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# MENNONITE BRETHREN BIBLICAL SEMINARY

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IS-520  
CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

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- 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 3-11, Session #1 - CCE/C - Los Angeles (1.5 units)

January 13-18, Session #2 - CCE/C - Fresno (1.5 units)

III. **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To develop vision, understanding, and appreciation for the cultures, diversity, and opportunities that grace God’s people in an urban context.
- 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.
- To focus skill training and resourcing in five primary areas: evangelism, discipling, urban church planting/growth, counseling, and cross-cultural communication.

- 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?).
- 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. **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Angrosino, Michael. 2001. *Talking About Cultural Diversity in Your Church*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Elmer, Duane. 2002. *Cross-Cultural Connections*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Fadiman, Anne. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Shenk, David W. 1995. *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Society*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

White, Randy. 2006. *Encounter God in the City*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**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.

#### V. **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 3.**
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 Jan. 3.**
3. Begin reading in the Fadiman, Angrosino, and White texts. 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 read 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. Please purchase a spiral-bound notebook and use it for your journaling.

Session #1 journaling is due on January 11. If you are registered for the Fresno CCE, it will be returned to you in time for the start of Session #2.

Session #2 journaling is due on January 17.

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 17.
4. Read the Angrosino and White texts. Please be sure to provide evidence of your interaction with these texts.
5. Complete six evaluations of the ministries we visit—three for session #1 in L.A. and three for session #2 in Fresno. For the ministries you choose to evaluate, 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 Critical Reflection Paper. Please see Critical Reflection Guidelines in Appendix A and Critical Reflection Rubric in Appendix B at the end of this syllabus.

The Critical Reflection paper is due by February 9. Students who complete this assignment by January 26 will be awarded 5 percentage points of extra credit.

Please use standard citation form (Chicago or APA).

2. Complete online course evaluation.

**VI. SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES**

- January 3 Elmer review due
- January 3 Shenk review due
- January 11 Session #1 journal due and three ministry evaluations due
- January 17 Fadiman response due
- January 17 Session #2 journal due and three ministry evaluations due
- February 9 Integrative paper due
- February 9 Course evaluation on class page of seminary website

**VII. GRADING:**

Elmer review	10%
Shenk review	15%
Daily Journal (session #1 and #2)	20%
Fadiman response	10%
Participation in discussions/evaluations	15%
Critical Reflection Paper	30%
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	100%

The grading scale is as follows:

- Excellent (A = 90-100%)
- Above average (B = 80-89%)
- Average (C = 70-79%)
- Unsatisfactory (less than 70%)

**VIII. 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. This must be done prior to the beginning of the course.

**IX. 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.

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# APPENDIX A

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## CCE/CCC CRITICAL REFLECTION GUIDELINES

The Critical Reflection is an important piece of the student's experience in Cross Cultural Encounter/Counseling. Yet, it is also one of the most difficult to describe. Perhaps it would be most helpful to begin by describing the purpose of the critical reflections. The process of writing and submitting a critical reflection is designed to help students reflect on their experience individually and in community. Writing a critical reflection includes four steps that can be called "The 4 A's:" (1) choose and **Anecdote**, (2) Social Scientific **Analysis** (3) **Application** of Biblical Theology, (4) **Action**.

### I. Anecdote

Initially many students find this the most difficult part of the task. That is because there are so many incidents to choose from. For the purposes of this assignment, choose an anecdote regarding something that affects your formation for ministry. It could be your first day in the class or a particularly challenging or encouraging interaction. It might be making a mistake that, on hindsight, is so incredibly stupid you cannot believe you made it, or the recognition that reactivity/counter-transference played a significant role at a particular site. Or, a critical incident may be an encounter with someone that touched your soul, helped you grow as a minister, or maybe even an encounter with God.

Choose an incident that touched something inside you, something that made you resonate. The incident should primarily have to do with your formation for ministry. Your broader personal growth, while important, is not the focus of this assignment. The incident should be clearly connected with your professional behavior as a vocational minister of the Gospel.

### II. Social Scientific Analysis

The analysis should include at least three elements. First describe the incident. Describe it behaviorally, that is, concretely and objectively. Paint a picture so that your reader can see the incident. In doing so, you may recall details that you did not notice before, or you may realize that you failed to attend to significant information and so do not know all that happened.

Then analyze the incident interpretively. What happened that affected you as a minister? Using the various theoretical lenses (e.g., theories of counseling, personality theories, systems theories, Appreciative Inquiry, Diffusion of Innovation, ethnographic analysis) with which you have been outfitted through your seminary training, how do you understand what happened? What theoretical frameworks provide you with insight about this incident? What can you not explain? What internal dynamics in you, and in the others involved, contributed to the incident? What could you not understand and why? And, most importantly, how did the incident affect you, how did you change after the incident?

### III. Application of Biblical Theology

Then reflect on the anecdote theologically. Where was God when the incident occurred? How were

you aware of God's presence and power, or perhaps you sensed God had withdrawn? How does scripture speak to what occurred? What theological questions or concerns did the incident raise? How is your understanding of and relationship with God, Jesus, or what it means to be a minister affected by this incident?

