

METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
— IN OHIO —

Amended May, 2006

CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION COURSE

STUDENT HANDBOOK

CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE TIMELINE

Preparing for a January Immersion Experience

Mid September:

- See Karen Gee about flight information
- Start preparatory reading for your experience (check individual trip syllabi) and check web site of the organization that designs your trip
- Apply for passport
- Language practice (whatever phrases/words you can learn)
- See Dr. for check-up/shots
- Look into insurance coverage

First November Pre-immersion session:

- Bring completed application for the cooperating organization of your immersion experience (i.e. CEMAL) to the pre-immersion session

Mid November:

- Enroll in both the January and Spring terms for the Cross-cultural Course

Early December (final pre-immersion session):

- Bring travel identification to session for verification
- Make roommate suggestions
- Turn in MTSO Release of Liability Agreement (2 pages) to Karen Gee
- Bring completed Emergency Contact Information Forms and leave with Karen Gee
- Arrange for transportation to the airport
- Get your Immersion Certification Signed by the Pre-immersion Session Leader

STUDENT HANDBOOK

FOR CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION COURSE

FOR THE METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO

THIS HANDBOOK HAS BEEN PREPARED BY THE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO TO ASSIST STUDENTS IN FULFILLING THE CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION REQUIREMENT. PLEASE CONSULT THIS HANDBOOK FOR FORMS AND EXPLANATION OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL REQUIREMENT INSTITUTED IN THE FALL TERM 2002 FOR ALL M.DIV. CANDIDATES.

Approved: MAY 2003
Amended: MAY 2004
Amended: MAY 2005
Amended: MAY 2006

**MTSO STUDENT HANDBOOK
CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION COURSE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Cross-cultural Rationale for the MTSO Curriculum	5
II.	Goals of the Cross-cultural Immersion Course	5-6
III.	Immersion Experience Standards	6-7
	A. Premise	6
	B. Design	7
IV.	Immersion Experience Guidelines	8-12
	A. Registration	8
	B. Fees	9
	C. Pre-immersion and Post-immersion Sessions	10
	D. Cross-cultural Immersion Offerings	10
	E. Alternative Programs for Reasons of Health and Physical Considerations	11
	F. Exemptions Based on Prior Experience	11
	G. Course Requirements & Assessment	12
V.	Practical Information	13-14
	A. Health & Insurance	13
	B. Identification & Passports	13
	C. Exertion Scale	13
	C. What To Take	13
	D. Emergency Information	14
VI.	Sample Immersion Itineraries & Pre-immersion and Post-immersion Syllabi	15-21
VII.	Alternative Immersion Application	22
VIII.	Application for Exemption	23
IX.	Approval & Assessment of Cross-cultural Immersion Programs.	24-25
X.	Immersion Certification	26
XI.	Confidential Health & Emergency Information.	27-28
XII.	Release of Liability Agreement	29-30
XII.	Emergency Contact Information	30

1. Cross-cultural Rationale for the MTSO Curriculum

The Methodist Theological School in Ohio's stated "Aims of the Academic Community" include the following goals, based upon the Wesleyan ethos, which guide the school's academic pursuits and common life:

- To respect the rich diversity of beliefs and practices in the wider church, extend hospitality to ecumenical partners, and nurture a global perspective, believing that this openness reflects our Wesleyan heritage;
- To create a teaching/learning environment that respects the value of each individual, and each person's ethnic and cultural identity, by cultivating an atmosphere of gracious acceptance;
- To enable students to grow in their understanding of Christian faith and its ethical, evangelistic, and missional implications and to find appropriate and responsible ways for the faithful proclamation of the gospel in the current context;
- To discern the Spirit's leading into new opportunities of creative partnership and service in such a way as to prepare persons who will be faithful and effective participants in God's mission in the world.

Therefore, in an effort to fulfill these academic aims, the Seminary has adopted a course requirement (as of fall semester 2002) that involves a cross-cultural immersion experience for all Masters of Divinity degree students. The immersion requirement is understood as integral to an educational process that seeks to address the expanding global perspective of the church as well as the increasingly diverse population of the United States in terms of its ethnic, cultural, and religious identities.

II. Goals of the Cross-cultural Immersion Course

- A. To become familiar with another culture by engaging the "other" through such means as common meals, worship, conversation and shared living experiences for a continuous period, normally at least two weeks.
- B. To examine the systemic issues that interconnect the global and local contexts for ministry.
- C. To expose the justice issues that intersect with the social, historical, economic and cultural peculiarities of the community.

