

CR 201-1 CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE: PRE-IMMERSION SESSIONS
METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO
Spring 2009 Thursdays 5:00 – 6:20 p.m. (Feb 19; Mar 19; Apr 16, 30; May 14)
Gault Hall 140

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students prepare for CR202, Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience, through assigned readings, discussion, and practical exercises. It focuses, first, on examining implications and challenges of globalization both to the human community and to the church. Since the latter part of the twentieth century globalization has become the most dominant force shaping and affecting the life and environment of the peoples on this planet. As the world is increasingly shaped by globalization, theology stands between the global and the local. Students are thus invited and challenged to engage in theology, interacting with and integrating both the global and local realities. Further, they are encouraged to understand critically the systemic issues (social, historical, and economic) that interconnect the global and local contexts, and begin to develop a vision of the church as a faithful witness and a transforming agent both in the personal and social realms.

Second, this course seeks to explore the nature and dynamics of intercultural communication and cross-cultural observation. It examines characteristics, principles, and precepts of intercultural interaction and communication. The emphasis is placed on preparing students to listen, to learn, and to begin to think critically about their own religious and social identity and location, and cultural context. As such, the pre-immersion sessions are designed to help students develop a receptive attitude and responsiveness to the “cultural other.”

Third, students will be introduced to the cultural, religious, historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts and issues of the country they travel to. By studying the culture, history, and religion prior to the trip, students will be in a better position to understand and engage the local people and their situation in a mutually hospitable way.

The cross-cultural immersion experience is not a “tourist” adventure, nor is it a trip in which students give something to the people they will be visiting. Rather, the goal is for them to receive and learn from the people in another culture. (Certainly, when invited by people in the host culture, they would be welcome to share about their own culture and faith.)

It is hoped that the three phases of the cross-cultural experience course (CR201, CR202, CR203) will provide students with different lenses (or additional lenses) for seeing and knowing themselves as a cultural person, shaped and formed by particular social location and culture; and for viewing the local church experience and the United States within the

global context. Gaining a new understanding of culture, people, and faith, they would be able to build an awareness of the increasing diversity found not only within the global church (and the world), but also within the church in North America. With such awareness they would be better prepared to engage in ministry in a culturally and religiously diverse context.

OBJECTIVES

To be able to prepare for a cross-cultural immersion experience by:

- understanding the globalization phenomenon with its positive and negative consequences
- beginning to engage in theology locally and globally, that is, interacting and integrating both the global and the local realities
- understanding changing concepts of culture
- learning dynamics and skills of intercultural communication and cross-cultural observation, and developing intercultural sensitivity in the context of cross-cultural encounter
- being aware of the meaning and value of listening to the “cultural other” in cross-cultural observation
- learning to interact more effectively in North American multicultural environments

TEXTS

A. Required Texts

Virginia B. Ricard, *Developing Intercultural Communication Skills* (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1993). **Chapters 4&5 (on reserve)**

Larry A. Samovar, and Richard Porter. *Communication Between Cultures* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1991). **Chapters 4&5 (on reserve)**

Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (New York: Orbis, 1997). **Chapters 1&7 (on reserve)**

Mika. Vahakangas, “Christian Partnership as an Ideal in Inter-Church Cooperation,” in *The Role of Mission in the Future of Lutheran Theology* (University of Aarhus, 2003). **(on reserve).**

James H. Grayson, “Korea’s Religious Traditions: Analytical Overview” and Don Baker, “Transformation of Religion in Modern Korea,” in *Insight into Korea* (Seoul: Herald Media, 2007), 302-320.