Of course, there is a great deal of overlap between these three elements of reflection and, as long as all three are clearly present, you may blend them as you write.

#### **IV. Action**

What new actions will you take in light of these reflections? Writing makes it real and helps you focus and clarify. Keep it brief and concrete. However, include enough detail to demonstrate that you did a thorough reflection. The instructor should be able to understand what occurred in the anecdote, why you chose it, how you used social sciences to analyze it, how you applied Biblical theology to understand it, and how it has affected your action. And the instructor should see you in the incident. A "newspaper article" style account is NOT acceptable. The reflection should demonstrate that you allowed the incident to touch your soul and show some of how God has used it in your professional growth.

#### **V. A Final Note**

Remember that your reflection will become part of your Performance Assessment Catalog and may be reviewed by faculty members outside of the class and by external reviewers. PAC documents must be submitted electronically.

# APPENDIX B

## EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION PAPER

Category	Poor	Good	Superior
<b>Anecdote:</b>			
a. Choice arises from the experience of or confrontation by a culture other than the student's own.	Little awareness shown of the personal impact of the experience/confrontation or anecdote arises from within the student's own culture.	Clearly identifies the personal impact of the experience/confrontation with a culture other than the student's own.	Shows advanced insight into the personal impact of the experience/confrontation with a culture other than the student's own.
b. Identifies and describes the culture of the ministry in the anecdote.	Inaccurately or superficially describes the culture of the ministry.	Accurately and insightfully describes the culture of the ministry.	Demonstrates advanced ability to describe the culture of the ministry accurately and insightfully.
c. Identifies and describes the cultural context of the ministry in the anecdote.	Inaccurately or superficially describes the cultural context of the ministry.	Accurately and insightfully describes the cultural context of the ministry.	Demonstrates advanced ability to describe the cultural context of the ministry accurately and insightfully.
d. Describes the relationship between the culture of the ministry and its cultural context.	Inaccurately or superficially describes the relationship between the culture of the ministry and its cultural context.	Accurately and insightfully describes the relationship between the culture of the ministry and its cultural context.	Demonstrates advanced ability to describe the relationships between the culture of the ministry and its cultural context accurately and insightfully.
e. Demonstrates awareness of the student's distance from cultures in B and C.	Shows limited awareness of the student's ethnocentrism and a limited ability to tolerate cultural differences.	Shows appropriate awareness of student's ethnocentrism and ability to tolerate cultural differences.	Shows an advanced awareness of student's ethnocentrism and ability to love and value across cultural differences.
<b>Analysis:</b>			
a. Uses categories based in social science in analysis appropriate to the anecdote.	Fails to use such categories or uses inappropriate categories.	Uses such categories appropriately.	Chooses categories with advanced insight.
b. Accurately uses categories based in social science for analysis.	Fails to use such categories accurately.	Uses such categories accurately.	Demonstrates advanced capacity to apply such categories accurately.
c. Demonstrates increased understanding of the anecdote through the use of categories based in social science.	Understanding of the anecdote does not advance beyond simplistic level.	Understanding of the anecdote shows an increased awareness of the complexity of the anecdote.	Uses such categories in elegant ways that demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the complex dynamics of the anecdote.
<b>Application:</b>			
d. Uses theological resources in analysis appropriate to the anecdote.	Fails to use such resources adequately or appropriately.	Uses such resources appropriately.	Employs such resources with advanced insight.
e. Accurately uses theological resources for analysis.	Fails to use such resources accurately.	Uses such resources accurately.	Demonstrates advanced capacity to employ such resources accurately.
f. Demonstrates increased understanding of the relationship between the anecdote and biblical theology.	Understanding of the relationship between the anecdote and biblical theology does not advance beyond a simplistic, inconsistent, or moralistic level.	Shows appropriate insight into the relationship between the anecdote and biblical theology.	Uses theological resources in ways that demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the anecdote and biblical theology.
<b>Action:</b>			
a. Identifies new actions/practices.	Fails to identify new actions/practices.	Identifies new actions/practices.	Identifies new, significantly appropriate actions/practices.
b. Actions/practices are informed by both theology and social science.	Actions/practices are not informed by both theology and social science.	Actions/practices are informed by both theology and social science.	Actions/practices are thoroughly informed by both theology and social science.
c. Actions/practices are	Fail to show clear connection	Shows clear connection with	Flow explicitly from the work

clearly the result of a faithful use of the 4 A's process.	with each of the three previous sections.	each of the three previous sections.	done in three previous sections.
<b>English Grammar:</b> Accurate use of word choice, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.	Many grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors.	Few grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Proper use of words.	None or very few grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Elegant use of words and phrases.
<b>Format:</b> Accurate use of APA*, MLA, or Chicago format.  [*CCC students are required to use APA format.]	Fails to use appropriate format.	Generally follows appropriate format.	Accurate use of appropriate format.