- D. To relate those specific issues to a broader theological context and to begin to develop a vision of the church that imagines transformative action, both in the personal and social realms.
- E. To practice self examination in light of standing outside of one's own environment, which includes one's beliefs and actions related to paradigm constructs of society, culture, religion and persons.
- F. To engage in theological "translation" of the issues of the cultural experience into the language of one's own culture, and to practice the articulation of that experience as it relates to various disciplines at the Seminary and anticipated contexts of ministry.

III. Immersion Experience Standards

A. Premise

An immersion experience ought to be designed to promote cross-cultural knowledge that enlarges a student's universe of human discourse. Immersion experiences focus on the particularity of a cultural group while at once exposing both common and separate constructions of social reality.

Immersion requires a definition of culture. For the Methodist Theological School in Ohio immersion experiences, culture is defined as: 1) a socially established structure of meaning through which people interpret their experience and generate behavior; 2) a context in which belief, behavior, ritual processes, social events, institutions and political discourses can be intelligibly reported; and 3) the product of a human group to be grasped in its particularity and in terms of global processes of interconnection and change.

MTSO immersion programs take place in a cross-cultural context either in other countries or in the United States. All students are required to participate in a pre-immersion and post-immersion component, which will take place during the term immediately before and after the immersion experience itself. These sessions will normally be led by MTSO faculty.

Whereas mission trips involve identifying needs and engaging in service to meet those needs, the cross-cultural immersion trips focus on learning from the host culture (as specified in this Handbook). While the Committee strongly affirms mission trips to be valuable opportunities for Christian service, it finds the contrasts between the two aforementioned trips to be significant enough to consider them separately. Mission trips will not normally fulfill the requirements of the cross-cultural program.

B. Design

An immersion experience ought to enable students to understand another way of life from the perspective of the host community. Therefore, the immersion experiences should be designed to facilitate a process of learning from people.

By the end of their experience in the field, immersion participants ought to be able to provide an adequate description of the “other” cultural group that includes an articulation of aspects of the consistent thought and behavior of the host cultural community.

Therefore, the immersion experience design will include dialogue with hosts and experiential learning around a cultural inventory that consists of:

Economic life: What are the characteristics of the system of production, distribution, and consumption? What patterns of ownership, capital, resources and decision-making are identifiable? Who owns? Who controls? Who pays? How does the economy produce group solidarity? How does it produce social conflict? What is the relationship between the local and global economy?

Social life: What are the patterns of social relationship and the demographic characteristics of the immersion context? Do people relate to each other in terms of race, class, ethnicity, age group, sex, and so forth? What is the basis for inclusion/exclusion in social groups? What are the dominant social problems? What general outlook on life is held by different social groups?

Cultural life: What are the predominant values of the cultural group? What cultural themes manifest the group’s consistent pattern of thought and behavior? Who influences the system of meaning out of which people live? What cultural knowledge are people using to generate behavior in their environment and organize a meaningful self-identity?

Political life: What is the relationship between political life and the system of beliefs constitutive of the local culture? How do people relate culture as a structure of meaning through which people construe their experience and politics as the context in which such structures unfold? What is the nature of political leadership? Who has a voice and decision-making power? What role does religion, the media and/or popular culture have on political life?

Religious life: What is the religious climate of the local group? Are categories of thought religious or secular? How does religion give expression to the cultural group’s ultimate concern? What do religious belief and practices as expressed by people in the immersion context support in the local setting? What religious symbols play a role in the construction of group and self-identity?

IV. Immersion Experience Guidelines

A. Registration

- The cross-cultural immersion requirement begins with M.Div. students entering in the fall class of 2002.
- Normally students will complete at least one year of full-time study before participating in the cross-cultural program. It is recommended that students complete the C-C program before their final year of study.
- The Cross-cultural Immersion Course is a 3 semester hour course.
- The entire Cross-cultural Immersion Course consists of three components: pre-immersion sessions, the immersion experience, and post-immersion sessions, each of which is necessary for course credit. Note that no students will be allowed to participate in the immersion experience without participating in the pre and post-immersion sessions.
- All students who are concurrently going to various locations for their immersion experience will enroll in the appropriate section of the pre-immersion and post-immersion sessions (CR 201-x and CR 203-x, respectively), as designated by the name of the immersion experience. All sessions will meet at the same time. Some class meetings will combine all the sections; others will meet at discrete sections (based upon the immersion experience).
- Students are required to register for the pre-immersion sessions in the term preceding the immersion experience and the post-immersion sessions subsequent to the immersion experience (i.e., those who have an immersion experience in the January term will register for the pre-immersion sessions in the preceding fall term and the post-immersion sessions in the spring term).
- The registration numbering sequence for the components requires that students designate the immersion experience of their choosing at the time of registration for the pre-immersion sessions, as follows:
 - 201-x Cross-cultural Pre-immersion Sessions: (name of immersion trip)
 - 202-x Cross-cultural Immersion Experience: (name of immersion trip)
 - 203-x Cross-cultural Post-immersion Sessions: (name of immersion trip)
- For the purposes of registration, no credit hours will be assigned to the pre/post immersion sessions and the immersion experience will carry three credit hours.
- Credit for the Cross-cultural Immersion Course will be awarded on a pass/fail basis.
- If students attending NHTS plan to take a Cross-cultural course, arrangements for pre/post immersion components will be developed in consultation between the Executive Director or designated staff at NHTS and the Coordinator of the Cross-cultural Program at MTSO.
- Spouses and/or other family members are welcome to accompany students on the immersion experience under certain circumstances. Students interested in this possibility should consult with the Program Coordinator, regarding expectations and considerations. The Coordinator will also schedule a meeting with the family members involved.
- Spouses of Trip Leaders – Faculty spouses and/or family members are encouraged to participate in the immersion trips, at their own expense. However,

