

*Understanding Culture for Global Service*

Abilene Christian University

Fall 2012

BMIS 245  
3 credit hours

MW 3:00-4:20  
BI 219

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## **I. ACU Mission**

The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. In particular, our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision states that we train students to think *critically*, *globally*, and *missionally*.

## **II. Catalog Description**

This course will help students develop a theology of culture, to learn how to understand a culture through studying cultural subsystems. They will learn the skills of participant observation, and be able to read a culture in order to facilitate presenting the good news. May not be used to complete a Bible requirement in the University Requirements. Prerequisites: BIBL 101, 102 (or 103), and BIBL 211.☐

**Synopsis:** This course is about culture. I have designed it to function as an entry-level applied anthropology course, with an eye toward applications of Christian witness, service, and intercultural ministry. We will cover multiple topics related to anthropology and intercultural competence.

### **Purposes:**

1. Increase awareness of one's own cultural commitments
2. Develop attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity towards cultural differences (ethnorelativity)
3. Increase knowledge of different cultural practices (intercultural awareness)
4. Develop skills to interact successfully with individuals from cultures different from yours (intercultural competence)
5. Consider what global means (particularly as a Christian) and define your own role as a global citizen (global competence)
6. Gain facility with basic anthropological tools, theory, and research methods
7. Understand how anthropology and intercultural studies can help us live out our missional calling (missional competence)
8. Learn skills for dealing effectively with intercultural conflict
9. Learn skills and strategies for dealing with culture shock and reverse culture shock

**TEXTS:**

*Introducing Cultural Anthropology* by Brian M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris

*Ministering Cross-Culturally* by Sherwood Lingenfelter

*Cross-Cultural Conflict* by Duane Elmer

**Student Learning Outcomes**

**1-** Define and understand major concepts in cultural anthropology

**Measure-Pass** quizzes and exams

**2-** Reason from the anthropological perspective

**Measure-Reflect** via movie and ethnography project

**3-** Gain facility with the ethnographic method and participant observation

**Measure-Do** an ethnography

**4-** Gain intercultural competence (ICC) and ICC self-awareness

**Measure-Take** the *Go Cultural Assessment* (GSA) and reflect on categories

**Assignments:**

Ethnography paper (200 points)

Mid-term exam (100 points)

Final exam (100 points)

GSA reflection (50 points)

Movie review (50 points)

4 quizzes (25 points each)

**Grades:**

600 points total

A- 540-600

B- 480-539

C- 420-479

D- 360-419

F- 0-359

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

***Ethnography project:*** choose a particular context in which you will do Participant Observation and ethnography work. (NOTE: submit to me for approval your choice of context no later than the beginning of class on 9/24). Your goal is to join in that contextual immersion on at least 3 separate occasions, ideally not less than an hour each time.

Be creative in your choice of contexts, ideally choosing to do your research in an environment that is foreign or distinctly different from your normal routine. Here are a few suggestions:

- Restaurant (e.g., McDonalds, Sharkey's, IHop)
- Church
- Bus
- Community activity center
- Mall
- Foreign community
- Public park
- Tattoo parlor
- The Leaf
- UFO group
- Sporting event

Your write-up should be between 4-5 double-spaced pages.

**GSA reflection:** you will take the online *Go Cultural Assessment*. Take the results and comment on the 16 sub-domains, reflecting on these areas using the various materials from our class. If there are any areas that appear problematic, include in your reflection an “action plan” that spells out concrete steps you can take to increase competence in *that* specific area.

**Movie review:** choose **two** movies to view from the choices I list below (if you wish choose your own movie, please see me for approval prior to watching the movie. Upon watching these, comment upon various aspects of culture that appear different from your own cultural understandings and commitments. Analyze these with terminology, theory, and frameworks from class materials. This project should be between 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages.

**Foreign movie options:**

*Manabí*--Senegal  
*Memories of Underdevelopment*--Cuba  
*Obstinate Memory*--Chile  
*El Norte*—Guatemala/U.S.  
*My Family*—Latino/U.S.  
*Raise the Red Lantern*--China  
*Once Were Warriors*—Maori of New Zealand  
*Ju Dou*--China  
*Mississippi Masala*—Race relations in the U.S. South  
*Saalam Bombay!*--India  
*The Secret of Roan Inish*--Ireland  
*Dim Sum*--China  
*A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*—China/Chinese American

*Farewell My Concubine*—China  
*Guelwaar*—Senegal  
*Hoop Dreams*—Inner city USA  
*The Joy Luck Club*—Chinese USA  
*Jo Dou*---China  
*The Story of Qui Ju*—China  
*Strawberry and Chocolate*—Cuba  
*Tampopo*—Japan  
*To Live*—China  
*Walkabout*—Aboriginal Australia  
*The White Balloon*--Iran  
*Gibbeh*--Iran  
*The Seven Samurai*-- Japan  
*Babettes Feast*--Scandinavian cultures  
*Mission Kashmir*-- India

## Course Policies

**Disclaimer:** I reserve the right to modify the content or order of particular classes, depending upon need. Assignments and exams, however, will always be due on the date noted in the course schedule

**Academic Integrity Statement:** Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff, and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, and dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life education and academic departments.