B. Supplemental Sources

Hall, Sherwood. *With Stethoscope in Asia: Korea* (MCL Associates, 1978)

Endo, Shusaku. *Silence* (Taplinger, 1980)

Yoshimoto, Banana. *Kitchen* (Grove, 2006)

Natsume, Soseki. *Botchan* (Kodansha International, 2007)

C. Recommended Reading

- Brislin, Richard W. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.
- Brubaker, Pamela K. *Globalization at What Price?: Economic Change and Daily Life*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.
- Greider, Kathleen J. "From Multiculturalism to Interculturality: Demilitarizing the Border Between Personal and Social Dynamics Through Spiritual Receptivity." *Journal of Supervision in Ministry*, 22 (2003): 40-58.
- Kim, Young-II. "Identifying and Communicating God's Presence in the Cross-Cultural Context." In *Knowledge, Attitude, and Experience: Ministry in a Cross-Cultural Context*, ed. Young-II Kim. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- Seelye, H. Ned, ed. *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1996.
- Storti, Craig. *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Difference*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1994.
- Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transformation and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Attendance
Attendance at all five sessions is expected and required. In order to pass the course, no more than one session may be missed.

2. Reading/Reflection Assignments
Much of the value of this course will come from interaction among the participants. Students are, thus, to prepare for each class session by carefully reading the assigned texts and to take an active part in discussions.

Students are required to write a reading reflection on the assignments for March 19, April 16, and April 30. Each reflection is to be **one single-spaced page in length**. It is to identify and single out 4-5 central points of the reading—major ideas, themes, and issues that have been found important—with a brief reflection that might include insights and assumptions of the author, opposing points of view, or questions crucial to cross-cultural experience. These reflections will be used for interactive class discussions.

3. Prerequisite
M.Div. students will normally have completed a 1/3 of the degree program before pursuing a cross-cultural immersion experience.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1—February 19: OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

- Introduction to the Course
- Cross-Cultural Immersion Handbook Review: Karen Gee
- Introduction to the Immersion Trip to Korea/Japan

Session 2—March 19: PREPARATION FOR THE IMMERSION TRIP

- **Korea and Japan:** Brief History, Culture, Religion & Society
- **Guest Alum:** Brian Dickensheets, “Letting Go”
- **Reading:** James H. Grayson, “Korea’s Religious Traditions: Analytical Overview” and Don Baker, “Transformation of Religion in Modern Korea,” in *Insight into Korea* (Seoul: Herald Media, 2007), 302-320

Kenneth J. Dale, “Why the Slow Growth of the Japanese Church?”

Session 3—April 16: GLOBALIZATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

- **Reading:** Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Chapters 1&7).
- Discuss “globalization and the contexts of theology,” “concepts of culture,” and “the new catholicity”
- Relate these ideas to what we know about Far East Asia

Session 4—April 30: DYNAMICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- **Reading:** Samovar and Porter, pp. 69-99, 103-142 (“Understanding Intercultural Communication: Principles and Precepts” and “Cultural Diversity in Perception: Alternative Views of Reality”); and Ricard, pp. 63-96 (“Observing” and “Listening”)
- Discuss forms and elements of “intercultural communication,” including the role/place of perception in intercultural interaction and communication.
- Discuss frameworks for growth in intercultural interaction and communication with particular emphasis on important factors that impact most intercultural

relationships, including observing and listening, as well as exploring similarities and differences across cultures.

- Discuss the impact of values on intercultural interaction and communication, the importance of recognizing individual similarities and differences (cultural patterns and preferences) in intercultural interaction and communication, etc.
- Practical exercises, including discussion of language issues (Practice some Japanese and Korean words)

Session 5—May 14: FINAL TRIP PREPARATIONS

- **Reading:** Vahakangas, Mika. “Christian Partnership as an Ideal in Inter-Church Cooperation.” In *The Role of Mission in the Future of Lutheran Theology*. University of Aarhus, 2003. (on reserve).

Augsburger, David. “The Universal, the Cultural, and the Unique: A Theology of Culture.” In *Pastoral Counseling across Cultures*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986.

- Discuss Augsburger’s notion of the “tripartite” model of understanding human identity and apply learnings to cross-cultural interaction.
- Final trip preparations