if the faculty spouse or family member is participating in the immersion trip with the expectation and anticipation that this trip will serve as a preparatory step to his/her own leadership of a future trip, the cross-cultural committee may recommend that his/her expenses for the trip be covered by the cross-cultural budget.

B. Fees

- The cost of three semester hours of tuition (at the current MTSO registration rate) for the Cross-cultural Immersion Course will be assessed during the term in which the student takes the immersion experience component of the course.
- The rest of the costs of the trip will be covered in whole or in part by means of an assessed program fee (in 2004-05 \$355.00 per semester) for each M.Div. student. This fee is collected for a maximum of six semesters.
- The cost of the immersion experience as determined by the Cross-cultural Committee will be charged to the respective students' account during the semester that they are enrolled in the pre-immersion sessions.
- Therefore, those who enroll in the course before they have contributed the maximum amount to their program fee (at the current fee, \$2,130.00) will use what amounts to an advance from the cross-cultural fund to finance their immersion experience.
- The students then will be required to make up for the deficit in their accounts by continued payment of the fee—until the costs have been covered.
- Students who have not contributed sufficient funds to the Cross-cultural Fund so as to cover the cost of an immersion experience (e.g. for reasons of transfer to MTSO or change of degree programs) will be responsible for the balance of the cost of the trip.
- If a student chooses a Cross-cultural immersion experience that costs more than the total amount that will be accrued after 6 semesters' fees (\$2,130), he/she will be billed at the beginning of the semester in which they are enrolled in the pre-immersion course for the estimated additional expense. This amount must be paid prior to leaving for the immersion experience. If the cost of the trip is greater than the estimated expense, an additional charge will be placed on the student's account. If the cost of the trip is less than the estimated expense, the difference will be credited to the student's account.
- After the immersion trip has been taken and all costs for the trip have been paid, any balance remaining in the student's cross-cultural account will be credited to his/her account and no additional cross-cultural fees will be assessed.
- If a student withdraws from MTSO before his/her cross-cultural account is cleared, he/she will be billed for the balance of the amount owed for the trip.
- If a student has contributed to the cross-cultural account and withdraws from MTSO before going on the cross-cultural trip, *no refund will be given*. After withdrawal, the fund will remain active for the 3 years prescribed by the MTSO readmission policy.
- If a student transfers to another degree program at MTSO for which the cross-cultural course is not a requirement, upon notification from the registrar's office, the business office will apply the collected funds to his/her account.

- Because the Cross-cultural Immersion Course is a requirement of the M.Div. degree, the course qualifies for whatever student aid and/or loans to which the student may already be entitled for tuition for this course.
- For details concerning the cross-cultural funds of particular student accounts, students may contact the Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant who will be provided periodic statements from the business office.

C. Pre-immersion and Post-immersion Sessions

An integral part of the total course is the pre and post-immersion seminars. Each of these will consist of at least four sessions of 1 ½ hours each, normally scheduled in terms respectively immediately before and after the immersion trip. I.e., for January trips the pre-immersion will be in the Fall semester and the post-immersion in the Spring. The pre-immersion will include both a) some basic information regarding the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and global awareness and b) orientation for the specific trip and its context. The post-immersion sessions will offer an opportunity for each group to continue to share aspects of the trip and to reflect on those experiences. Concluding sessions will provide occasion for reflection in terms of our general world views, our theological understandings, and our concepts of ministry. (Sample syllabi for pre-immersion and post-immersion sessions are included in the appendices of this “Handbook”).

