

MI 534 Intercultural Communication

Winter 2012 Online

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SCHEDULE: January 16 – April 21, 2012

COURSE WEIGHT: 3 credits

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DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the principles and processes of communicating from one sociocultural context to another, with special focus on the communication of the Christian message.

**“Men hate each other because they fear each other;
they fear each other because they do not know each other;
they do not know each other because they do not communicate;
they do not communicate because they are separate.”**

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To become familiar with the discipline of intercultural communication
2. To develop an awareness of contemporary events that illustrates the need for improved intercultural communication skills.
3. To gain skills toward the reduction of the attrition that arises in the process of communicating from one cultural context to another.
4. To increase awareness of one's own cultural values and attitudes and how these affect one's ability to develop relationships with persons of other cultures and subcultures.
5. To grow in understanding one's own style as a communicator and to make adjustments that can enhance one's effectiveness, especially in the communication of the Christian message.

MI 534 Winter 2012 Online

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Lustig, Myron W. and Jolene Koester. *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures*. (6th ed.). Allyn & Bacon. 2010. Also available as a PDF download for US\$ 40.99 at <http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0205595758&xid=PSED>

Livermore, David A. *Cultural Intelligence: Improving your CQ to Engage our Multicultural World*. Baker Academic, 2009. Available as Kindle eBook at www.amazon.com for US\$9.99

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Forum Discussions. (15%) Online discussions are the closest equivalent to face-to-face classroom interaction. Students are expected to contribute an original response, of at least 100 words, to the question(s) posed and interact, with at least 60 words, to a minimum of one classmate's posting. Every module will include at least one (asynchronous) discussion arising from the readings or lectures. Original postings must be offered in each threaded discussion as well as an interaction with a classmate in each threaded discussion. Points will be assigned based on the quality of your contribution. **Due at the end of each module period.**

2. Quizzes. (30%) Each of the six modules will conclude with a timed quiz on material drawn from the text readings and lecture. Students are not forbidden to consult their course materials, however, the time allotted to the quizzes will be brief and will assume that the student is not taking time to look up answers. **Due at the end of each module period.**

3. News Article. (10%) You will post a link to an online news article related to one of the topics covered in the course. Along with the article link, offer a 400-500 word reflection on the significance of the article and how it relates to our course. Where there are implications for Christian ministry across cultures, offer those reflections as well. This assignment will be shared with the entire class. **Due March 10**

4. Research Paper. (20%) You will choose to do *one* of the following options:

A) Reflection on a Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience. The student will seek out an opportunity to become fully immersed in a different cultural context for a minimum of four (4) hours and then reflect upon and analyze that experience. The setting should be one that includes several hours of interaction with people of one particular ethnic group. It may involve a visit to a cultural centre, religious temple or mosque, a wedding, or spending time in a family setting. The paper should concentrate on differences between the group being researched and the mainstream Canadian culture, with special reference to values, time orientation, use of language, gender and age differences, proxemics and kinesics.

B) Bus Trips. Take a few rides on several city buses and LRT, especially during rush hour. Observe eye contact, the use of space and communication patterns by the passengers. Take into account such variables as age, gender, ethnicity, and fluctuating size of the crowd on the bus. What can you learn

MI 534 Winter 2012 Online

about our culture based on these observations? To undertake this project, pretend you have just landed in Edmonton from another planet or distant country. You have no prior knowledge about Canadian urban culture and are seeking to outline some basic values about our culture based upon these rather limited observations.

C) A Congregational Cultural Analysis. Do an informal study of different cultural groups of your congregation. These may be differentiated by ethnicity, generation or socioeconomic situation. Prepare an orientation paper to these cultural differences that would be helpful to a new pastoral staff member or to a group of elders/deacons involved in pastoral care. The paper should focus on differing cultural values and suggest strategies of approach for more effective ministry.

D) A research paper on a topic of your interest and choice, with prior approval of the professor.

This paper should be 8 – 12 pages in length (double spaced, no more than 12 point font) and should follow the Taylor Guide for Research and Writing (available in the Resource Section of our web site).

Due March 24.

