

WESTERN SEMINARY SACRAMENTO

Communicating Christ in Culture

DIS 501 – 2 credit hours

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Syllabus – Winter 2009

January Intensive: Jan. 9 & 10; Feb. 7

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates: January 9, 10; February 7

Plus 6 hours of group project meetings

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

DIS 501 – Communicating Christ in Culture

Ministry is communication. The content must be known and experienced so that proclamation will have substance and credibility. After learning what we are to communicate, we must learn how to communicate. This course covers fundamental concepts that will equip the student to communicate across both personal and cultural barriers.

COURSE CONTRIBUTION TO STATED DEGREE OUTCOMES

- 1) Be a person whose Christ-like character is worthy of being emulated, and whose integrity imparts credibility to his/her ministry
 - a) gratefully aware of his/her new identity and spiritual sufficiency in Christ (MFM 500)
 - b) motivated by genuine love for God, others and self (SFS 501)
 - c) reflects biblical balance and skill in life management, appropriately fulfilling the roles and responsibilities mandated by God (MFM 500; SFS 501, 502; overarching)
 - d) regularly practices spiritual disciplines to facilitate personal transformation and intimate fellowship with the Lord (SFS 502)
 - e) cooperates effectively with God's Spirit in the process of replacing sinful habits with godly virtue (SFS 501, 502)
 - f) fosters healthy interpersonal relationships, including the ability to listen and speak with respect for the feelings and opinions of others (SFS 501)
 - g) thinks and acts ethically in areas of personal, professional and social responsibility (SFS 504)

- 2) Know the nature and mission of the church, being able to implement a biblical philosophy of ministry in various contexts and cultures
 - a) properly emphasizes glorifying God by fulfilling faithfully the evangelizing, edifying, and worshipping functions of the Church (DMS 501)
 - b) able to use extra-biblical truth without compromising the ultimate authority of Scripture for faith and practice (DMS 501)
 - c) able to recognize spiritual and structural evil, and to apply effectively biblical truth and strategies in confronting it (PTS 504)

- 3) Be able to think biblically and critically so that various truth claims can be effectively evaluated
 - a) has embraced a biblical worldview (THS 501-3, THS 508; overarching)
 - b) able to apply the basic elements of critical analysis and sound reasoning (MFM 500; overarching)
 - c) sensitive to cultural variations in styles of thinking (overarching)
 - d) reflects an appropriately humble and charitable spirit in applying biblical criteria for truth (overarching)

- 4) Be able to communicate God's truth clearly, accurately, and convincingly
 - a) able to preach and teach effectively, working both from Scripture to life and from life to Scripture (PTS 510; EMS 501)
 - b) able to offer basic counseling and spiritual nurture in areas of frequent need (PTS 507, PTS 508)
 - c) able to communicate one's thoughts effectively in writing (MFM 500; overarching)
 - d) aware of alternative communication strategies for the purposes of ministry (DIS 503-4)
 - e) able to contextualize biblical truth without compromising the finality and authority of Scripture (DMS 501)

- 5) Be a true life-long learner, building upon his/her seminary training
 - a) committed to pursuing growth and learning in key areas of need (MFM 500; overarching)
 - b) able to access and manage information (including that available via computer/online resources) so that it is readily available when needed (overarching)

COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to understand human communication and learn how to apply those insights given the particularities of a specific culture. The message we have received is for both us and others who have yet to walk in communion with Jesus. This means the Christian worker must give primary attention to communication. Seeing our task essentially as communication gives us a framework for constructing effective ministry. Developing the skills of cultural analysis enables us to apply those communication skills within a specific

culture.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through this course, each student will be able to discover those elements of culture that must be understood for effective ministry:

Cognitive:

1. Able to discriminate between different cultures, whether biblical or contemporary.
2. Able to recognize the significance of interpersonal networks in ministry, including how they might be effectively developed and utilized.
3. Have an understanding of the basic principles of human communication, set forth as specific propositions in the primary text and how these principles function within the social situation that you will study.
4. Describe how effective proclamation of the complete biblical message is based on an understanding of culture as the environment within which ministry happens.
5. Summarize the major steps in mapping a culture scene.

Affective:

1. Appreciate the social and ministry significance of cultural groups.
2. Make a commitment to effective ministry that results from building relationships.
3. Gain confidence in conducting ministry in diverse social situations.

Volitional:

1. Able to apply basic skills for quickly and accurately learning a society.
2. Demonstrate your understanding of how basic human communication principles function within societies – by applying communication propositions to real-life and proposed situations.
3. Demonstrate the usefulness of these principles by strategically applying them to your personal and extended ministry.

TEXTBOOKS

We are happy to announce that Western Sacramento is now an Amazon Associate. Any purchases (not just books) you make on Amazon using this link will mean that a minimum of 4% of the purchase price comes to Western. Please support your seminary by using this link for all your Amazon purchases.

Click [here](#) to order texts and other products.

