



Orality.
Academy

Syllabus: Module 1

Foundations of Orality: Theology & Theory in Practice

Cohort:
Instructor:

Date:
Platform:



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An  Ministry

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DESCRIPTION

This course explores the theology, theories, and practices of orality, examining ancient and modern streams to equip students with skills for designing orality-framed communication strategies. Emphasis is placed on missiological applications for unreached peoples, especially those with high orality reliance. The course also fosters Christian spirituality, emphasizing the relational dynamics with the triune God and community, aiming to cultivate greater sensitivity to God's presence in individual, communal, and vocational contexts.

Through interactive sessions and expert insights, participants engage as a cohort, sharing experiences and research to foster mutual growth. The course prepares students to develop high-quality research and publications, with adaptable content to meet students' evolving needs and interests.

COMPETENCY: CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Articulate how your life in Christ exhibits the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit as formed in your Christian community and devoted to the glory of God the Father.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Content Mastery

- Articulate and teach orality principles and methods to diverse audiences, including church members, peers, and students.
- Analyze the traits of orality that shape target audiences and explore how your theological tradition informs spiritual formation and Christian practice.
- Effectively teach key building block concepts—such as God as the communicator, inner speech, the orality gap, core traits, and Jesus' model of communication—to an 8- to 12-year-old child.
- Establish a comprehensive orality resource archive, including bibliographic materials, media, and networking contacts to support ongoing learning and practice.
- Develop advanced literature research skills, utilizing non-assigned resources to deepen understanding. Demonstrate skillful biblical study and an awareness of interpretive frameworks that inform theological and vocational understanding.

Personal Transformation

- Pursue transformation into the image of Christ through daily life and spiritual disciplines, integrating your theological tradition's understanding of discipleship.
- Reflect on your spiritual journey, engage in spiritual disciplines, and discern ways to integrate them into your daily life. Deepen your faith by recognizing God's presence in the everyday and participating in spiritual direction.
- Articulate a coherent Christian theology that shapes your vocation. Exhibit critical and appreciative awareness of your own and other cultures, traditions, and the global Church.
- Reflect on and integrate spiritual disciplines into daily rhythms, cultivating a life transformed into the image of Christ. Demonstrate discernment, gratitude for God's presence, and renewed spiritual practices that align with your theological tradition.

- Show growing awareness of the gifts received from and contributions made to your Christian community, emphasizing collaboration and shared discipleship.

Practical Application

- Conduct and analyze an Orality Survey/Index for an unreached people group, applying Jesus' communication methods.
- Critique mission practices through an orality lens and contribute to a collaborative archive of resources.
- Form partnerships to research and publish findings while integrating spiritual disciplines into your vocation and calling.
- Demonstrate effective cultural exegesis and implement contextually-appropriate approaches in creating a vocational project within the field of orality.
- Build an end-to-end oral strategy for reaching a people group, applying Jesus' communication methods. Mentor others effectively (2 Timothy 2:2), teach orality principles, and engage with your gifts and passions in vocational contexts.

OUTPUTS

Pre-Course Assignments

- Complete the Global Orality Mapping Project (GOMAP) [survey](#) for a people group you are working with.
- Read chapter 2 of Qalb, *Weaving*.
- Read chapter 2 of Madinger, *Transformative Learning*.
- Read Ong, *Orality and Literacy*.

Assignments by Lesson

Refer to the Overview to find assignments connected to each lesson. Tasks may include reading, watching videos, reflection exercises, hands-on experiences, or preparation for upcoming sessions.

Final Project (choose one)

1. Unreached People. Use GOMAP survey research to begin a deeper look into your target audience. Choose a communication project and describe how you would incorporate each of the demographic factors and characteristics of orality with very specific descriptions. As we discuss the traits of orality apply what you discover, and this project nearly completes itself.
2. Implement a communication project in your ministry: sermon series, workshop, community outreach, etc. Analyze your target audience based on their 15 traits of orality reliance. Integrate them as you implement them in a live event. Get feedback from your audience with details on what (specifically) they liked about your use of orality and how it differed from previous experiences (with you). Report on how it worked well, how it might be improved, and what you did not do that needs to be the next time from the perspective of your expanding orality literacies.

The project/reports may be submitted in a variety of formats:

- A well-structured research paper with 3,000 words, plus properly cited sources.

- A good quality YouTube video that contains the same foundational information as a research paper might offer. This would mean obtaining “b-roll” or images from the people (option A) or event (option B) and editing it to demonstrate how you integrated orality into your ministry.
- A PowerPoint presentation of the event and your integration of orality (narrated or with notes view). Slides and recording must demonstrate your understanding of orality.
- Any art form to detail the same elements you would have done on a project paper.

