group in a sensitive and wholistic way.

Finally, conclude your paper by summarizing your findings and relating them to your growing understanding of God's calling—in your life and in the life of the church. How are you coming to view illness, healing, change, ministry, mission, evil, and salvation? What does God's shalom project now look like for you? What is your place in God's mission?

Please use standard citation form (Chicago or APA). The grading scale is as follows: excellent (A = 90-100%), above average (B = 80-89%), average (C = 70-

79%), unsatisfactory (less than 70%). Integrative paper is due to Prof. Delores Friesen on January 28.

2. Complete online course evaluation.

VII. SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

January 5 Elmer review due
January 5 Shenk review due
January 13 Session #1 journal due and three ministry evaluations due
January 14 Fadiman response due
January 20 Session #2 journal due and three ministry evaluations due
January 28 Integrative paper due
January 28 Course evaluation on class page of seminary website

VIII. GRADING:

Elmer review	10%
Shenk review	15%
Daily Journal (session #1 and #2)	20%
Fadiman response	10%
Participation in discussions/evaluations	15%
Integrative paper	30%

	100%

IX. FOR STUDENTS NEEDING ONLY 1.5 UNITS: Consult with instructors and arrange/propose an assignment plan roughly half of the amount expected for 3 unit students, tailored to whether you are doing the L.A. session or the Fresno session.

X. NOTES:

A. Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <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, accommodations for disabilities, grading, 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 an instructor or consult the Registrar.

B. Evaluation. "Student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class" (<http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course.

C. Submitting assignments. Students are asked to submit hard-copy versions of their assignments to the instructor indicated in the assignment description above. The instructors will not print papers sent electronically as file attachments.

D. Course evaluations. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.