

## **CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION WME 204 (3 hours)**

Canadian Bible College

First Semester, 2003-2004

Instructor: Dr. Emma Karin Emgård

### **Course Description**

In this course we will deal with foundational principles for communication between people from different cultures. You will learn to be aware of the influence of thinking processes, worldviews, verbal and non-verbal behaviors.

### **Course Objectives**

What we think about communication has consequences for how we communicate. Regardless of whether we relocate to a different nation and speak to people we meet there or if we speak with a co-worker in our hometown, we have probably crossed some cultural border. Therefore, everyone needs to be aware of the principles involved in cross-cultural communication.

After completing the course, you should be able to:

- explain the importance of cross-cultural communication.
- explain basic components of cross-cultural communication.
- explain the importance of cross-cultural communication to change, transformation and conversion.
- identify personal traits in your perception of reality and explain how these traits affect communication.
- evaluate different means and models of communication.
- suggest how to apply principles of cross-cultural communication in daily life.

### **Contact Information**

I will be in my office (#531) most days between 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. If you prefer to call, my office phone number is 410-2000 ext 4903 and my e-mail is eemgard@cbccts.ca

The best way to reach me at home is via e-mail: emma@emgard.com. I check my emails a number of times a day, even at home. However, if you need to call, my home number is 208-6990.

### **Course Outline**

The following are the main topics we will cover. Some of the topics will be combined in one lecture; others might take up to four lectures to cover. In addition to lectures and class discussions we will also do some field trips and watch and critique a few movies.

- The Incarnation and Communication
- What is Communication?
- Self-awareness and Communication

- The Basic Model of Communication
- The Concept of “the Stranger”
- Anxiety and Uncertainty in Communication
- The Meaning of Communication
- Media for Communication
- Verbal and Non-verbal Communication
- Cultural Influences on Communication. (These topics will take a number of lectures.)
  - View of time, control, task, people, crises prevention
  - Collective vs. individualistic culture
  - Power distance
  - Feminine vs. masculine culture
  - Uncertainty avoidance
- Conflict Resolution

### Required Reading

Storti, Craig.  
1999 *Figuring Foreigners Out*. Intercultural Press.

#### One of the following two:

Kraft, Charles H.  
1999 *Communicating Jesus’ Way*. Revised edition. Pasadena, CA: William Carey.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., and Marvin K. Mayers  
1986 *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

### Description of Assignments and due dates

In this class I have four different kinds of assignments that you will be graded on. I want all the written assignments (except for final exam) to be emailed to BOTH my email addresses. You will get the assignments back the same way, with my comments.

#### 1. Active Class Participation (10% of the grade)

- Active participation means more than being present and on time; it means that you actively interact in the class discussion.

#### 3.2 Field Research and Reports (30% of the grade)

- At times you will give a verbal report and at other times you will write a two-page report. At times you will do this in groups at other times it will be done individually. You will receive more information in class.
- You will do a total of four different reports.
- Due dates:
  - The week following the field research. (That means, the week after we have seen a movie or after you have done your study down town Calgary.)

**Commented [EE1]:** 4 reports ~ 5-6 hours and actual field research -- 10 h = 15 h

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#### 4.3. Research Paper and Class Presentation (35 % of the grade)

- You will write a well-researched ten-page paper about how to reach people from a certain culture living in Calgary. You will also give a fifteen-minute presentation in class.
- Guidelines for choosing the culture you want to research:
  - You cannot be familiar with this culture before the class.
  - There are people living in Calgary from this culture.
  - There are “enough” sources in the libraries (Libraries at CBC, University of Calgary or public libraries). You can also use the internet. You must have at least three academically sound sources.
  - The assignment will be more enjoyable if you choose a culture you have some interest in.
  - If you have a special interest in a culture that is not represented in Calgary, please come and see me before you begin.
- Ideas of People to study
  - You can choose any group in Calgary that is significantly different from yourself. For example: First Nation, Mainland China immigrants, Muslim women, runaway teens (on the streets of Calgary), professionals from Latin America, young unwed mothers etc.
- Issues that you want to research
  - Demographics
    - Answer questions like: How many people from this culture live in Calgary? Where do they come from? Where do they live? What do they do for a living? What do they do when they do not work?
    - Time: You should spend about two hours on researching the demographics.
    - These internet addresses will get you started: <http://www.calgary.ca> and <http://www.statcan.ca/english/>
  - Beliefs (How do they make sense of their lives?)
    - Here you need to know something about their religious beliefs, yet bear in mind that this is not a class for religious studies. What (if any) world religion do they adhere to? Find out about their view of
      - ◆ Humankind (are we essentially good or bad?)
      - ◆ Life and death (where do we come from and what happens when we die?)
      - ◆ Salvation (is there a concept of salvation in their belief? If so, how does a person attain salvation?)
      - ◆ The meaning of life and what is important in life.
    - Time: These are huge questions, and I want you to gain some insight, however, do not spend more than about three to four hours researching this area. If your culture does not hold to “organized religion” you will need to find what their main beliefs are from either interviews or drawing it out yourself as you read other information about the people.

