

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

IM-667 (3 Units)  
Spring 2008  
Thursdays 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Professor: Mark D. Baker, Ph.D.  
452-1768 (office); 255-5236 (home)  
e-mail: mbaker@mbseminary.edu  
Office Hours: Tues. 1:00-3:00 &  
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
- 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
- develop ability in discerning areas a culture could benefit from God's transformative work.

**RELATED DEGREE OBJECTIVES**

Within the larger curriculum goals of the Seminary, this course will facilitate growth in ability to:

- Articulate integrated theological and social scientific understanding through cultural context analysis (3.1.4)
- Compare traits of own culture with cultures that differ from one's own (3.2.1, 4.2.2)
- Identify indigenous leadership styles from ethnographic and anthropological studies (4.3.3.1)
- Identify the weaknesses of Western style leadership when imposed on non-Western cultures (4.3.3.3)
- Demonstrate contextualization skills through the completion of an ethnographic field research project (4.4.3)
- Demonstrate preparedness for intercultural ministry by developing and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships and communication links with diverse cultural groups (4.5).

## COURSE TEXTS

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

Entz, Donna. *From Kansas to Kenedougou... And Back*, MMN, 2004.

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

Feb. 7           **1 Introduction to the Course**

Feb. 14          **2 Gospel and Culture**

Preparation: Read Lingenfelter, "Transferring or Transforming Culture?" 11-22.

Due: Response Essay to *Ministering Cross-Culturally* Part I.

Feb. 21          **3 Gospel and Culture, cont. & Ethnographic Method**

Preparation: Read Baker & Wagner, "Reading Romans in Hurricane Devastated Honduras," 367-377 and list implications for missionaries.

Read Melba P. Maggay "The Gospel in Filipino Context" and evaluate it in terms of last week's class. Bring observations, reflections and questions to class.

Bring to class ideas for three possible ethnographic research sites

Feb. 28          **4 Field Trip: Participant Observation**

Read; Lingenfelter, "Disputes, Conflicts and Communication," 147-166.

Due: Ethnography preliminary site proposal

March 6         March Intensive Week - No class

Due: Final site proposal and thematic question.

March 13        **5 Communication & Reciprocity**

Preparation: write interview questions for your ethnography project.

March 20        No class - Holy Week

March 27        **6 Classification, Kinship, Status, and Roles**

Preparation: Read Lingenfelter & Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 91-101.

April 3          **7 Observing a Culture**

Preparation: Read Comaroff, 126-169

Field notes due

April 10         **Individual Meeting with Professor to Discuss Your Ethnographic Project** (No

class; make appointment to see professor)

"Imagining Transformation" assignment due

- April 17      Reading week
- April 24      **8 Missionaries and Culture: Learning from Outsiders**  
Preparation: Read Comaroff, xi-xv, 1-13, 32-85, 170-251, 309-314 and write a book review
- May 1         **9 Missionaries and Culture: Learning from an Insider & Incarnational Mission**  
Preparation: Read *Kisare*, 13-150 and Entz, 1-13 - see appendix
- May 8         Due: Field notes and Response Essay Part II due
- May 15        **10 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 Feb. 14*. 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 May 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. Due April 10. It is imperative that this assignment is finished before class number eight; papers handed in after that date 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 *April 24*; 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. Come to class with ideas for 3 possible sites - Feb. 21**

**1. Preliminary Site Proposal - Feb. 28** 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 - March 6** 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 - April 3 & May 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 May 8.

**4. Final paper - May 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 May 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 - May 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 (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, accommodations for disability, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, grading templates, 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 your professor or consult the Registrar. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

#### **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 10%; Response Essay Part II 5%; Imagining Transformation Essay 10% Book Review 15%; Ethnographic Project 50% (Field notes 15% each, Paper 15%, 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 letter 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 (11 x 2.75 hrs. = 30.25)	30 hrs.
Assigned reading (565 pages @ 2min/p = 18.8.)	20 hrs.
Response Essays	6 hrs
Comaroff assignments	12 hrs.
Ethnographic method recommended reading	2 hrs.
Ethnographic project logistics	10 hrs.
Ethnographic field research	15 hrs.
Writing and summarizing field notes, meeting with prof.	25 hrs.
Ethnographic proposal, paper, and presentation	15 hrs.
Total	135 hrs.

**Appendix*****Kisare Reading Assignment* pp. 13-150**

As you read please think about the following questions:

1. Where do you see examples of things we have read about in Ligenfelter and the Comaroffs in this book? Or, Why might Kisare recommend we read those books?

2. What are lessons we can learn from this book about cross-cultural mission? (What are things to emulate and things to avoid?)

3. How does seeing the gospel, the church, and mission through the eyes of an Tanzanian add to and enrich your understanding, and potentially your experience of the gospel of Jesus Christ individually and corporately?

**Donna Kampen Entz. *From Kansas to Kenedougou... And Back***

Please read this essay through the lens of the class sessions and other readings this semester. What are things you see that remind of you things we have read or discussed? How does she put into practice things we have advocated? What are new insights and ideas you have from this reading?