Syllabus
Issues to Consider Before Exploring Culture

Course Creators and Facilitators

This course was created by a team led by Dr. Jeff Hogue. Jeff is a veteran church planter in Southeast Asia and college professor. He holds a Masters Degree in Biblical Studies and a Doctorate in Intercultural Studies. He is passionate about ethnographic research and contextualization. His most recent academic work is entitled: Incorporating a Religious Logic into a Discipleship Program: A Strategy for Khmer House Churches. The design team also includes Dr. Donald Grigorenko, Rev. Ted Szymczak and Mark Morgenstern, all of whom also have extensive cross cultural experience.

Course Description

Issues to Consider Before Exploring Culture is a two-week Grow2Serve online course that lays a solid foundation for intentional cross-cultural learning. Studying culture is an extremely valuable and strategic time investment for missionaries and cross-cultural ministry teams. Researching your host culture will open the door for greater levels of personal reflection and effective contextualization of the Gospel. But before you jump in and start collecting information and interpreting what you are seeing and hearing, we'd like to recommend a few preparatory steps. The course asks you to make an **investment of 6-8 hours of learning time over the 14-day period.** A prerequisite for this course is the 1 week *Learning Culture through Purposeful Observation* course.

This course will help you…

- explore the value of purposeful culture study,
- understand the ethics involved,
- respect and protect those who share information with you,
- realize barriers that may exist for good information collection,
- avail yourself of cultural background information that already exists in writing, and
- realistically assess your own biases and limitations when studying culture.

As a result of actively participating in the course, you will be equipped to…

- Explain the importance of dealing respectfully and responsibly with the people we encounter while doing ethnographic research.
- Describe the different ways that informants should be protected during and after research.
- Discuss the importance of anonymity in cultural exploration.
- Define ethnographic access and its goal. (Getting good data relevant to the project.)
- Recognize the importance of access considerations in project decision-making.

- List potential hindrances to access for possible projects considered by participants.
- Describe different ways that one can gain access to a social group.
- Decide upon a doable, focused ethnographic project that is believed to have implications for the mission task.
- Explore and value the historical and physical environment of the group studied.
- Investigate existing credible sources relevant to your people group or the cultural institution you are studying.
- Compile notes of insights from your sources that are relevant to your study.

Is this Course for Me?

Issues to Consider Before Exploring Culture is designed for those who have already lived and ministered at least 3 months in a culture new and unfamiliar and who are committed to fully placing themselves into God's hands for the sake of effective cross-cultural Gospel ministry. If you really want to know the heart of your new culture and how to serve them effectively with pure gospel then this would be a good course for you.

Course Mechanics

The key to successful learning in this course is interaction, both with the facilitator and with the other participants in the course. It is vital that each participant faithfully post responses on time and reply to the posts of other participants. You will not receive a grade or mark from your facilitator. Your success in learning will be measured by you and the learners that you will serve in the future as you engage into ministry as a course facilitator.

Please note that ideally, for maximum learning impact, a learner in this course will spend 45-75 minutes daily (Monday – Friday) working on the material. Some of the coursework will involve reading, writing, listening and viewing videos on the computer. Other pieces will involve interacting with other learners and engaging in your local community while practicing the skills you are learning.

Please complete all the activities in the order they are presented. Before you begin with the course content and activities, carefully review and complete all the activities under "Course Orientation." Important introductory information and course navigation tips are presented there.

A main feature of the course is the interaction between participants and the facilitator through forums. This is an asynchronous course, so there are not specific times you need to be online. Participants will be in several different time zones around the world, so there is not one set time when everyone is online together. The assignments have due dates, and within the

boundaries of those due dates, you are free to complete assignments according to your schedule (i.e., you can do them at night, in the morning, at lunch, etc.). Please note that in the instructions for forums, quizzes, and wikis, all references to days when an item is due (without a particular time on the clock included) refer to Eastern Time, USA (New York).

We want you to engage with each other as well as with the subject matter. Don't be afraid to articulate your unique ideas, to think critically, or to ask challenging questions of others in a godly manner. Of course, your words of encouragement to fellow participants are always welcome.

Copyright Issues

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