**Non-Discriminatory Language Policy:** Many women and men (including this professor) no longer find the terms "man," "men," and "mankind" acceptable as generic designations. Such exclusive language, though once normative in English, alienates a substantial group of people. As Christians desiring to support human equality, we must avoid unnecessarily exclusive language that is discriminatory. This is true for both the church and the academy. I take it as a given, then, that followers of Jesus should lead in challenging harmful patterns of language even when such inflicts harm unconsciously and without intention. Therefore, all work you submit for this class *must* use non-discriminatory language.

**Attendance:** I expect you to be in class and make your agreed-upon work, deadlines, etc. a high priority as what you do directly affects others. If you have a special situation where attending is difficult or impossible, please contact me. 2 unexcused absences will result in a 5-point reduction from your final average. For each unexcused absence after that, your final average will be reduced a further 3 points.

### **Special Needs/ADA:**

Abilene Christian University is dedicated to removing barriers and opening access for students with disabilities in compliance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Alpha Scholars Program facilitates disability accommodations in cooperation with instructors. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with Alpha Scholars Program, and you must complete a specific request for each class in which you need accommodations. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please call 325-674-2667.

**Late and poor quality work:** I expect you to perform as professionals. In the work place work needs to be excellent and punctual. So too, in this class, failure to complete an assignment shall result in an automatic failure for that assignment. In other words, *I do not accept late work*. In the event of a real emergency or an unexpected situation you cannot turn an assignment in on time, please contact and we'll see what we can do.

The habits you develop here shall go a long way toward predicting your success in the "real world," especially in missions, church planting, and every type of intercultural service. So, always do a great job on your work. Excellence matters! It matters to God, and it matters to others.

**Questionable or offensive material:** Some material, particularly in the movies you will choose to watch, may be offensive. If you have objections, or wish to discuss possible alternate assignments, please speak with me and we will attempt to work something out.

**Make-up Exams:** I shall arrange make up exams/quizzes in the case of an emergency (a *real* emergency). Otherwise, you miss an exam or a quiz, you earn a 0.

**Withdrawals:** You, the student, must initiate a withdrawal from the course by completing and signing a "Withdrawal from Class" form, and submitting it to your advisor. Notifying me or stopping attendance **does not** withdraw you.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS OUTLINE

\*N.B.: Readings listed are to be read **for that day**. Similarly, assignments listed are due **on that day**.

ICA= *Introducing Cultural Anthropology* by Howell and Paris

MCC= *Ministering Cross-Culturally* by Lingenfelter

CCC= *Cross-Cultural Conflict* by Elmer

### WEEK 1: GETTING STARTED

8/27: Welcome and introductions

8/29: Questions and building the syllabus

### WEEK 2: ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURE; THEORY AND RESEARCH

9/3: ICA Chpts. 1-2

9/5: ICA Chpts. 11-12

### WEEK 3: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE; SOCIAL STRUCTURE, RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

9/10 ICA Chpt. 3

9/12 ICA Chpt. 4; *Quiz #1*

**WEEK 4: SUMMIT**

9/17 Summit

9/19 Summit

**WEEK 5: ECONOMICS & RECIPROCITY**

9/24: ICA Chpt. 6

9/28

**WEEK 6: POWER**

10/1: ICA Chpt. 7

10/3: *Quiz #2*

**WEEK 7: KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE**

10/8: ICA Chpt. 8

10/10

**WEEK 8: RELIGION AND RITUAL**

10/15: ICA Chpt. 9

10/17: *Midterm exam*

**WEEK 9: GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE**

10/22: ICA Chpt. 10

10/24

**WEEK 10: MINISTRY, INCARNATION AND CULTURE**

10/29: MCC Chpts. 1-2

10/31: MCC Chpts. 3-4 Time and Judgment

**WEEK 11: MINISTRY, INCARNATION AND CULTURE**

11/5: MCC Chpts. 5-6 Crisis and Goals

11/7: MCC Chpts. 7-8 Self-Worth and Vulnerability

**WEEK 12: CROSS CULTURAL CONFLICT**

11/12: CCC Chpts. 1-2; *Quiz #4*

11/14: CCC Chpts. 3-4

**Week 13: CROSS CULTURAL CONFLICT**

11/19: CCC Chpts. 5-6; *Movie review due*

11/21 Thanksgiving

**WEEK 14: CROSS CULTURAL CONFLICT**

11/26: CCC Chpts. 7-8; *GSA project due*

11/28: CCC Chpts. 9-10

**WEEK 15: CROSS CULTURAL CONFLICT**

12/3: CCC Chpts. 11-12; *Ethnography project*

12/5: [Culture Shock](#) (read all 3 sub-entries, viz., "About Culture Shock," "Re-Entry Shock," and "Factors to Adjusting"); [Language shock article](#)

**WEEK 16: FINIS!**

12/12 *Final exam*