Required

- Kraft, Charles H. Author. 1990. *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Shaw, R. Daniel, and Charles E. Van Engen. 2003. *Communicating God's Word in a Complex World: God's Truth or Hocus Pocus?* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed. Vol. 5. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Recommended

- Barker, Chris. 2008. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE Publications.
- Barrett, Stanley R. 1996. *Anthropology: A Student's Guide to Theory and Method*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Fortner, Robert S. 2007. *Communication, Media, and Identity: A Christian Theory of Communication*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Groome, Thomas H. 1998. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers.
- Gutt, Ernst-August. 1992. *Relevance Theory: A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- . 2000. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Hill, Harriet S. 2006. *The Bible at Cultural Crossroads: From Translation to Communication*. Manchester: Saint Jerome Publishing.
- McLuhan, Marshall. 1996. *The Medium Is the Message*. Reprint ed. San Francisco: Wired Books.
- . 2001. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Nida, Eugene A. 2001. *Message and Missions: The Communication of the Christian Faith*. Revised ed. Pasadena: William Carey Library Publishers.
- Sperber, Daniel, and Deirdre Wilson. 1995. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. 2nd ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Spradley, James P. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth; Independence.
- . 1980. *Participant Observation*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth; Independence.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading

The reading schedule is contained in the course outline. Reading should be done at the mastery level (about 20 pages per hour and assumes careful reflective interaction with the material, note taking and accountability in class). Chapters are to be read in advance of the class session in which they will be discussed.

Written Assignments

10% of the grades on the typed papers will be form, that is, conformity to the above standards (our purpose is to motivate all Western Seminary students to present work that consistently looks as good as its content).

1. Kraft Review (Due: January 9)

Write a two-page book review of the above book. Dedicate the first page to a summary and the second to a critique. Show where you agree and disagree with the author(s). In your critique, make use of phrases such as “I contend that” and “I agree/disagree with the author because.”

2. Shaw and Van Engen Review (Due: January 9)

Write a two-page book review of the above book. Dedicate the first page to a summary and the second to a critique. Show where you agree and disagree with the author(s). In your critique, make use of phrases such as “I contend that” and “I agree/disagree with the author because.”

3. Yin Review (Due: January 9)

Write a two-page book review of the above book. Since this is a methodology book, there’s no need for a critique. Instead, use the second page to describe a potential “case” for study. In this course you will both identify and study a people group in need of the gospel. Consider the following examples: (1) nominal Christians at a local church, (2) a dance club, (3) a local softball league, (4) employees at a local grocery store, (5) a Slavic population in the Sacramento region.

4. Case Study Proposal (Due: January 10)

Write a one-page case study proposal that includes:

- Title
- Purpose
- Goal
- Central Research Issue
- Variables
- Research questions
- Methodology

Note: Please do not complete this assignment until the night of January 9. I will give both instruction on how to complete the assignment and a template with which to work.

5. Peer Reviews (Due: March 2)

Prior to giving your final oral presentation you will present your findings/analysis to a group of peer reviewers (groups assigned in class/work done outside of class). In addition, you will critique the findings/analysis of the others in your group and submit a one-page critique of each (up to five). Divide your critiques into three sections: (1) summary of content, (2) three things you learned, (3) three things the presenter could improve.

6. Case Study Paper (Due: March 2)

Write a 20-25 page paper that includes the findings of your case study. Your paper should include five “chapters”: (1) The Research Focus, (2) Review of the Literature, (3) Methodology, (4) Findings, (5) Conclusions and Recommendations. The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to make use of communication theory as it pertains to effectively communicating the gospel to a specific people group and (2) to identify the particularities of a specific people group and how those particularities may come into play when proclaiming the gospel.

Research papers must cite a minimum of five secondary (i.e. outside of the Bible) sources, two of which must be from a physical library or from Western library’s online journal collection (see the library information below). Note the physical location of each book or other resource as an addendum to each bibliographical entry in your written project.

Late papers will incur a loss of one letter grade.

General Information

All work should be carefully proof read and must reflect a master's level use of the English language. Plagiarism will result in failure of the first assignment so discovered. A second instance will result in failure of the course.

STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN WORK (MLA)

Papers must be written to a near-thesis standard; that is, minimum format standards must be met, as defined below. English grammar, idiom, and spelling must be at graduate level. Always include a strong introduction paragraph (declare what you intend to show the reader) and conclusion paragraph. Qualities valued include clarity, succinctness, and precision, as well as insightful application to ministry.

- 1" margins top, bottom and sides
- Double-space, except for block quotes
- Single space block quotes
- 12-point standard
- Indent paragraphs .5 inch
- No extra line-feed between paragraphs (use: Format/Paragraph/Space After)
- Underline section headings
- Use footnotes rather than paragraph citations
- Footnotes follow a standard format
- Staple (no paperclips, folders, or fanfold)
- Page numbers appear at the upper right on every text page
- Attach a title page.