5. Final Examination. (25%) The final examination will consist of a case study in intercultural conflict. You will be expected to analyze the case and interact with the main characters in essay form, using the categories of analysis discussed in this course. The purpose of this exercise is to test your ability to integrate the theory of the course with a concrete life-like situation. Class lecture notes and texts may be consulted. This examination will consist of a single essay and you will have two hours to write and submit it. The examination will be available from April 19 at 12:05 AM until April 21, 11:55 PM.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DATES

Assignment	Date Due	Grade Value
Forum Discussions	Weekly (Second Saturday, 23:55 hours)	15
Quizzes	Weekly (Second Saturday, 23:55 hours)	30
News Article	March 10	10
Research Paper	March 24	20
Final Examination	April 19-21	25

MI 534 Winter 2012 Online

POLICY FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

The online platform has been set up so that all assignments are due by Saturday at 11:55 PM Mountain Time, at the end of each module. When crisis situations such as a family tragedy or prolonged illness make it extremely difficult to hand an assignment in on the due date, a brief extension can be negotiated *prior to the deadline*. When an extension has not been granted, papers or postings on the Internet Site that are received after the deadline will not be graded.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Module 1 - Jan. 16 – 28

What is Intercultural Communication?

Read: L & K, cha 1-2; Livermore, cha. 1-3

Forum Discussion: Livermore states that Christians seem to display no greater levels of CQ than secular people in America. As you reflect on church life in Edmonton (compared with educational institutions, workplaces, businesses, neighbourhood associations, etc), do you think this is true of us as well? Explain.

Module 2 – Jan. 30- Feb . 11

Cultural Patterns

Read: L & K Cha. 3-4; Livermore, Cha. 4-5

Forum Discussion: Where do you think you would place yourself on the Activity Orientation scale? Are you more of a “doing” person or a “being” person? Are there differences in the predominant activity orientation among groups within your congregation? (These may be ethnic groups, generational, socioeconomic, etc.)

Forum Discussion: Both L & K and Livermore warn against making incorrect interpretive statements based on our observations of others’ behaviours. Livermore cites as examples:

- a. "Lots of poor people are smiling; they must be happy despite their poverty."
- b. "Older people in my church demonstrate little emotion in worship; they must be spiritually dead."

What are some other common misattributions you are aware/guilty of?

Module 3 – Feb. 13- Fe. 25

Cultural Patterns and Communication

Read: L & K Cha. 5-6; Livermore, Cha. 6-8

Read Case Study: Tim and Ahmed

Forum Discussion:

The root of the conflict in this case study has to do with friendships and role expectations. Both Tim and Ahmed come to this situation with different expectations dictated by their respective cultures. What would you tell Tim to help him understand Ahmed’s culture, and what would you tell Ahmed to help him figure out where Tim is coming from?

Watch Video Clip from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*

Forum Discussion:

MI 534 Winter 2012 Online

Compare and contrast the middle class Midwestern American culture with the Greek culture of the bride, using as many categories of cultural patterns as you can from the readings of this week.

Module 4 – Feb, 27-March 10

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Read: L & K Cha. 7-8; Livermore, Cha. 9-10

Forum Discussion:

How have your own faith commitments and beliefs been challenged through exposure to another religious or ideological system? Why do you think many Evangelicals are hesitant to engage in this kind of discussion?

Online Article: Read “What’s in a Word?” found at

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/07/08/what-s-in-a-word.html>

Forum Discussion:

If you are familiar with another language, offer an example or two, comparing how a choice of words affects our cognitive associations with concepts or objects.

News Article Due

Module 5 – March 12-24

Facework and Self-Disclosure

Read: L & K Cha. 9-10; Livermore, Cha. 11-12

Read Case Study: Lu Chen Chang

Forum Discussion:

After reading the case study of Lu Chen Chang, describe the different assumptions that Lu and the scholarship committee were operating under – particularly with regard to status orientation and rules of disclosure or concealment of vulnerability. If you were to give Lu advice about the culture and expectations of the scholarship committee, what would you tell her?

Research Paper Due

Modular Break

Module 6 – April 2-14

Contexts for Intercultural Communication

Culture Shock

Read: L & K Cha. 11-12; Livermore, Cha. 13-15

Forum Discussion:

Have you ever experienced some of the symptoms of culture shock? What coping strategies did you employ and how effective were they in helping you deal with the stress of living in another culture?

MI 534 Winter 2012 Online

Access to our Course Web Site

In order to access Taylor's online learning platform, you will need to follow these steps:

1. Go to www.online.taylor-edu.ca
2. Your user name is TSXXXXX (TS followed by your Taylor Student ID Number)
3. Your password is your last name in small case letters (eg., effa). Once you log in you may change your password by going into PROFILE and accessing EDIT PROFILE.
4. If you are already registered on the platform you will need to click on *MI 534 Intercultural Communication* in order to access the course materials.