

## MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

### Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

CUL-2200 Introduction to Cultural Studies, 3 credit hours

### Course Description

An introduction to the theories, concerns, and methods in cultural studies. Emphasis placed on the evaluation of various works within cultural studies, as well as on the application of particular methods.

Prerequisite: GSU-1107 Foundations of Learning; can be taken concurrently.

### Course Objectives

By the completion of this course the learners should be able to:

1. Define principles of effective cross-cultural communication, especially from a Christian understanding of 'Servanthood.'
2. Identify and explain descriptive categories of cultural differences and how understanding cultural anthropology can assist you in learning another culture.
3. Indicate familiarity with multiple definitions of culture and describe your own culture and worldview in objective terms.
4. Explain how a knowledge of culture should influence both thought and action in your areas of long-term vocational interest.
5. Apply understandings of culture characteristics to specific cross-cultural challenges.

### Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information

#### Textbooks:

Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*. 2.6.2006 edition.

Downers Grove, IL: Publisher's Name, IVP Books, 2006. Print ISBN 9780830833788 [Elmer]

Howell, Brian M., and Jenell Williams Paris. *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*.

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010. Print ISBN 9780801038877. [Howell & Paris]

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., and Marvin K. Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003. Print ISBN 9780801026478. [Lingenfelter]

#### Articles (link or PDF included in the course):

Christianakis, Mary. "Lessons for Life: Roma Children, Communal Practices, and the Global Marketplace." pp. 11-18 in *8.1 (2010)*. [Christianakis]

Sharp, Lauriston. "Steel axes for stone-age Australians." *Human Organization* 11.2 (1952): 17-22. [SHARP]

Chernus, Ira. "Religion as a Cultural System: The Theory of Clifford Gaertz" [Chernus]

#### Media (link or PowerPoint included in the course):

- Explore God, "How Should Christianity Engage Culture?"
- Prevette and Koeshall, "Understanding Culture: Part 1" (Including PowerPoint [notes](#))

- John Scarbrough, “Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians: a study of social change”
- Wisconsin Public Library Documentaries, “Being Hmong Means Being Free”
- TEDx Talks, “Cultural Intelligence: The Competitive Edge for Leaders, Julia Middleton, TEDxEastEnd”
- National Democratic Institute, “Who are the Roma?”
- ReconciliationAus, “Family and Kinship”
- Amanda Rose, “I’m My Own Grandpa- Ray Stevens”
- Explanity, “Globalization easily explained”
- United Way of Greater New Haven, “Thomas Friedman’s Three Eras of Globalization”
- MindToolsVideo, “Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Video”
- Prevette and Koeshall, “Understanding Culture: Part 2” (Including PowerPoint [notes](#))

### Assignments

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Active participation is expected in this online course. Participation includes two main areas: discussion boards and reading
  - a. **DISCUSSION BOARDS:** You must maintain a significant presence in the discussion board. You must maintain a significant presence in the discussion board. Please refer to the discussion board rubric included in the Resources section of this course for more information on how your participation in the discussion board will be assessed. Students must make an initial post that indicates a familiarity with the assigned text(s) and critical thought on the subject and the question at hand. This initial post is due each week by 11:59 pm CT on Friday. Students must make two additional posts on fellow student’s postings by 11:59 pm CT on Monday. Note: For this course, late initial responses will result in point deductions.
  - b. **READING COURSE EXPECTATIONS:** The completion of the course reading, online articles, etc. is an important part of the course. You are expected to complete the weekly reading assignments prior to your discussion boards each week so you are able to discuss the concepts with others in the course.
2. **PAPER ASSIGNMENTS:** There will be several projects in this course requiring skills learned that may include work with Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Specific assignment instructions are provided under the Weekly menu. Assignments are submitted through a link provided so they can be recorded as submitted through the Blackboard Grade Center. The paper assignments in the course are:
  - a. **READING REPORTS (DUE WEEKS 6 AND 8):** This course will likely take you into realms of learning where you have never ventured before. Many of your readings will address topics, issues, and questions that may not immediately appear to impact the way you do ministry. As this course lays a theoretical foundation for studying and impacting culture, you will draft four (4) structured reading reports to further analyze the ideas being studied.

Over the next eight weeks of this course, you will select and complete four separate reading reports. You may only complete ONE reading report PER WEEK. The reading reports may examine one or more readings. As the readings in a single week often interrelate, you are **encouraged** to consider multiple readings, when possible, in a single report.