Absences from seminar sessions: In cases of family emergencies or personal illness, a student may be excused from only one of each of the pre and post-immersion sessions. In such a case all the assignments for that session must be completed, as well as any “make-up” work required by the sessions leader. If more than one session is missed, the student will be dropped from that part of the course. In the case of the pre-immersion seminar, if two or more sessions are missed, the student will be dropped from the entire course. In this case, any money already paid by the School on behalf of the student (e.g., deposits for the program, airfare, administrative costs) will be charged to the student’s account. In the case of the post-immersion sessions, the student will be required to enroll in the next available post-immersion sessions to complete the requirement of the course.

D. Cross-cultural Immersion Offerings

- Generally, the student will engage in an immersion experience led by MTSO faculty with the field immersion occurring in either the January or Summer term. The immersion will last about 2 weeks.
- The course offerings for each year are listed on the class schedules. Specific information about each of these offerings can be obtained from the instructor (who is the Immersion Experience Leader) listed for each section (trip), from the Coordinator of the Cross-cultural Program or from the Administrative Assistant.
- Other immersion experiences, available through other educational organizations, may be suitable for course credit, subject to approval by the Cross-cultural Committee. If another immersion experience is taken to fulfill that portion of the course requirement, the student will still be required to participate in the MTSO pre and post-immersion components of the course.

- If students opt for alternative immersion experiences, they must submit a proposal in writing to the Cross-cultural Committee at least 3 months prior to departure. (See attached form “Alternative Immersion Course Proposal” below).
- Alternative courses must have the following elements to be viable:
 - Normally two weeks participation
 - Students are expected to live in the context of the immersion
 - The experience must include components related to the categories of economic, social, cultural, political, and religious as listed above
- Normally short-term immersion experiences taken prior to enrollment at MTSO will not be approved to fulfill this requirement. (See paragraph F below for “Exemptions.”)
- If a student transferring from another ATS accredited institution has successfully completed a 3 semester hour cross-cultural course, which included an immersion experience, together with preparation for and reflection upon that experience similar to that outlined in this handbook, the student may submit a detailed description of that course (e.g., syllabi and relevant trip information) to the Coordinator of the Cross-cultural Program. If approved, the Coordinator will notify the Academic Dean and the Registrar and the course may be transferred as fulfilling the cross-cultural requirement for the MTSO M.Div. degree.

E. Alternative Programs for Reasons of Health and Physical Considerations

If a student is aware of health or physical issues that should be considered in determining an appropriate way to meet this requirement, particularly as it related to the immersion experience itself, he/she should consult the Coordinator of the Cross-cultural Program and the Immersion Experience Leader as soon as possible in the program of studies. In some cases, specific documentation may be required. If special consideration is deemed appropriate, the student and the Coordinator will work together to develop a proposal for an alternative program which would meet this requirement. That program proposal will then be submitted to the committee for approval.

F. Exemptions Based on Prior Experience

- In *rare* cases, exemptions from the cross-cultural requirement may be granted, particularly when an individual can document extensive previous cross-cultural experience that addresses the goals of the course as described in this handbook. (NOTE: A short-term immersion trip or volunteer experience does not qualify as “extensive experience.” On the other hand, an extended mission or study program may.) To petition for exemption, submit the “Cross-cultural Exemption” form (included below) to the Coordinator of the Cross-cultural Program who will then consult with the Cross-cultural Committee for action. The student will then be notified of the action of that committee, with a copy filed in the registrar’s office.
- Exemption from the immersion component of the course may not necessarily exempt one from the pre/post sessions or the written requirements of the course.
- Those who qualify for the immersion exemption but not from the other components of the course need to enroll in the pre/post immersion sessions and

submit their reflection paper to the professor assigned to the course for the immersion experience.

- After all components of the course are complete according to the instructions of the Coordinator and a properly signed form is submitted, the registrar will note on the student's transcript that the cross-cultural requirement has been fulfilled.

G. Course Requirements and Assessment

- The Cross-cultural Immersion Course will be offered on a pass/fail basis.
- There are four areas of assessment: 1) the pre-immersion sessions, along with any related assignments, 2) the immersion experience, 3) the written assignment, and 4) the post-immersion sessions. Each of these areas must be completed in order to receive a "pass" for the course.
- A list of all students enrolled in the Cross-cultural course (all sections) will be presented for review to the faculty meeting in executive session at the first meeting of the Fall semester for January immersions and of the Spring semester for Summer immersions.
- Students will be assessed at the pre-immersion stage and must be approved by the Immersion Experience Leaders before they will be allowed to go on the immersion experience.
- This course is experientially based, therefore, full participation in each aspect of the course is required. If students are forced to withdraw from the immersion component of the course (either due to personal circumstances or due to inappropriate behavior), they will receive an incomplete until the time when they can complete their two weeks of immersion experience. Components of the course that have already been completed may not need to be repeated if the course is completed within a reasonable amount of time.
- The written component of the immersion experience generally requires a daily journal of reflection which serves as a springboard for a final reflection/integration paper of 10-12 double-spaced pages. The specific guidelines for the written component will be provided by the Immersion Experience Leaders.
- The written component is due within a week of one's return from the immersion experience and before the post-immersion sessions begin.
- Students will have their Cross-cultural Certification (see attached document) signed at each stage of their course (pre-immersion, immersion experience, post immersion) and then submit it immediately to the Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant.
- The faculty member who leads the immersion experience will issue a mark of pass/fail for the course following completion of the post-immersion sessions and the submission of the signed Cross-cultural Certification to the Administrative Assistant.

