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MS 671 Anthropology

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MS 671 / MB 700
Term: Fall 2008
Room: SH 231

ANTHROPOLOGY FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION
Instructor: Michael A. Rynkiewich
Time: Tuesday 1:00-3:45 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is “An introduction to cultural anthropology, with application to Christian evangelization and mission.”

From before the beginning (Genesis 1), our Triune God has been in mission, reaching out in self-giving, other-embracing love (John 1 & I John 1). We now call this the *missio Dei*, “the mission of God” to remind us that it is not our mission, nor does mission belong to the church. How God does mission is best understood in the sending of Jesus the Christ (Ephesians 2:11-15). As the Father has sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us (John 20:21). It is in the life of Jesus here on earth that we most clearly see our example for mission: Jesus emptied himself, came down to the people, developed relationships and learned the local language and culture for 30 years; and then he began to preach about the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:43) and perform acts of mercy and justice (Luke 4:18-21) that the people saw as signs and wonders of the presence of God among them (Luke 4:22,32,36).

The acts of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (the proper title of Acts) continued in the apostles, deacons and those who were called later, like Paul. The apostles began in mission with the Jews (Acts 2-7). The deacons reached out a little further to the half-Jews (Acts 8) and then to the proselytes (Acts 8). Finally, Peter reluctantly reached out to those who were not Jewish, half-Jewish or even wanna-be Jews but were full fledged Gentiles (Acts 10). Still, it was the multi-cultural church at Antioch (not the mono-cultural church at Jerusalem) that commissioned and sent out the first missionaries: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13). What they did changed not just the composition of the church but the life of the church. Jesus the Messiah (Christos) became Jesus the Lord (Kyrios) (Acts 28), because that is what the Greeks and Romans were looking for. New understandings of Jesus brought fuller meaning to the cosmic event of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was interpreted anew as the Logos (John 1), the Pleroma (Colossians 1:19, 2:9-10), the Mystery and Wisdom of God (Ephesians). Every generation deserves a fresh reading of the gospel. Who will speak now to the migrant generation of this globalized world?

A critical view of anthropology as it relates to theology will lead us to our main concern, and that is missiology. There will be a conscious effort in our course to maintain a dialogue between anthropology, theology and missiology. Our goal is to gain insights about missiological issues and concerns.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To *read* all the material, attend all lectures, and participate in all class discussions.
2. To be able to *dialogue* about the main points which will be raised in lecture and readings.
3. To *develop skills in analyzing* mission issues from anthropological, theological and missiological perspectives.
4. To *develop skills in interpreting* the meaning of mission issues.
5. To *develop skills in applying* Biblical and cultural understandings to resolve mission problems and to make and execute mission plans.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Texts for Master's Level Students:

1. *Other People's Worlds: An Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology, Second Edition* (2008)
-- Joy Hendry New York University Press ISBN 0814736025
2. *The Christ of the Indian Road* (1924)
-- E. Stanley Jones United Methodist Publishing House ISBN 0687063779
3. *The Anthropology of Globalization: Cultural Anthropology Enters the 21st Century.* (2002) -- Ted C. Lewellen. Bergin & Garvey ISBN 0897897404
4. *One Church, Many Tribes* (2000).
-- Richard Twiss. Ventura, CA: Regal Books (Gospel Light)
5. *Being Maasai* (1993).
--Edited by: Thomas Spear and Richard Waller. Ohio University Press.
ISBN -13: 9780821410455
6. *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.* Revised Edition.
-- Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett. Intercultural Press, Inc. ISBN-13:
978-1-877864-01-8. (ISBN-10: 1-877864-01-3) whichever is paperback.
7. *The Best of Missiology: Articles on Anthropology and Mission*
These articles are available through Information Services; they do not need to be bought. Master's students, chose one of three.