Each report will answer 4 short-essay questions using the “Reading Report Worksheet” (located in the **Resources** section of this Blackboard course):

1. Give three or four observations/comments/reactions to the reading by way of **carefully crafted** sentences, demonstrating that you have engaged with the overall content of the text. You can cite a quote, but you should expand on the quote with your own thinking or critique – you may be critical (“I think that...”) or merely descriptive (“The author says...”).
2. State two or three questions you have that may require further study, or that you would like to hear more discussion around. Each one of your questions must include a) a clear question and b) 1-2 sentences of discussion/further description. Provide specific citations, if possible.
3. Give one or two stories/examples from your own experience - such as "This reminds me of a time when ..." In other words, try to relate the theory to your own life experiences or ministry practices.
4. Your strongest "Aha!"—you might include a sentence or two that would make a good quote from your reading if you were using it in a longer paper. Explain why this was a new insight for you, why it is important, how will it help you develop more knowledge on the subject.

This assignment will be submitted in two iterations. To ensure students do not leave these reports to the last week, you will submit two (2) reading reports at the **end of Week 6** and another two (2) at the **end of Week 8**. You may complete the reports for any weeks you choose, however, they will be submitted at these times.

- b. **LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW PAPER (DUE WEEK 7):** For this assignment you will conduct an anthropological study of a person’s culture by using the “Life History Interview” document (located in the **Resources** section of this course) as a toolkit of helpful questions and aims. Your goal is to use a person’s story, with attention to how they tell it, to objectively describe their society and their self-understanding of how they fit and function within it.

Following the guidelines in the “Life History Interview” you will find/select a person from another culture to ‘interview’. (**Note:** An interview is like a guided conversation, you probably will not be trying to take notes while you are talking to this person.) This person does not necessarily need to be from another country, but should have a cultural identity (or history) that is different from your own. Please contact your instructor if you are unsure about whether a person’s culture is different enough from your own.

You will use this interview to collect the information necessary to write a **full 2-3 double-spaced paper** describing the person’s culture and their self-understanding of their place and function within it. Therefore, make sure to gather information on at least the following aspects of their life and culture (see the “Life History Interview” document for more information):

- Family
- Residence
- Life Cycle
- Community and Friends
- Beliefs

You must complete your interview by **Week 5**. After conducting your interview, you will use the information gathered to draft and submit your paper in **Week 7**. If you suspect you may need more than one visit or conversation with your interviewee to complete your paper, please plan this in advance. You may plan as many visits, chats, or interview sessions as you need. Make sure to be thorough: give a full picture of the person's culture and identity, not just what you find interesting. Also avoid using **only** a comparative perspective: your paper is (in theory) an objective description of their culture and identity, but may use comparative (i.e., ways in which their culture is different from your own) discussion where appropriate. Although it is not due until **Week 7**, you should begin to use your time to find and schedule an interviewee.

- c. **SOCIAL CHANGE ANALYSIS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (DUE WEEK 4):** In Week 2 you will study an example of how a small technological change had immense impact on a society. Based on what you learn from this lesson, you will critically examine how a selected technological change has impacted your own society, whether within your lifetime or the past 100 years.

All technological changes have consequences, whether media (e.g., TV, radio), new media (e.g., Facebook), electronics (e.g., smart phones, Xerox) or more subtle technological innovations (e.g., indoor plumbing, the automobile). Your selected technology does not need to have been invented in the last century; instead, it must have had a noticeable impact upon your society during this time. You are encouraged to choose a novel example of technology: one that you are personally curious about and believe your classmates will be unlikely to choose.

Once you have chosen a technology, you will study its direct or indirect impact upon society. Examine a variety of ways this impact has been felt through social change. How has it changed the way your society spends time or uses money? How has it impacted relationships or family structures? What is its economic or environmental impact? How has it impacted the religious practices in your wider community, or the spiritual life of your church? Cast a wide net when searching for examples of impact.

For this assignment your research should include balanced amounts of:

- **Anecdotal or common sense evidence.** This refers to evidence from personal experience or general observation, such as saying that "Since social networking became popular, I have noticed my family/friends/community spend hours each day communicating online."
- **Cursory social sciences research.** You must collect information from studies, polls, news articles, or other published materials to support and/or illustrate how this technology has impacted your society.

You will submit your research in a 10 to 15-slide PowerPoint presentation. Your PowerPoint should include both images and text, but does not need to have transition effects. Try to keep text in the slide to a minimum. In addition to this text on the slide you must insert 25-50 words of notes per slide (bullet point or paragraph, in the notes section of PowerPoint) that you could use to present your PowerPoint. These notes will be an essential part of your grade.

This assignment is due at the **end of Week 4** and will be submitted through Blackboard as a PowerPoint document.

- d. **OPENNESS, ACCEPTANCE, AND TRUST PAPER (DUE WEEK 3):** For this assignment, you will read what Elmer describes as how truly Christ-like cross-cultural servanthood requires radical openness, acceptance, and trust, as well as review previous readings in this course about understanding culture and how to engage well cross-culturally. You will consider some of the negative experiences of the Hmong people in the documentary "Being Hmong Means Being Free." Did you observe any of these stemming from a lack of the Christ-like behaviors Elmer talks about?

