

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MCS 544 Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Billie Davis

Summer, 2002

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An interdisciplinary study of the challenges associated with living and functioning effectively as Christian workers in cross-cultural settings. Special attention is given to human temperament and interpersonal relationships.

OBJECTIVES

The comprehensive objective of this course is to help the student understand psychological principles that relate to adjustments in cross-cultural situations, and be able to apply the knowledge personally, and/or in the context of missionary administration and education.

Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:

1. Identify major psychological concepts related to interpersonal relationships in cross-cultural situations. Explain what is meant by applied psychology, and make specific applications to Christian living and ministry.
2. Describe aspects of the missionary experience that require special adjustment.
3. Evaluate individual psychological and spiritual strengths and weaknesses that can enhance or hinder ministry in a cross-cultural context.
4. Demonstrate spiritual attitudes, appreciations, insights, and skills that facilitate cross-cultural relations and communication.
5. Understand attitudes and skills required to enhance relationships among persons and groups, and resolve individual and group anxieties and conflicts.

TEXTBOOKS

Jones, Marge, with E. Grant Jones. *Psychology of Missionary Adjustment*. Springfield, MO: Logion. Gospel Publishing House, 1995.

Quinn, Virginia N. *Applying Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 3rd

edition, 1996.

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BASIC OUTLINE

- I. Review of relevant psychological principles.
- II. Role expectations and preliminary adjustments in cross-cultural situations.
- III. Factors that affect relationships.
- IV. Personality development.
- V. Relationships, interpersonal and professional.
- VI. Families in cross-cultural situations.
- VII. Intercultural appreciations and communication.

METHODOLOGY

In addition to lectures, emphasis will be on discussion and interaction as a “learning community.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
2. Read assignments previous to class session and be prepared to participate in discussion.
3. Do a research project, to be written and reported to the class. Choose a real-life situation that you may face in ministry and address it in the context of this course material. Establish your conclusions on the basis of research. This is an exercise in applying research, with the objective of enhancing personal ministry and being able to teach others. Length of the paper should be 2000-3000 words.
4. Final examination.

GRADING

Class participation	30%
Research report	40%
Final exam	30%

The nature of this course makes it propitious for all work to be done within the scheduled time for the course. Extra time may be arranged for submission of final draft of report.

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Dobbins, Richard D., *Your Spiritual and Emotional Power*, Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984.

Echerd, Pam and Alice Arathoon (Eds.), *Planning for MK Nurture*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1989.

_____ *Understanding and Nurturing the Missionary Family*, 1989.

Foyle, Marjory F., *Honorably Wounded: Stress Among Christian Workers*, London: MARC, BMMF Interserve, 1987.

Hall, Edward T. And Mildred Reed Hall, *Understanding Cultural Differences*, Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, 1990.

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Joy, Donald M. *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God*, Dallas: Word Publishing, 1985.

Kenny, Betty Jo. *The Missionary Family*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983.

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Petersen, William, Michael Novak, and Philip Gleason, *Concepts of Ethnicity*, Cambridge, MS: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1982.

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READING PLAN

Objective of the reading plan is to integrate materials from the two textbooks:

Quin, Virginia N. *Applying Psychology*, New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Co., 1996.

Jones, Marge, with E. Grant Jones. *Psychology of Missionary Adjustment*, Springfield, MO: Logion, Gospel Publishing House, 1995.

The stated purpose of Quin is to present basic topics in psychology and “describe their application across a broad range of everyday experiences, including--but not limited to--work, education, consumer concerns, community and civic programs, social and environmental interests, sports, mental health, human relations, forensics, and a variety of vocational interests.”

The stated purpose of Jones is “to look at the total psychological problem of missionary adjustment, from the moment of feeling a call . . .to the ultimate time of retirement.”

When the two works are brought together, Jones provides a specific area of concern (missionary adjustment) to which Quin can be applied. The idea of the reading plan is to synchronize the two bodies of material, and thus practice application of psychological research and principles to various aspects of cross-cultural adjustment. The student will need to do some personal orientation, browsing through the materials and making individualized applications.

Topics to be considered	Quin	Jones
Methods of Psychology	Chapter 1	Introduction
Motivation	7	Chapter 1
Understanding Emotions	8	2 and 5
Learning and Changing Behavior	3	3

Identifying Problem Behavior	10	7 and 8
Thinking and Problem Solving	5	9
Adjusting	9	4 and 6
Communicating	13	9
Using Attitude Theories	14	4
Perceiving	2	
Working With Groups	15	
Developing	6	10 and 11

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STUDY GUIDE FOR FINAL EXAM

Review OBJECTIVES in the course syllabus.

Review significant concepts in textbooks as follows:

Quin, *Applying Psychology*

Chapter 1 Five major views of psychology.

- 2 Definition of *perception*. Factors affecting interpretation.
- 3 Definition of *learning*. Difference between classical and operant conditioning.
- 5 Functions of the brain. Kinds of thinking.
- 6 Parenthood. Basic understanding of developmental stages.
- 7 Definition of *motivation*. How needs affect motivation. Common motivators.
- 8 Basic types of emotion. Handling stress.
- 9 Definitions: *adjustment*; *self-concept*; *defense mechanisms*.
- 10 Definition of *abnormal*. Anxiety disorders. Mood disorders. Personality disorders.
- 13 Listening. Denotations and connotations. Body language. Patterns of communication.
- 14 Definitions: *attitude*; *prejudice*; *discrimination*. Influencing and changing attitudes.
- 15 Definition of *group*. The nature of groups. Leadership.

Jones, *Psychology of Missionary Adjustment*

Chapter 1 What is meant by the use of the term *pedestal*?

- 2 Major sources of stress for first-term missionaries.
- 3 Factors that affect language learning.
- 4 What is meant by *bonding*? What are the alternative responses?

- 5 Name ways of avoiding the *letdown*.
- 6 Understand cultural differences in the concept of *privacy*.
- 7 What are some positive and negative modes of adjustment to feeling out of place?
- 8 What are some conditions that cause guilt feelings?
- 9 Describe some sources of conflict for missionaries.
- 10 and 11 Describe attitudes that lead to ultimate victory and satisfaction.