

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
MNST 6264
Communicating the Faith in the Contemporary World
Soong-Chan Rah

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Gracious and effective communication of the good news of the Christian faith involves the complex interplay of many factors. Drawing from studies in communication, evangelism, and contemporary culture, participants in this course will engage in an exegesis of culture, an exploration of the mandate and means of evangelism, and the development of skills in listening and speaking. Three hours.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, participants should be able to:

1. To acquire exegetical skills in biblically-based cultural interpretation for effective communication of the faith required by all Christ followers daily.
2. To formulate a personal biblical theology of Christian communication through the study of scripture, analysis of case studies, personal reflection, and group interaction.
3. To gain practical experience and develop abilities in receptor-oriented expressions of the faith using a variety of media in various cultural, personal, and public situations.

We will work towards the Seminary Learning Goals of:

- Understanding of cultures in order to live and present the Gospel effectively.
- The ability to communicate effectively through spoken and written media.
- Develop understanding of the vocation and practice of ministry, including its joys, challenges and breadth

REQUIRED READING:

Charles H. Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness, Rev. Ed.* Orbis, 1991.

Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West.* Eerdmans 2003.

Robert E. Webber, *Ancient Future Evangelism.* Baker Books, 2003.

Donald K. Smith, "The Signals We Use." p.144-165 in *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes.* Zondervan, 1992.

A minimum of 500 pages of additional reading new to the student, and that is helpful for the student's final presentation and paper (see bibliography).

TOPICS INCLUDE:

Introduction to Missional Communication

Missio Dei

Meaning and Message

"What is the Gospel?"

OT Missional Communication

NT Missional Communication

Signal Systems

Communication through Conversation

Communication through Story

Contextual Forms for Communicating Faith

Gospel and Culture
Evangelism from a Historical Perspective
Postmodern Communication of the Faith
Evaluating Contemporary Evangelism Methods
Measuring Success in Communicating the Faith

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Attendance in all class sessions, mind, body, and soul. 5% of class grade.
- 2) Personal integration and reflection of the reading, lecture, and discussion material.
- 3) Lead a class devotional, approximately five minutes in length. Date to be determined.
- 4) Present in class a ten minute communication of a missional communication from the Bible employing numerous signal systems. 10% of class grade.
- 5) Beyond the three required texts and the Smith article, students will read 500 additional pages. Included in these 500 pages should be at least one book from the recommended reading list upon which the student will write a reflection paper (see #6 below). The remaining pages beyond the fourth text can be from other sources and should help the student towards completion of the final presentation and final paper (see #7 and #8 below). It is encouraged that the student look for recent publications, including journals and scholarly electronic media articles, relevant to the cultural group chosen for the final project. A signed reading log will be submitted by the last day of class listing all the reading done by the student. 5% of the grade.
- 6) Write four 500 word interactive reflections, one for each required text and one on a text selected from the recommended reading list. 40% of class grade.
- 7) Final Presentation: Present in class a fifteen minute cultural communication of one particular term or concept of the gospel message using dance, media, music, ritual, symbol, or communication methods contemporary for a specific societal group of your choice. In the introduction of your presentation include a brief exegesis of this cultural group and why the topic you have chosen is important to them. 20% of class grade.
- 8) Final paper: Write a fully researched and documented 2,500 word paper describing the exegetical process involved in your project, including your decision to focus on a particular societal group, your decision on the topic used in communication, and the methodology used in communication. Include in this paper your own theology of Christian communication and personal application lessons learned as well as other requirements listed on the handout. 20% of class grade.