Then, think about a time in your own life when you have experienced a lack of trust, acceptance, or openness from others OR when you yourself might have acted so to others. From your personal experience, write a 500-word paper with references describing:

- A time when you have experienced a lack of trust, acceptance, or openness from others **who are different from you** (optimally, culturally, but other substantial differences will suffice) **OR** a time you might have acted towards others in such a way
- If you were the recipient of the negative behavior, how you felt **OR** if you behaved in this way towards others, how you observed them to feel (or think they felt)
- What you have learned together from the **Elmer** reading and the experience about how to engage cross-culturally as Christ would

This assignment is due at the **end of Week 3** and will be submitted as a Paper on Blackboard.

- e. **THE ROMA AND ECONOMICS ESSAY (DUE WEEK 5):** Write a 2-3 double-spaced page essay based on your reading in Lesson 5 on marketplace, power, authority and learning. Consider what key insights you can draw from the way that the Roma people in the Christianakis article educate their children to function in the a globally impacted economy. Use economic, social, and/or anthropological categories from the **Howell & Paris** and **Elmer** reading to evaluate how the Roma teach their children to perform and survive in their economy. What do you think of their methods? Explain how they are (or are not) appropriate, based upon the cultural strategies that have helped the Roma to survive over many centuries in Europe.

This essay will be due at the **end of Week 5**.

- f. **ANTHROPOLOGY AND WORLD RELIGIONS RESPONSE PAPER (DUE WEEK 6):** Many Christians today have suspicious and negative attitudes towards other religions. Because of the theological nature of the divergent belief system offered by other religions, Christians will often talk about other religions as evils to be overcome.

An anthropological perspective on religion, with focus upon the religious person, rather than the religious belief, offers another perspective. The reading in Week 6 in **Howell & Paris** pointed out areas of commonality between religious traditions (symbols, rituals, myth) and how this can help Christians to appreciate the image of God present in all people that drives them to seek God. Such an approach, from a Christian perspective, could understand other religions as a **cultural system (Chernus)**, rather than merely a competing theological system of belief. Religions, as cultural artifacts, reveal the questions of ultimate concern and the socially formed systems of meaning in persons or societies.

Evangelists and missionaries can tend to look past a person's religion to understand them. But, as **Howell & Paris** point out, "Being able to speak to the deep concerns in someone's life involves an understanding of how the symbols and practices of various faiths seek to answer those questions" (p. 198).

In a 2-3 double-spaced page paper, respond to the following questions:

- How have you tended to think about other religions: as spiritual battlegrounds, as competing systems of truth, as lies from Satan, as the beliefs of "most lost" persons, or as systems of symbols, rituals, and myths representing ways in which people have tried to make sense of their lives?
- How has your perspective changed (or not changed) based upon the readings in Week 6? Do you agree with the authors or not? Explain why.

This assignment is due at the **end of Week 6** and will be submitted through Blackboard.

- g. **GLOBALIZATION, CHRISTIANITY, AND POWER RESPONSE PAPER (DUE WEEK 7):** Globalization is a torrential force that impacts all of us. For good or for ill, Christians share the opportunities and unintended consequences of an increasingly connected and networked world.

Based upon your readings on globalization and Christian servanthood and power in **Howell & Paris** and **Elmer**, in a **2-page double-spaced essay**, provide a personal response to **either** the a) opportunities or b) ethical consequences of globalization for **you** and your community. If choosing the former, you may want to **describe, discuss, and apply any** of the following that might be relevant to your own context:

- How globalization offers new advantages for evangelism/missions
- How globalization can facilitate needed economic, educational, or social changes in societies
- How studying the history of missions and colonialism can help you become a more effective cross-cultural worker

If choosing the latter, you may want to **describe, discuss, and apply any** of the following that might pertain to your own context:

- What some of the ethical issues stemming from globalization are that you/r community participate in?
- How the history of colonialism and missions impacts the way you might approach cross-cultural ministry in post-colonial nations
- Ways in which you can become more aware of the economic inequalities tied to the actions, patterns, or purchases in your everyday life

Be sure to interact at least once with **Howell & Paris** and **Elmer** (one time per book). You may write in first person, detailing exactly how you can respond to globalization in your specific context/culture. Be honest in your reflections and precise with your applications. Avoid terse points of application, such as “I need to become more aware of how I am spending my money.” Instead, be detailed about what this would look like in your specific context: “I hope to begin researching how the food I eat gets onto my table to ensure that I am supporting those who worked for it either at home or overseas.”

This assignment is due at the **end of Week 7** and will be submitted through Blackboard.