V. Practical Information

A. Health and Insurance

- Prior to departure, students should consult their physician to discuss any needed inoculations or medications for travel. International sites particularly often require tetanus, hepatitis and other vaccines. As these vaccines often occur in stages, it is best to begin this inquiry several months before departure.
- Allergic or asthmatic students should check with their physicians to anticipate their prescription needs in a different environment.
- Any students with particular health concerns need to be in touch with the Immersion Experience Leader well in advance of the immersion experience in order to make special requests related to diet and health. (Note that circumstances do not always allow for special requests.)
- Students should insure that they have an ample supply of any prescription medications for the trip and carry them in their personal care during travel (e.g. carry-on luggage).
- Emergency Evacuation Insurance is required for all Cross-cultural participants. Those participants who carry MTSO insurance already have this coverage. Participants without this coverage must purchase this insurance through the MTSO plan for the duration of their immersion experience for a nominal charge. The cost may be deducted from their cross-cultural fees.

B. Identification and Passports

- No special identification is required for students whose immersion experience is within the U.S.
- Those traveling outside the U.S. must acquire a passport for travel. This process takes up to 8 weeks from the time that application is made.

C. Exertion Scale for Cross-Cultural Immersion Experiences

Each trip will be assigned a level as follows:

- Level 1 – Walking required per each activity less than one mile, and/or ability to transport own luggage for ½ mile, and/or moderate elevation level, and/or occasional stairs.
- Level 2 – Walking per each activity may be up to 2 miles, and/or elevation level over 1 mile high for an extended stay, and/or 2-3 flights of stairs at one climb.
- Level 3 – Regular daily walking could exceed more than 3 miles, and/or 3-4 flights of stairs at frequent intervals during the day, and/or hiking in moderate terrain over a several hours' period, and/or high altitude or serious city pollution for extended stay.

D. What To Take

- The watchword is: TRAVEL LIGHT! Pack only what you can carry by yourself comfortably, as you will be required to tote your own belongings at several times throughout your experience. The recommended load is one moderate suitcase and a backpack.

- Pack things that can be worn more than once or can be washed out and hung up to dry overnight.
- Pay attention to the cultural customs of the area. At times, shorts or revealing outfits will not be well received by the natives.
- A backpack will be useful for daily excursions.
- Do not take any valuables, including cameras. Disposable cameras are recommended.
- A notebook for your daily journal is required. Try to locate a small Bible to bring along.
- Bug repellent, pain killers, Band-Aids, hand sanitizers, kapectate are recommended.
- Bring along a water bottle to take on daily excursions.
- Plastic shower thongs are recommended.
- Other specific instructions will be given based upon the destination.

E. Emergency Information

- Each participant is required to complete a release form (see back section) before departing on the immersion experience.
- The Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant will be the contact person in case of emergencies either at the immersion site or at the student's home.
- Because contact with home is often limited, the Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant will relay via email the safe arrival of the participants to their contact person if requested.
- If an emergency requires that a student's immersion experience be cut short, the Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant will arrange for a return flight at the expense of the student.
- Students should travel with their medical insurance information.

VI. SAMPLE IMMERSION ITINERARIES AND PRE-IMMERSION AND POST- IMMERSION SYLLABI

THE ITINERARIES AND SYLLABI INCLUDED ARE INTENDED ONLY AS SAMPLES AND ARE NOT CURRENT IMMERSION COURSE ITINERARIES OR SYLLABI. SEE THE INDIVIDUAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE LEADERS FOR ANY PARTICULAR IMMERSION ITINERARIES.