**Commented [EE2]:** major paper 12-15 p ~ 15 hours Em:  
allow about 25 h  
minor paper 5-8 p ~ 10 hours

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- Cultural communication insight
  - Draw insight about how culture affects the way these people communicate. (The lectures will be especially helpful here.) Use whatever cultural continuums are applicable.
  - Time: we will have talked about these things in class, yet you will need to deal with your specific culture. You should allow about five to six hours for this part.
- Interaction and interviews.
  - You will spend at least one to two hours talking with people from this group. You can spend the time validating the insights you gained from the books and internet, or spend it gaining additional insight. Alternatively, you can speak with only one person from the culture and one Christian who ministers in this culture.
  - It makes for a much more interesting paper if you include one or two interesting quotes from your meeting with someone in this culture.
- Writing the research paper
  - You will have three parts to the paper
    - ◆ Introduction
      - In one or two pages you explain why you choose this group, introduce the group, and give an overview of what you did in your research.
      - Note this introduction will either get the reader excited to continue, or make them yawn and wish they did not have to read the rest! So, it is important that you get the reader's attention here. You will get a brownie point for an interesting opening.
    - ◆ The "body" of the paper
      - In the following six pages you will give the information you have gathered and analyzed. Make sure to organize it so the reader can easily understand your information.
      - Reference your sources properly. I expect you to use at least two references for the demographics, at least three for the beliefs and at least lecture notes, textbooks and two more for the communicational part.
    - ◆ Conclusions
      - In the last 3 pages you will draw conclusions for reaching this group with the gospel. I do not look for actual methods of evangelism, but rather for insight that will help the readers themselves determine the methods to use. You must include a comparison between your Canadian culture and the group you study as far as how you will communicate with each other.
      - Note that this part is your own conclusion. Here, I do not want you to repeat what the books say, but share what conclusions you draw from what you have read.
        - For example: The group you studied might be refugee women from Iraq. You might have discovered that they are isolated because they do not speak English, and they are uneasy with non-Iraqis. Your conclusions could be stating basic needs to provide for (long term friendship, safety,

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childcare, English teaching, information on how to and where to shop in Calgary etc.). Things to watch out for (it needs to be women who minister if it is a one-on-one situation, never criticize their religion or people they view as heroes, comparison between your own low and their high context and how this will effect communication and what to do to improve relationship etc.) While you can use lists, they should be in the context of your narrative, with transitions from one idea to the next so that your narrative flows.

- Be careful to follow the College’s writing guidelines format. You will be graded on grammar, spelling, and format as well as content.
- Due dates:
  - On October, 8 you will hand in a paragraph about what culture you have chosen and two or three references (books and or articles) you will use, and a tentative names/places for the interviews. (3% of the grade).
  - You will present your research to the class November, 26. (5% of the grade).
  - The final paper is due the last day of class. (27% of the grade).

**5.4. Final Exam** (25% of the grade)

- The exam will cover
  - Kraft or Lingenfelter /Mayers
  - Storti
  - The lectures

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**Time Management**

Different people have different ability to read and write. Therefore, I know that the amount of time each one of you spend on the different assignments will differ. However, these are my guidelines.

	Hours	% of grade
Active class participation	25	10%
Required reading (needed for assignments and exams)	20	0%
Field research and reports	15	30%
Research paper (the reading and class time will help you with the research)	25	35%
Midterm and final exam (reading and class time will help you with the exams)	5	25%
	90	100.00%