- h. **CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND MY MINISTRY WORKSHEET (DUE WEEK 8):** For this summative assignment you will apply everything you have learned in this course to a prospective (or current) cross-cultural ministry venture. You will select a people group different from you who you are currently engaged with or hope/plan to be in the future. If no cross-cultural people groups come to mind, do some research and find one that interests you and that you might one day be interested in reaching or supporting others to reach.

This will be a multi-step short-essay assignment in which you will strategically explore and apply the lessons you learned in this course to your own future/prospective ministry practice. The goal is that you apply the concept of “servanthood” (Elmer) to the challenges you will face living and communicating with persons of other cultures. You will use the “Anthropology and My Ministry Worksheet” (located in the **Week 8 Resources** folder) to complete and submit these short essays.

Each one of your short essays will consider: How far have I come and how can I use it regarding...

1. **Cultural Identity and Understanding Persons Unlike Myself:**  
Research and write a **150-250 word essay** detailing what you need to know that is important/different from you about the people of this culture. To complete this section, review the “Life History Interview” worksheet from Week 1. In addition to the categories listed in this worksheet, consider examining (if any apply) the culture’s understandings of marriage, gender, sexuality, religion, or ritual.
2. **Culture Change:**  
In a **150-250 word short essay**, describe how the introduction of the gospel or missionaries from your culture might affect change in the society? What might be

some **positive outcomes** and what might some of the **negative outcomes**? Explain how you will know if the changes are positive. How can you be careful to protect your host society from negative changes?

3. **Communicating (the Gospel) Cross-Culturally:**  
In a **200-350 word short essay**, explain what you have learned about cross-cultural communication that would be useful with this particular group? How can your understanding of culture and culture change best be used to the advantage of sharing the gospel or making an impact in a second culture?
4. **Servanthood: Applying what you have Learned:**  
Consider In **at least 400 words**, consider what would be the best avenues for building genuine relationships and sharing the gospel with this group while modeling Christ-like servanthood (**Elmer**). List at least **three specific options** and how you will be able to practice servanthood in such vocations.

Some things to consider are: What generation is acting as the change agents in the culture or community you are writing about? Would it be advantageous to work among this segment of the population in order to transform the culture/community? How should one go about that? What is the role of technology in this culture? Can this be used to share the gospel? What is the status of education? Can I create inroads by teaching? What is the socio-economic or medical situation? Is relief work an avenue? Be creative. If you are not sure where to start, do some research on how missionaries today are reaching your people group or ones that are similar.

This assignment will be due at the **end of Week 8** and will be submitted through Blackboard using the "Anthropology and My Ministry Worksheet."

3. **BASIC VALUES QUESTIONNAIRE QUIZ:** You will complete the "Basic Values Questionnaire" in **Lingenfelter & Meyers** pp 29-35. You are not required to submit your results in this assignment, but will report your full completion through a short completion quiz on Blackboard by the end of Week 4. This quiz will merely ask you how much of the Questionnaire you completed: All (100% score), Most (75% score), Half (50% score), Some (25% score), or None (0% score). You will want to keep your results to use in the Week 4 Discussion Board.

**Important Note:** Please complete this assignment after reading **Lingenfelter & Meyers** chapter 2 and before reading chapters 3-9.



### Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Class Participation (8 Discussions 25%; Reading 10%)	35%
Reading Reports (4)	15%
Life History Interview Quiz and Paper	8%
Social Change Analysis PowerPoint Presentation	5%
Openness, Acceptance, and Trust Paper	5%
The Roma and Economics Essay	5%
Anthropology and World Religions Response Paper	5%
Globalization, Christianity, and Power Response Paper	5%
Cultural Anthropology and My Ministry Worksheet	15%
Basic Values Questionnaire Quiz	2%
	<b>100%</b>

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A	96% or higher	C	73 - 76.9%
A-	90 - 95.9%	C-	70 - 72.9%
B+	87 - 89.9%	D+	67 - 69.9%
B	83 - 86.9%	D	63 - 66.9%
B-	80 - 82.9%	D-	60 - 62.9%
C+	77 - 79.9%	F	Below 60%

### Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Go through this Checklist to determine how best to obtain books and articles on your topic: <http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/checklist>

- Bookmark the library's search start page for MBI-DL: <http://library.moody.edu/distance-learning/begin-your-search/>
- Bookmark this online guide for MBI-DL students: <http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning>
- Bookmark this tab that provides tutorials for online students: <http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/tutorials>

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk> or [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the NET Bible at <http://bible.org>.

The final resource that deserves mention here is iTunes University. Apple has developed a platform for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures available on iTunes U. Download the iTunes University application for your device or computer to access.

### **Course Copyright Statement**

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