Lessons Overview

#	Title	Contents, Theories, Concepts	Assignments
1	Introduction and Overview	Definition of orality God as oral communicator	Explain orality to a 10–12-year-old child and document it.
2	The 7 Disciplines of Orality	What to say and how to say it The 7 Disciplines of Orality	Start an orality matrix of the Bible.
3	Orality Bridges the Gap	Orality Gap 15 Traits of Orality The Flaw of the Excluded Middle	Additional GOMAP surveys & recommendations. Read: Connecting Points (Story, Language, Words)
4	Ways of Articulating	Transportation Theory Speech-Act Theory Story-Listening Pyramid	Bring art from your people to demonstrate it in class. Read: Connecting Points (Symbols, Rituals, Arts)
5	Ways of Expressing	Liminality Unification, Condensation, Polarization	Evaluate last Sunday’s sermon considering its use of orality. Read: Connecting Points (Space, Respect, Identity)
6	Ways of Relating	Self-identity Theory Ascribed vs. achieved respect Animism	Watch the documentary We are the Land and reflect on this lesson. Read: Connecting Points (Time, Grouping, Change)
7	Ways of Organizing	Chronos and Kairos time Diffusion of Innovation Magic vs. religion	Watch the video How to Draw to Remember More . Then make a drawing to remember today’s lesson. Read: Connecting Points (Learning, Logic, Memory)
8	Ways of Learning	Transformative Learning Oral Pedagogies Linear vs. Spiral processing	Watch the video The Biggest Myth in Education . Then make a short video of yourself saying what learners you are and why, then share it with the class.
9	Review, Integration, and Application	Orality 7 Disciplines of Orality 15 Traits of Orality	Use an artistic expression (perform, record, draw...) to show three things that you will change in your ministry because of what you learned in this module. Final project: Deadline ~10 weeks after the last lesson.

Resources

A comprehensive, updated [resource collection for Module 1](#) is available online.

We use Zotero as citation management software. Join the [Orality.Academy library](#) for shared references. Check out this [tutorial on using Zotero](#) and [joining group libraries](#).

REQUIRED

GOMAP. (n.d.). Global Orality Mapping Project. <https://gomap.pro>

Madinger, C. (2024). *Transformative learning: a case study using oral narrative and participatory communication: an inquiry into radio drama-based training among Zambian caregivers of abused and exploited children*. OralityResources.International. <https://oralityresources.international/transformative-learning/>

Madinger, C. B., & Qalb, D. (Eds.). (2025). *Connecting points: bridging the orality gap to minds and hearts* (Vol. 1). OralityResources.International. <https://oralityresources.international/connecting-points-1>

Ong, W. J. (2002). *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word*. Routledge. https://monoskop.org/images/d/db/Ong_Walter_J_Orality_and_Literacy_2nd_ed.pdf

Qalb, D. (2025). *Weaving the Maguindanao Story of Tradition, Faith & Education through Orality*. OralityResources.International. <https://oralityresources.international/weaving>

ESSENTIAL

Chiang, S. E., & Lovejoy, G. (Eds.). (2014). *Beyond literate western practices: continuing conversations in orality and theological education*. International Orality Network. <https://orality.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Beyond-Literate-Western-Practices.pdf>

Coppedge, W. A. (2021). *African Literacies and Western Oralities?: Communication Complexities, the Orality Movement, and the Materialities of Christianity in Uganda*. Pickwick Publications. <https://books.google.com.ph/books?id=XChMEAAAQBAJ>

Goody, J. (2000). *The domestication of the savage mind* (Reprinted, transferred to digital printing). Cambridge Univ. Press. <https://archive.org/details/domesticationofs0000good>

Havelock, E. A. (1986). *The muse learns to write: reflections on orality and literacy from antiquity to the present*. Yale University Press. <https://archive.org/details/muselearnstowrit0000have>

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- Madinger, C. (2023). *Orality and the Cycle of Revelation: How God and His Image-Bearers Communicate*. The Center for Hebraic Thought. <https://hebraicthought.org/orality-bible-god-humans-communicate/>
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- Making Disciples of Oral Learners (LOP 54)*. (2004). Lausanne Movement. <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/making-disciples-oral-learners-lop-54>
- Ong, W. J. (2000). *The presence of the word: some prolegomena for cultural and religious history* (Second edition). SUNY Press.
- Orality Resources International*. (n.d.). <https://oralityresources.international>
- OralityTalks*. (n.d.). Journal & Webinar. <https://oralitytalks.net>
- Sheard, D. (2007). *An orality primer for missionaries*.
- Slack, J. B. (n.d.). *The Ways People Learn: Exploring the Implications of Orality, Literacy and Chronological Bible Storying Concerning Global Evangelization*. <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/41601341/the-ways-people-learn-by-dr-james-b-slack-exploring-the->
- Steffen, T. A., & Armstrong, C. D. (Eds.). (2022). *New and old horizons in the orality movement: expanding the firm foundations*. Pickwick Publications.
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- Stringer, S. (2024). *Faith living understanding: towards a theatrical model for oral theologizing* [Doctoral dissertation, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies].