TMxxx: ETHNICITIES & CHURCHES: US Narratives & Intercultural Life
Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martínez

DESCRIPTION:
This course will introduce students to the narratives of US ethnic groups with theoretical materials from cultural/social anthropology and intercultural communication. Students will be given means for perceiving, understanding, and developing ministry in the context of the multicultural US environment. The course will attend to theological and spiritual resources that support church leadership, with heuristic foci on African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American and Euro-American experiences.

RELEVANCE FOR MINISTRY:
All churches in the US, especially those in urban environments, need to have a life and ministry that is faithful to the presence of peoples from various cultures. The course seeks the following goals for each student: Cognitive: Historical and theoretical knowledge about social anthropology, intercultural communication, and the interpretation of artifacts, in conversation with Christian theology, with special attention to the US; Affective: Deepened appreciation for cultures, personal and communal responsibility and ownership regarding ethnic histories, and increased commitment to overcoming racism in society and in churches; Skills: Culturally-informed interpretive skills regarding social histories, personal relationships, and church life.

COURSE FORMAT:
The class will meet weekly for three hours. Students will need to complete reading and other assignments on schedule and participate fully in class. Assignments will be the basis for class discussions, lectures, and student presentations. Class time may include guests, videos, and shorter articles. Students will also visit a worship service of a culture other than one's own.

REQUIRED READING:
Course Reader on Ecclesial Practices: Hospitality, Christian education, Preaching, Worship, Spirituality, Friendship, Outreach

RECOMMENDED READING:
DeYoung, Curtis et al, United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race. Oxford University Press, 2003

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Be prepared and participate in class. (20%)
2. Read assignments plus 200 additional approved pages; keep a reading log for submission. (20%)
3. Based on Branson & Martínez, write four 500 word papers synthesizing cultural comparisons and provide personal illustrations. (4 papers, 10%)
4. Write a personal “cultural autobiography” noting history, transitions in understanding and practices, the interaction of faith, identity, church, and world. Present highlights in class. (1000-1200 words, 10%)
5. Participate in a group presentation on one ethnic group and its transition since 1950. (5%)
6. Visit a worship service of a culture other than your own. Write a 500-600 word reflection paper. (10%)
7. Write a research paper (2500-3000 word) integrating course lectures and materials. (25%)

(05/05)
8. For pursuit of an A/A-: Read Acts, noting how cultural issues of are treated, and write a 1000-1200 word paper of observations and reflections.

PREREQUISITES: None.
RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: Meets M. Div. core requirement in Missions (MIN 8); meets M.A. in Theology (General Format) requirement for Globalization (GLBL).
FINAL EXAMINATION: No.