Helpful web sites on MLA style include:

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html>

- <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/bibliography/mla/mlamenu.htm>

These websites are expanded and pasted into Western Seminary's *How to Write a Research Paper*.

A good website with footnote/bibliography entries is:

- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicabgo.html>

For assignments that require the use of non-course texts and include a bibliography, of the resources mentioned in the bibliography for your project/paper, two must be from a physical library. Note the physical location of each book as an addendum to each bibliographical entry.

GRADING

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
99-100%	95-98%	93-94%	91-92%	88-90%	86-87%	84-85%	81-83%	79-80%	77-78%	74-76%	70-73%

Assignment	Percentage of grade	Approximate hours required
Reading		20
Field Work		10
Peer Reviews	5%	6
Class Participation	10%	24
Kraft Review	10%	3
Shaw and Van Engen Review	10%	3
Yin Review	5%	3
Case Study Proposal	10%	2
Case Study Paper	40%	20
Case Study Oral Presentation	10%	5
Total	100%	96

CLASS POLICIES

Cover page: To safeguard confidentiality, please make use of a title page as a cover for all assignments. Include your student mailbox number in the upper right corner of the cover page.

Attendance and Late Assignments: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Unexcused absences and tardiness will impact a student's grade. Students who anticipate an absence should discuss it in advance with the instructor. Any late work will incur a minimum reduction of one letter grade.

Students who miss three or more hours of instruction will not pass the course, unless they arrange with the instructor to complete additional assignments (1 page per hour missed).

Incompletes: Faculty members determine their own procedures and due dates for the completion of course assignments. The instructor's expectations will be stated in the course syllabus. The latest possible deadline available to the professor for all course work is the last day of the school term (regardless of the date of the last class session) as noted in the Academic Calendar (see current class catalog). In the case of serious illness, family emergency, or other extenuating circumstances, the instructor may grant an extension **at the initiation of the student**. A temporary notation of "I" (incomplete) is assigned until a final grade can be determined. The maximum extension permissible is six weeks, **with all work due to the prof for grading on Fri, 5/29/09 at the latest**. All course assignments not completed by the extended deadline will be given a failing grade. Under no circumstances may this six-week period be extended except by petition and approval of the Administrative Committee.

The Availability of Disability Services at Western Seminary: Western Seminary is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Western students are assisted individually as their needs dictate. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to identify themselves and the nature of the disability. Any student who has a disability should contact the seminary's Disability (Section 504) Coordinator, Ken Epp, at 503-517-1815/1-877-517-1800, ext. 1815. His office is at the Portland campus. Students at the northern California campuses may contact Carrie Priest (Student Services Coordinator – San José) or PJ Oswald (Director of Student Development – Sacramento), or they may contact Dr. Epp directly. Appropriate forms will be provided and must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator's office.

Enrichment Students: Enrichment students are encouraged, but not obligated, to participate in assignments and class discussions. Professors are not obligated to grade participation for these students, but may opt to do so depending on class size.

LIBRARY AND INTERNET RESEARCH

All class assignments with a research element require library research annotated as such in the bibliography. A minimum of two resources must be from a physical library. Note the physical location of each resource as an addendum to each bibliographical entry.

For complete library information including: hours of operation, interlibrary loan, local library resources, etc., please:

- Visit www.westernseminary.edu .
- Click the link "Sacramento Campus" in the left navigation pane.
- Click the link "Library Resources" in the left navigation pane.

Reserve Collection

The library carries all required readings for this course.

Print Resources

Use the Western-Arcade Library catalog to find books and other materials. To search the library collection:

- Visit <http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC> .
- Click the link “Search the Library Collection Online”.

Periodical & Research Databases

As you complete your assignments for this course, don’t forget about the resources in the Western research databases. Remember to evaluate and cite your information too. To access the Western research databases:

- Visit <http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC> .
- Click the link “Research Databases” from the bottom menu.
- Click the link “Ebsco Host Research Databases”.
- Log in. [**User ID:** westsem / **Password:** seminary]
- Click the link “EBSCOhost Web”.
- Click the database(s) you wish to use. Start with *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*.

To cite your information, consider the following MLA composers:

<http://www.noodletools.com> and <http://www.citationmachine.net>

Western-Arcade Library offers a variety of ministry related software for student use including BibleWorks, Logos Bible Software, and SeminaryLibrary.

Course Packs (if applicable)

To access the course pack(s) for this course:

1. Go to the library homepage: <http://www.westernseminary.edu/Library/SAC>
2. Click the link ‘Course Packs’.

Reference and Research Contact Information

David Holifield, M.A., M.L.S. / (916) 488-3720, ext. 7 / dholfield@westernseminary.edu

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

January 9	Prior to class: Complete all reading Turn in: Kraft, Shaw and Van Engen, Yin book reviews Classroom discussion topics: AM Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions/Syllabus• What is communication?• What is the gospel (God’s <i>intent</i>)?• Should the gospel be contextualized? PM Session
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