



MB BIBLICAL
SEMINARY

Building Relationships Across Cultures

DSC 610 WMB

The mission of MB Seminary is to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Instructor: Doug Heidebrecht, PhD
Associate Professor of Mission and Theology
Email: dougheidebrecht@mbseminary.ca
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: None
Course Term: September 28 to November 28, 2026
Instruction: Teaching Intensive at Waterloo MB Church

- October 2 (3:00 pm - 9:00 pm)
- October 3 (8:30 am - 4:30 pm)

Online Session

- October 20 (7:00-8:30 pm EST)

Discussion Forums

- #1 - October 26-31
- #2 - November 2-7

Course Description

How do we build relationships across cultures within our culturally diverse neighborhoods and church communities? This course will explore how cultural awareness and intercultural skills open new opportunities to share the love of Christ through hospitality and friendship. This course will also explore how we can serve more effectively on multicultural teams and through cross-cultural partnerships.

Objectives

By the end of this course, each student should:

- Understand and appreciate diverse cultural approaches that shape relationships across cultures.
- Develop practical skills for building mutual friendships across cultures.
- Explore ways of connecting and developing relationships with neighbors who are from different cultural backgrounds.
- Explore how to serve effectively together on multicultural teams within the church or in cross-cultural ministry partnerships.

Course Textbooks

- Hedinger, Mark. *Culture Learning: The Art of Understanding What No One Can Teach You*. Portland: CultureBound, 2021. (139 pages)
- Hibbert, Evelyn & Richard. *Leading Multicultural Teams*. Littleton: William Carey Library, 2014. (212 pages)
- Meyer, Erin. *The Culture Map: Decoding How People Think, Lead, and Get Things Done Across Cultures*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2014. (253 pages)
- Pathak, Jay and Dave Runyon. *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012. (184 pages)

Total pages = 788

Required Inventory

Personal Profile and Country Mapping Tool

<https://erinmeyer.com/tools/the-personal-profile-tool/>

Access for 24 hours - \$9.95 USD

Access for 7 days – \$12.95 USD

Learning Intensive Schedule

Teaching Weekend (Waterloo MB Church)	
Friday, October 2, 2026	3:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Session 1	Course Introduction
Session 2	Navigating Cultural Differences
Session 3	Navigating Cultural Differences
Saturday, October 3, 2026	8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Session 4	Strangers are Neighbours
Session 5	Developing Friendships across Cultures
Session 6	Serving Together

Note: Attending all sessions of the course intensive is a requirement for passing the course.

Course Assignments

The assignments for this course four assignments and the course evaluation. If you ever have an idea for an alternative assignment that you believe would have greater personal value and would still meet the objectives of the course, feel free to talk with me about it. Please double-space all written assignments.

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm (EST) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in Populi. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in Populi where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book). Please note that I typically deduct 5% of an assignment's total possible value for each week that it is late (assignments submitted more than two weeks beyond the due date will not be accepted). If you find that you are unable to complete an assignment on time, I will grant one extension of up to one week for one assignment during the course (without penalty) when you inform me of your need for an extension before the due date for that particular assignment. I will also consider extensions in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency (when a doctor's note accompanies the request).

Overview of Assignments

Week	Due Date	Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade	Cumulative Percentage
Week 1	October 2	Complete Personal/Cultural Profile		
	October 2-3	Learning Intensive		
Week 2				
Week 3	October 13	Personal/Cultural Comparison	20%	20%
	October 13	Neighborhood Profile	5%	25%
Week 4	October 20	Online Session		
Week 5	October 26	The Culture Tree	20%	45%
Week 6	October 26-31	Discussion Forum #1	5%	50%
Week 7	November 2-7	Discussion Forum #2	5%	55%
Week 8	November 16	Connecting with Neighbours	15%	70%
		Course Evaluation		
Week 9	November 28	Leading Multicultural Teams	30%	100%

A. Personal and Cultural Profile Comparison (worth 20% of final grade)

Required Reading – *The Culture Map* by Meyer

Required Inventories – Personal Profile and Country Mapping Tool

During the first week of the course (**September 28 – October 2**) prior to the Learning Intensive weekend, complete the Personal Profile Tool on the Erin Meyer website. There is a small fee required to access this tool. Please complete the following:

- 1) Choose your identified Cultural Profile (e.g. Canada or another country) and complete the short questionnaire. Print the report as a hard copy, which compares your Personal Profile with your identified Culture Profile. Please ensure that you save it as a pdf file on your computer. **Please bring a copy of your Personal Profile report to the first session of the Learning Intensive (October 2).**
- 2) Reflect on how your Personal Profile compares to your identified Cultural Profile – which dimensions are similar and which are different? What may have shaped these similarities and/or differences in your own life?
- 3) Compare your Personal Profile with two other Cultural Profiles from the list of 65 countries. Please choose countries that represent the background of current friends or colleagues, or places where you have personally visited. Reflect on how your own Personal Profile compares with these two Cultural Profiles – what are the key differences and similarities? Please include several examples from your experience that can illustrate what you observe.

Assignment length: 1500 words

Due: Tuesday, October 13

B. Loving our Neighbors

Required Reading – *The Art of Neighboring* by Pathak and Runyon

1) Neighborhood Profile (worth 5% of final grade) - Complete the neighborhood profile on pages 36-38 of *The Art of Neighboring*. Describe your neighborhood (or work setting) and the relationships you have with your neighbors/colleagues. Identify which three words best describe each of your closest neighbors/colleagues – stranger, acquaintance, or relationship. Complete this during the week following the Learning Intensive.

Assignment length: 500 words

Due: Tuesday, October 13

2) Connecting with Neighbors (worth 15% of final grade) - Intentionally connect with at least two of your neighbors/colleagues. What are some purposeful ways you sought to connect with those around you that moved your connection from stranger to acquaintance or from acquaintance to relationship? For example, did you invite them for coffee or a meal; did you share your story; did you ask them for help or advice? Reflect on the barriers you had to overcome to make these connections and the impact this exercise has had in your own life. How have these experiences shaped your

relationships with your neighbors/colleagues? What did you learn about crossing cultures (if this was part of your experience)?

Assignment length: 1000 words

Due: Monday, November 16

C. The Culture Tree (worth 20% of final grade)

Required Reading – *Culture Learning* by Hedinger

Choose a partner from the course and use the model of The Culture Tree found in *Culture Learning* (Chapter 6) to describe each other's cultural contexts. You will describe the nine elements of The Cultural Tree regarding your partner and he/she will describe your cultural context. Ask each other questions in order to explore how the various aspects of your cultural context work together to shape who you are. As part of the exercise, share with each other your story – what it was like to grow up in your family and where you lived. How do your experiences reflect your cultural context?

What are several key insights you have learned regarding the cultural context of both yourself and your partner in this assignment? How did this exercise help you better understand yourself? Please also engage with what you have learned from Hedinger.

Assignment length: 1500 words

Due: Monday, October 26

D. Discussion Forums (worth 10% of the final grade)

This course has two regular online discussion forums during weeks 6 and 7 of the course.

Discussion Forum #1 – October 26-31

Discussion Forum #2 – November 2-7

These forums provide opportunities to share your thoughts and experiences and gain insights from others in the class regarding key questions, assignments, and course readings. They are an integral part of our class time together. You should plan to invest approximately 3-4 hours per forum week.

Each Discussion Forum week starts on Monday and ends on Saturday. Students are expected to contribute to the forum discussions by posting one substantive contribution per week and minimally three conversational posts in response to others per week. Your substantive contribution should be posted by Wednesday each week, in order to allow time for others to engage with your thoughts (points will be deducted for late entries).

Substantive responses are your initial thoughts regarding the key Discussion Forum question(s), which reflect a deep processing of relevant ideas (200-400 words). This is a tremendous opportunity to learn from one another as we share our own understanding, insights, and experience. Our collaboration will deepen and broaden our learning. Substantive contributions are worth 60% of the Discussion Forum's mark.

Conversational contributions reflect your participation in the flow of the conversation and are shorter responses where you engage with what others have posted (e.g. questions, affirmations,

quick thoughts about what someone has said). I'd encourage you to ask good coaching questions or share experiences that invite others in the class to think more deeply or perhaps differently. You may also respectfully challenge one another in ways that are also supportive and encouraging. Excellent participation will be evident in listening well to other group members and adding meaningful content to the conversations. Conversational contributions are worth 40% of the Discussion Forum's mark.

Forum discussions are a best practice in online learning and are meant to supplement early classroom discussions with your peers. They are opportunities to consider a topic more deeply and synthesize ideas, perspectives, and experiences as a class.