**CR 201 Cross-Cultural Experience:
Pre-Immersion Sessions**

Methodist Theological School in Ohio
Fall 2004

Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
(Sept. 28, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, 16, & 30)
Gault Hall 133

Instructor: Joon-Sik Park, Ph.D.

with Professors Kempton Hewitt, Lee Johnson, and Lisa Withrow

Office (Werner #217): 740-362-3367; Home: 614-985-4918

jpark@mtso.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students prepare for CR202, Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience, through assigned readings, discussion, and practical exercises. It focuses, first, on examining implications and challenges of globalization both to the human community and to the church. Since the latter part of the twentieth century globalization has become the most dominant force shaping and affecting the life and environment of the peoples on this planet. As the world is increasingly shaped by globalization, theology stands between the global and the local. Students are thus invited and challenged to engage in theology, interacting with and integrating both the global and local realities. Further, they are encouraged to understand critically the systemic issues (social, historical, and economic) that interconnect the global and local contexts, and begin to develop a vision of the church as a faithful witness and a transforming agent both in the personal and social realms.

Second, this course seeks to explore the nature and dynamics of intercultural communication and cross-cultural observation. It examines characteristics, principles, and precepts of intercultural interaction and communication. The emphasis is placed on preparing students to listen, to learn, and to begin to think critically about their own religious and social identity and location, and cultural context. As such, the pre-immersion sessions are designed to help students develop a receptive attitude and responsiveness to the “cultural other.”

Third, students will be introduced to the cultural, religious, historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts and issues of the country they travel to. By studying the culture, history, and religion prior to the trip, students will be in a better position to understand and engage the local people and their situation in a mutually hospitable way.

The cross-cultural immersion experience is not a “tourist” adventure, nor is it a trip in which students give something to the people they will be visiting. Rather, the goal is for

them to receive and learn from the people in another culture. (Yet, when invited by people in the host culture, they would be welcome to share about their own culture and faith.)

It is hoped that the three “phases” of the cross-cultural experience course (CR201, CR202, CR203) will provide students with different lenses (or additional lenses) for seeing and knowing themselves as a cultural person, shaped and formed by particular social location and culture; and for viewing the local church experience and the United States within the global context. Gaining a new understanding of culture, people, and faith, they would be able to build an awareness of the increasing diversity found not only within the global church (and the world), but also within the church in North America. With such awareness they would be better prepared to engage in ministry in a culturally and religiously diverse context.

OBJECTIVES

To be able to prepare for a cross-cultural immersion experience by:

- understanding the globalization phenomenon with its positive and negative consequences
- beginning to engage in theology locally and globally, that is, interacting and integrating both the global and the local realities
- understanding changing concepts of culture
- learning dynamics and skills of intercultural communication and cross-cultural observation, and developing intercultural sensitivity in the context of cross-cultural encounter
- being aware of the meaning and value of listening to the “cultural other” in cross-cultural observation
- learning to interact more effectively in North American multicultural environments

TEXTS

A. Required Texts

Ricard, Virginia B. *Developing Intercultural Communication Skills*. Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 1993. (on reserve)

Samovar, Larry A., and Richard Porter. *Communication Between Cultures*. Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Pub., 1991. (on reserve)

Schreiter, Robert J. *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. New York, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997.

B. Recommended Reading

Brislin, Richard W. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.

Brubaker, Pamela K. *Globalization at What Price?: Economic Change and Daily Life*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.

- Greider, Kathleen J. "From Multiculturalism to Interculturality: Demilitarizing the Border Between Personal and Social Dynamics Through Spiritual Receptivity." *Journal of Supervision in Ministry*, 22 (2003): 40-58.
- Kim, Young-Il. "Identifying and Communicating God's Presence in the Cross-Cultural Context." In *Knowledge, Attitude, and Experience: Ministry in a Cross-Cultural Context*, ed. Young-Il Kim. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- Seelye, H. Ned, ed. *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1996.
- Storti, Craig. *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Difference*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1994.
- Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transformation and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Attendance
Attendance at all five sessions is expected and required. In order to pass the course, no more than one session may be missed.

2. Reading/Reflection Assignments
Much of the value of this course will come from interaction among the participants. Students are, thus, to prepare for each class session by carefully reading the assigned texts and to take an active part in discussions.

Students are required to write a reading reflection on the assignments for November 2 and 16. Each reflection is to be one single-spaced page in length. It is to identify and single out 4-5 central points of the reading—major ideas, themes, and issues that have been found important—with a brief reflection that might include insights and assumptions of the author, opposing points of view, or questions crucial to a cross-cultural experience. These reflections will be used for interactive class discussions.