Assignments for Master's Level Students (Who register for MS 671):

1. *Critical Reflection Papers.* There will be ten papers due, one each at the beginning of the middle weeks of the semester. These will be a great aid to you and the class as they will prepare you for the week's work. The papers should begin with a single sentence describing the anthropological concepts and theory that is the topic of the week. This opening sentence should be followed by a list of the main assumptions or propositions of this particular way of looking at the world. The final paragraph should suggest how these assumptions relate to theology and missiology, that is, what difference does this perspective make for

- the work of the missionary and/or the local indigenous church worker. These papers should be two to three pages, double spaced, and are due as scheduled.
2. *Write a Theology of Mission for you and/or your church.* This will be your final. It will be practical, but must draw on the literature and theories provided in the texts and lectures. You may write as senior pastor of a missional church, as missions pastor, or as a missionary for your supporting churches. It will require ethnographic work by you on your church congregation and setting, and it will require engagement with the literature as you consider what the mission of God is, what the mission of the church is, and what your place in God's mission is.

Texts for Th.M. and Doctoral Level Students (Who must register for MB 700):

1. All of the above texts, plus...
 2. Either: *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World* (2005)
-- Bruce Knauft McGraw Hill ISBN 0072972637
- Or: *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society.* (2004)
-- Joel Robbins University of California Press ISBN 0520238001

Assignments for Th.M. and Doctoral Level Students:

1. *Critical Reflection Papers.* There will be ten papers due at the beginning of the middle weeks of the semester. These will be a great aid to you and the class as they will prepare you for the week's work. The papers should begin with a single sentence describing the anthropological concepts and theory that is the topic of the week. This opening sentence should be followed by a list of the main assumptions or propositions of this particular way of looking at the world. The final paragraph should suggest how these assumptions relate to theology and missiology, that is, what difference does this perspective make for the work of the missionary and/or the local indigenous church worker. These papers should be two pages, single spaced, and are due as scheduled. (Note: these are of no use if they are turned in late).
2. *Write a critical review* of one of the two ethnographies listed above.
3. *Write a Theology of Mission for you and/or your church.* This will be your final. It will be very practical. You may write as senior pastor of a missional church, as missions pastor, or as a missionary for your supporting churches. It will require ethnographic work by you on your church congregation and setting, and it will require engagement with the literature as you consider what the mission of God is, what the mission of the church is, and what your place in God's mission is. This should be an integrative work, pulling together the anthropological, biblical, theological and missiological paradigms into a single understanding of the mission of God in the world.

COURSE EVALUATION

Master's Level Students.

- 50% Critical Reflection Papers (10 papers @ 5% each)
- 50% Theology of Mission Position Paper.

Th.M. and Doctoral Level Students

- 30% Critical Reflection Papers
- 30% Critical Review of Ethnography
- 40% Theology of Mission Paper.

COURSE GRADING

The unit of credit is a semester hour, which is defined as one hour of classroom work per week for one semester, or its equivalent. The 4.00 point system is used to compute grade point standing. The grading system is:

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| A | 4.00 | Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives. |
| B | 3.00 | Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives. |
| C | 2.00 | Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives. |
| D | 1.00 | Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives. |
| F | 0 | Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives. |

INCOMPLETE WORK

The official end of each term is 4:00 p.m. on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of the semester.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

Incomplete grades shall be removed one calendar month prior to the close of the following semester unless an earlier date is designated by the Office of the Chief Academic Officer on the individual petition. If the work is not completed by the time designated, the "I" shall be changed to an "F" unless a passing grade can be given based on work already completed or unless special permission is granted by the Chief Academic Officer.

Professors are required to give either a grade or an "I," if approved, to each student registered for credit in a course. Students with Incompletes in two or more classes will not be allowed to enroll in a new semester or term without permission from their Dean.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be Wednesday 9:30-12:00 and Thursday 9:00-11:00 p.m. It is best to make an appointment in advance (858-2077). My office is in the Administration Building, the office of the Director of Postgraduate Studies (second floor). Telephone: 858-2218.