E. Leading Multicultural Teams (worth 30% of final grade)

Required Reading – *Leading Multicultural Teams* by Hibbert and Hibbert

Please identify a team you are currently part of OR a team you were part of in the past, which was made up of participants from different cultural backgrounds. (Please talk with me if you have not participated in this kind of team).

- 1) Please describe the make-up (bicultural or multicultural team) of the team (do NOT provide names of the participants) along with its shared vision or purpose.
- 2) Describe the nature of the cultural differences among team members using 3-4 of the Cultural Dimensions described by Meyer in *The Culture Map*. How did these dimensions shape the functioning of the team?
- 3) Imagine you were the leader of this team (perhaps you were). First, how would you lead/facilitate communication within the team, given the cultural differences on the team? Hibbert/Hibbert provide a helpful model of communication (p. 152). Second, how would you lead/guide the team through a conflict, given the cultural differences on the team? Hibbert/Hibbert provide a helpful model of conflict management (p. 148).
- 4) Complete the "Multicultural Team Leader Inventory" found in *Leading Multicultural Teams* (pp. 223-225). Reflect on both your strengths and growth areas as a leader of multicultural teams. What would be some concrete steps you could take to develop your character as a leader?

Assignment length: 3000 words

Due: Saturday, November 28

F. Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important to us, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be posted in the Populi classroom in Week 7.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Assignment Assessment

When I assess written assignments and presentations, I tend to look for the following:

- Appropriateness – The content matches the requirements of the assignments.
- Substantiveness – The content reveals deeper level thinking. This may take the form of critiquing existing ideas and proposing new ones. It may involve applying ideas from the readings and class discussions in deeply personal ways. It could also include a novel integration of ideas from various sources.
- Coherence – The content flows in a consistent and meaningful way.
- Engaging – The writing style does not distract from the content (e.g. grammatical mistakes) but rather engages the reader's attention. You may wish to use creative title pages that introduce a theme or multiple themes from your assignment in an engaging way.

Important Academic Notes

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire MB Seminary community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at MB Seminary. Instances of academic misconduct are taken seriously at MB Seminary, and appropriate consequences for plagiarism and academic fraud will be applied.

Artificial Intelligence

The inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools is also a form of Academic Misconduct. Generative AI, when properly cited, may support a student's work, but it may not be used to transform it. Therefore,

When students use generative artificial intelligence tools to **research** any course-related work, the generated material must be clearly and correctly indicated and cited using the Chicago/Turabian referencing style for generative AI. Additionally, students must also cite the exact prompts used.

Citation is not required to document the use of simple proofreading. However, generative **AI tools may not be used to translate, paraphrase, or increase the fluency of a student's original work.** Therefore, if the AI tool's results produce material changes to your wording, structure, phrasing, language, or style, you are in contravention of this policy.

Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material or any use of AI paraphrasing tools that alter syntax, originality and/or clarity will be considered a violation of academic integrity and reported as academic fraud. For specific issues related to your course, students are encouraged to contact their course professors directly.

Late Assignments

Manage your time well. Review the required assignments for the course and write out a realistic schedule for completing each assignment's research and writing.

- Assignments can be submitted before their due dates (and it is better time management to do so).
- Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day, to a maximum of five days. Any assignment submitted more than five days late will not be accepted.
- Please note that any assignment submitted after the last day of class will not be counted toward your final grade – there will be no exceptions. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. If you have requested and been approved for a formal course extension, it is your responsibility to submit all assignments before the expiry of the extension.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the [Turabian Citation Quick Guide](#) for information or:

Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal an assignment's grade to the course instructor by stating their reasons for contesting the grade in writing. The deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has received their grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Director of Student Development, briancooper@mbseminary.ca. These must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the grade being posted.

Web Support-Student Portal — <https://mbseminary.populiweb.com>

All students at MB Seminary will receive an MBS-Populi username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application. If you have any difficulty with your password or your login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Church Equipping, keithreed@mbseminary.ca.

Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate class cancellation information to your church host and contact. You should also check the Populi classroom for updates.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the MB Seminary Director of Student Development (briancooper@mbseminary.ca) of this fact **before the start of a course** so that necessary arrangements can be made to support the student's learning. Medical documentation is required, along with a description of the accommodation the student is seeking. Students are encouraged to have any accommodations granted in place well before the start of their course.