3. Prerequisite
M.Div. students will normally have completed a 1/3 of the degree program before pursuing a cross-cultural immersion experience.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Session 1 (September 28):

“OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE”

- Introduction to the Course
- Cross-Cultural Immersion Handbook Review
- Introduction to the Immersion Trips
 - Mexico Trip: Prof. Lee Johnson
 - Russia Trip: Prof. Lisa Withrow

Session 2 (October 19):

“PREPARATION FOR THE IMMERSION TRIPS”

- Mexico Trip: Prof. Lee Johnson
- Russia Trip: Prof. Lisa Withrow

Session 3 (November 2):

“GLOBALIZATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION”

- Reading: Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*
- Discuss “globalization and the contexts of theology,” “concepts of culture,” and “the new catholicity”

Session 4 (November 16):

“NATURE AND DYNAMICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION”

- Readings: Samovar and Porter, pp. 69-99, 103-142 (“Understanding Intercultural Communication: Principles and Precepts,” and “Cultural Diversity in Perception: Alternative Views of Reality”); and Ricard, pp. 63-96 (“Observing,” and “Listening”)
- Discuss forms and elements of “intercultural communication,” including the role/place of perception in intercultural interaction and communication.
- Discuss frameworks for growth in intercultural interaction and communication with particular emphasis on important factors that impact most intercultural relationships, including observing and listening, as well as exploring similarities and differences across cultures.
- Discuss the impact of values on intercultural interaction and communication, the importance of recognizing individual similarities and differences (cultural patterns and preferences) in intercultural interaction and communication, etc.
- Practical exercises

Session 5 (November 30):

“FINAL TRIP PREPARATIONS”

- Mexico Trip: Prof. Kempton Hewitt
- Russia Trip: Prof. Lisa Withrow

CR 203 Cross-Cultural Experience: Post-Immersion Sessions

Methodist Theological School in Ohio
Spring 2005

Mondays 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
(Jan. 31, Feb. 7, 14, 21, & 28)
Gault Hall 133

Instructor: Joon-Sik Park, Ph.D.
with Professors Kempton Hewitt and Lisa Withrow
Office (Werner #217): 740-362-3367; Home: 614-985-4918
jpark@mtso.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The post-immersion sessions are designed to help students reflect on the significance of their cross-cultural immersion experience. In sharing their personal experience in the “immersion location,” they will be asked to assess constructively their participation in and contribution to intercultural communication and cross-cultural observation; and to examine critically social, historical, and economic issues that interconnect the global and local contexts.

This course mainly consists of class discussion, in which the students will also explore implications of their experience and insights for their own practice of ministry. It is hoped that, based on their cross-cultural experience, they will view themselves as a cultural person, shaped and formed by particular social location and culture; and gain a new understanding of culture, people, and faith so as to build an awareness of and sensitivity to the increasing diversity found within the church in North America. With such awareness and sensitivity, they would be better prepared to engage in ministry in a culturally and religiously diverse context as well as to engage in theology locally and globally, that is, interacting and integrating both the global and the local realities.

RESOURCES

- Brislin, Richard W. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.
- Brubaker, Pamela K. *Globalization at What Price?: Economic Change and Daily Life*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.
- McSpadden, Lucia Ann. *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural—Cross-Racial Clergy Appointments*. Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2003.
- Ricard, Virginia B. *Developing Intercultural Communication Skills*. Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 1993. (on reserve)

- Samovar, Larry A., and Richard Porter. *Communication Between Cultures*. Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Pub., 1991. (on reserve)
- Schreiter, Robert J. *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. New York, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997.
- Seelye, H. Ned, ed. *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1996.
- Storti, Craig. *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Difference*. Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1994.
- Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transformation and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

3. Class Attendance

Attendance at all five sessions is expected and required. In order to pass the course, no more than one session may be missed.

4. Reflection Assignments

Much of the value of this course will come from interaction among the participants. Students are, thus, to prepare for each class session by carefully and critically reflecting on their cross-cultural experience with a different focus.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS

Session 1 (January 31) & **Session 2** (February 7):

“Reflective Sharing of Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience on the Whole”
--Guided by Professors Kempton Hewitt and Lisa Withrow:

Including:

- an immersion event, space, or conversion that made an impact on you;
- its cultural, political, socio-economic, doctrinal, and theological significance for your ministry;
- and questions this encounter raised for you and your response to them

Session 3 (February 14):

“Reflective Sharing with a Focus on *the Other*”

Session 4 (February 21):

“Reflective Sharing with a Focus on *the Self*”

Session 5 (February 28):

“Reflective Sharing with a Focus on *Theology and Ministry*”

VII. Alternative Immersion Application

Complete form and submit to the Cross-cultural Committee at least 3 months in advance of the proposed immersion experience.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Degree Program _____

Starting and ending dates of proposed experience _____

Semester and dates of pre/post immersion meetings in which you plan to participate

Respond to the following questions on attached pages:

1. Describe the immersion experience in which you plan to participate. Attach a copy of the descriptive material (brochure, etc.) provided by the sponsoring agency, group or individual.
2. Why is this an appropriate cross-cultural experience for you?
3. How does this experience allow you to interact with a different economic, social, cultural, political and religious group?
4. How can you imagine that this experience will impact your ministry?

