FAQs ICCT: Cross Cultural Living and Ministry
Institute for Cross-Cultural Training

Our Cross-Cultural Living and Ministry course is taught entirely online. It is a companion course to our Second Language Acquisition courses which have been successfully used by people preparing for cross-cultural service for many years. This course prepares participants for cross-cultural living and ministry as they learn about their own cultural values and how those values may differ from the basic values commonly found in other cultures. Our primary goal is to provide a framework for understanding and adjusting to life and ministry in another culture along with tools for further observation and discovery.

Listed below are answers to common questions about this online course. If you have additional questions, please contact us at icct@wheaton.edu.

Who is this course for?

This course meets the needs of three groups of participants: (1) Some are individuals who are preparing and planning to live in another culture and work or minister cross-culturally. (2) Some may take this course after their arrival in a cross-cultural location or host culture. (3) Others are individuals who are in cross-cultural ministry in their home country or are exploring possibilities for cross-cultural service.

What about earning credit?

This course is a non-credit course.

Can I learn as much in this online course as in a traditional course?

Based on our experience with the other online courses offered by ICCT, we have found that there are many advantages to learning online. For one thing, students can learn at their own pace and schedule their time online at their own convenience. The components of the course provide variety, from narrated PowerPoint presentations to interaction with other students on the forums. There are opportunities for reflection on the course materials as well as personal application. An integral part of the course providing an authentic learning experience is the time spent with a culture helper where the student interviews and gets to know someone from a different culture. Another personal aspect of the course is meeting with the instructor on Skype several times during the course.

Aren't most online courses just a lot of reading, and then more reading?

That's true for many online courses, but we can assure you that this is not a reading course that happens to be online. Personal interaction is woven into the course including contact with the instructor via Skype, interaction with other students in the forums, and meeting in person with a culture helper.

Can you describe a typical day?

This course is designed to take about 2 hours per module, about 6-8 hours a week over four weeks, so you will have two days to complete each module. Most work is asynchronous — that is, you schedule your own work time. In addition, there are Skype meetings with an instructor once a week. In most modules you will read a chapter of the book, *Ministering Cross-Culturally* by Lingenfelter and Mayers. The online component on Moodle usually has an introduction followed by Foundations which consists of readings and a narrated PowerPoint presentation. Most modules also have a forum for reflection and interaction with other participants and the instructor, and a survey to discover cultural values. A few of the modules include links to videos or other online materials. Some modules have an assignment with reflection or application questions to submit.

What materials are used?

This online course employs the Moodle learning management system. The text book for the course is *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships*, 3rd edition (by Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, 2016). It is available for purchase in paperback or in Kindle format.

When should I register?

We will accept registrations until we have reached our maximum capacity, but we suggest you register no later than one month before the course begins.

What are the advantages of taking the ICCT online course vs. a traditional pre-ministry course elsewhere?

For many learners, there are a number of advantages to our online Cross-Cultural Living and Ministry course. They can be summarized as convenience, cost, and content.

- **Location**: While most traditional pre-ministry courses require you to leave home and travel to another location for two weeks or longer, you can take our online course without leaving home or you can take it from another location anywhere in the world with internet access. This can mean less disruption to your life and family routines. It also makes it easier if only one family member is taking the course.

- **Flexible study hours:** Instead of fitting into a prearranged schedule that might not be convenient, you can do most of your work at any hour of the day or night.
- **Cost:** With no plane tickets to buy and no room-and-board expenses away from home, for most participants our online course is considerably less-expensive than two-week traditional (on-site) courses with a culture component. We encourage you to compare our costs with those of other programs with similar goals.
- **Individualized assignments:** With learning experiences that are tailored to individual student needs more than is possible in most classroom settings, participants are more fully engaged in each component of the course. In addition, they can use their time more wisely when instruction is focused on individual needs rather than the broader needs of the class.
- **Five years of free support:** ICCT gives five years of unlimited, free support to all those who go through our program. Our goal is to "be there" through each step of the on-field language and culture learning process. While this is very labor-intensive on our part, it has proved to be a tremendous help to those who need ongoing guidance and encouragement, and so we have come to see this as a very important part of our ministry. We are also available to agency administrators who are dealing with issues related to the language and culture learning of their personnel already serving in their host community.

What are the advantages of taking a traditional on-site culture course (not with ICCT)?

- **Fewer interruptions and distractions:** If you need to leave home and other responsibilities in order to focus on your studies, a traditional on-site course can provide the break you need.
- **Computer equipment and basic computer skills are not needed**: Most traditional courses don't require a computer with daily access to high-speed internet. In fact, most do not require you to do even basic tasks on a computer.

Who is most likely to succeed in this online course? Who should not enroll?

Success in this course depends heavily on your being motivated to get the most from the course (vs. doing the work only to meet a requirement) and being sufficiently self-disciplined to manage your time wisely. It also depends upon being free from other responsibilities that might keep you from your online work. Because success in this course depends on being able to do the work each week, it may be better to postpone enrollment in this class or take a culture class offered elsewhere for any of these reasons:
- lack of time each week for the online work
- lack of consistent access to a computer and high-speed internet
- lack of basic computer skills (e.g., cutting and pasting, saving files, sending emails, downloading files from the Internet, printing documents, using a search engine, using Skype)
- lack of a quiet place to work, free from interruptions and other distractions

Are there assignments to do before the course begins?

Yes, you should purchase the book, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for effective personal relationships*, 3rd edition (2016) by Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers in either paperback or Kindle format. You should have all software installed (it's free) and working before the course begins. You will also have scheduled a session with your instructor on Skype. In addition, you will need to locate a culture helper, a person from another culture, to work with you for three or four hours during the four weeks. (See following sections.) When you register you will receive some pre-course documents by email with further instructions.

Focus on a host culture with a culture helper

As part of this course, you will choose a host culture to focus on and will need a "culture helper" from that host culture. Throughout the course, there will be days on your schedule when you are to meet with your helper (see the course schedule sent to you separately). You will meet twice with your helper, one to two hours each time. Each time you meet you will be conducting interviews with the helper to learn about the culture.

The ideal culture helper would be a person from your chosen host culture who speaks good English or another common language since you will be interviewing them about their culture and the basic values of that culture. You may also use a translator if necessary. This person can be a friend or someone you locate through a mutual acquaintance. You will meet with the culture helper in person, on Skype (or other video chat platform), or a combination of the two. You may want to choose someone from the host culture that you primarily work with (or will work with in the future). However, your culture helper does not need to be from your actual host culture you work with, since our primary goal is to equip you with the skills you need in order to work effectively with other helpers throughout your journey in cross-cultural ministry; it is most important to choose someone that is accessible during this course.

Which software programs will I use?

For most of our online work we use Moodle (we will give you the link to the course). Other programs are Skype, Adobe Acrobat Reader, and Adobe Flash. You also will need Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox (Chrome, Safari, and Microsoft Edge do not work well with the course). You will be able to access the course a few days before the course begins.

Where can I learn more?

We encourage you to email ICCT with additional questions (ICCT@wheaton.edu).

Wheaton College