

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER: LATIN AMERICA
CROSS-CULTURAL COUNSELING: LATIN AMERICA

IS-520-3/MF-520-3 (1.5 Units)
Summer 2008
June 5-15

Professor: Mark D. Baker, Ph.D.
452- 1768 (office); 255-5236 (home)
e-mail: mbaker@mbseminary.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION This course involves an encounter with the Honduran culture and context through site visits, community living, presentations, and conversation. It also provides an opportunity to encounter the biblical text in conversation with Central Americans. There will also be times of processing and debriefing with other MBBS students. It provides a rich context for self-examination and ministry preparation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through this course students will:

- Develop and practice skills in sound cross-cultural engagement
- Nurture healthy interpersonal relationships and effective communication patterns in the context of the learning cohort
- Observe urban and rural examples of Christian community development and holistic mission
- Learn about the church and ministry in a different setting and learn from ministry practitioners in that setting
- Observe, and participate in, a model of missionary led biblical study that gives input, is dialogical and displays an expectation to learn from participants
- Articulate pastoral and missional implications and applications of Paul's letter to the Galatians
- Reflect on the opportunities and responsibilities of having sibling relationships with churches and Christians in Central America

LEARNING OUTCOMES ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE

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

- Analyze, synthesize, and engage contemporary church and world issues from a biblical theological perspective (2.4)
- Assess the significance of cultural context for interpreting Scripture within and across cultures (3.2)

REQUIRED READING

Baker, Mark D. *Religious No More: Building Communities of Grace and Freedom*. Wipf & Stock, 2005 or IVP, 1999.

Nazario, Sonia. *Enrique's Journey*. Random House, 2006, 2007; pages 3-15 & 24-37 (CP).

Fraser, Barbara & Paul Jeffrey. *Latin America Today*. National Catholic Reporter, 2004 (all 17 articles) available at: http://ncronline.org/mainpage/la_intro.htm

McLaren, Brian. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*. Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Padilla, C. Rene. "Integral Mission." In *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, ed. John Corrie. IVP, 2007 (CP) (For CCE students).

Sells, James, et al. "The Effect of Honduran Counseling Practices on the North American Counseling Profession: The Power of Poverty." *Journal of Counseling & Development* 85 (Fall 2007): 431-39. Full text available through EBSCO (For CCC students)

CP = Course pack, photocopied articles will be given to the students, and they will be billed for copying and royalty costs.

RECOMMENDED READING

Baker, Mark D. "Is God Perceived as a God of Love: The Impact of Spanish Roman Catholic Heritage, Machismo, and Experience of Authority on Latin Americans' Concept of God." Available under "Journal Essays" at: <http://www.mbseminary.edu/baker/articles>

Baker, Mark D. "Saving Significance of the Cross in a Honduran Barrio." *Mission Focus Annual Review* 14 (2006): 59-81. Available under "Journal Essays" at: <http://www.mbseminary.edu/baker/articles>

Benjamin, Medea. *Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks From the Heart*. Harper, 1989. In library: HN160.Z9 C62 1989.

ASSIGNMENTS

Before the course

Do all of the required reading except McLaren. As you read write down things the texts lead you to want to explore more while in Honduras. You are encouraged to interpret the previous sentence broadly. For instance it could include things like: "I would like to meet 'Martin' from chapter three of *Religious No More* and ask him...."; "I would like to talk with others about whether they really think it matters whether we translate Galatians 2:16 as 'faith of'."; "I want see ways ministries we observe do and do not match up to the following characteristics in Padilla's article...." etc. Hand in a statement listing the reading you have done and your notes on the reading (list of things you want to explore) by June 2. (You may turn this in electronically or hard copy.)

During the course

Participate actively in group discussions, debriefing, and class discussions. Engage presenters with respectful and thoughtful questions. Be a constructive member of the cohort.

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. Reflect on questions like: What caught your attention? What troubled you? What surprised you? Where did you see God at work? What did you learn? What would you like to think more about? Please purchase a spiral-bound notebook and use it for your journaling. Hand in on Thursday June 19th.

Immediately after the course

Take a few hours, even on the plane, and look over your journal and reflect over the significance of this time in Honduras for your life. Write a letter to a friend, family member or partner in

ministry communicating what was most significant about the time in Honduras for you. How did it change you? What are things you have learned about yourself, the world, God's mission in the world, etc.? How do you hope this time will continue to influence and impact your life? What are things you want to think more about? There is not a set limit for the length of this letter, but remember it is a letter not a formal reflection essay. Do not make it so long the person will not feel like reading it. Due by Thursday June 19th. (Some students will likely come back to significant "to do" lists and it may be a challenge to get this done in the first days back. This is, however, meant as an immediate, fresh response to the trip. Therefore it is important to do it as soon as possible, thus the June 19th due date.)

After the course

Read McLaren's book through the lens of your experience in Honduras. Write a three to four page (single-spaced) response essay. This is not meant to be a summary or book review. Rather interact with the book in light of your experience in Honduras. The following are examples of some of the questions you might interact with: What sections of the book do you read differently than you would have before your Honduran experience? How is it obvious that McLaren too has been in Honduras and places like Honduras (actually even with the people of Amor Fe y Vida Church)? How does the book guide and/or challenge you as you consider how to respond to things you learned and experienced in Honduras? Are there ways your Honduran experience leads you to disagree with aspects of the book? Due July 10th.

We will set up a time in July to come together and discuss the book and reflect back on the trip.

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).
2. All written work should have one inch margins and Times Roman 12pt font.
3. All assignments may be printed on scrap paper.

Grading Scheme: Reading log 20%; Participation 10%; Journal 20%; Course response letter 25%; McLaren essay 25%.

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.