SIGNATURES:

Student _____ Date _____

Cross-cultural Committee _____

_____ Date _____

Coordinator _____ Date _____

VIII. Application for Exemption from Cross-cultural Requirement

Complete form and submit it to the Office of the Dean. Do not assume an exemption will be granted by virtue of this application. Applications for exemption should be submitted early in the student's academic program.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Degree Program _____

Starting and ending dates of previous cross-cultural experience _____

Respond to the following questions on attached pages:

1. Briefly describe your immersion experience. Attach a copy of the descriptive material (brochure, if available) provided by the sponsoring agency, group or individual.
2. Briefly describe your pre-trip preparation.
3. Explain (in 1-2 pages) how your cross-cultural experience allowed you to interface with the following cultural inventory in an unfamiliar setting: economic life, social life, cultural life, political life, religious life.
4. Explain (in 1-2 pages) in what ways and under what circumstances have you articulated theologically your cross-cultural experience? What are the theological implications of your experience?

SIGNATURES:

Student _____ Date _____

Coordinator _____ Date _____

IX. Approval and Assessment of Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs

APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

A. CRITERIA FOR THE PROPOSAL

Two basic approaches are possible: 1) working with an established organization that offers educational immersion programs, and 2) developing a program which the faculty member(s) plans and implements.

- 1) Working with an established education organization. The organization should be one whose primary mission is cross-cultural education. While volunteer service programs, work camps, and other similar programs offer important exposure to and immersion in another culture, they are normally not structured to expose participants to various spheres of life, the range of cultural contexts, and the diversity of perspectives sought for this program. If volunteer service is one aspect of the proposed program, the design must outline clearly the larger educational dimensions.

The organization should have a proved track record in working with programs similar to our own, i.e., graduate theological education. Preferably a faculty member will have had experience with the organization or be directly familiar with it. If not, evaluations from other seminary leaders should be solicited. Sample programs should demonstrate that they typically address each of the areas outlined in our standards: economic, social, cultural, political and religious (see p.7). Participants should be exposed to different perspectives on issues encountered within each of these spheres. Educational integrity requires engagement with diverse positions.

It is also possible to supplement the basic program with a brief engagement with another organization or setting. E.g., the program to Mexico in January 2002 worked primarily with an educational center in Cuernavaca. They then spent the final (extended) weekend at the Methodist seminary in Mexico City, which included accompanying students to their various churches for weekend services.

- 2) Faculty developed programs. A faculty member (or members) might develop their own program, making their own contacts with groups and spokespersons in the immersion context. As in the programs described above, the proposals must outline clearly ways in which the standards of the program will be met, i.e., attention to economic, social, cultural, political and religious aspects. The proposal must also indicate the basic plan attending to logistics: food, lodging, and local transportation.

The faculty leader(s) must have substantial experience in and knowledge of that context, including functional competence in the primary language (or languages) of the context. The faculty leader should have a network of contacts, such that they can plan for an appropriate experience—and such that they can adapt the program to emerging issues or special circumstances.

B. TIMELINE FOR PROPOSALS

Initial proposals, providing sufficient information that the committee can evaluate the program potential, must be submitted to the committee (through the Coordinator) no later than October 1 of the year prior to the academic year for which the program is projected. I.e. proposals for programs projected for the summer of 2010 or J-term of 2011 must be submitted by October 1, 2009.

This allows the committee adequate time to review the program and work out implementation details with the leader(s), including plans for pre- and post-immersion sessions. It also allows the Coordinator time to work out teaching load issues with the Office of the Academic Dean and to have the course included in projected class schedules. This advance notice (via the longer range course schedules) will allow students adequate time to plan for the trip.

EVALUATION OF IMMERSION EXPERIENCES

A. REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

As soon as possible after the completion of an immersion course, the Coordinator will arrange a meeting of the immersion leader with the full committee. (If other faculty have also participated in the experience they would also be invited.) The leader will be asked to provide a brief report of the experience, including the basic program design and daily itineraries. Finally, an assessment of the program should be offered, particularly in light of the criteria outlined in the Handbook. (How effectively did this experience address each of the spheres identified? Did the reflection papers by students, taken as a whole, indicate that they had engaged these various dimensions?) Does the leader recommend this particular program for future consideration? If yes, are there any specific concerns that should be addressed in planning future trips? Are there any recommendations for the committee or for future leaders? Does he/she have any ideas that might enhance a future trip, either as part of the basic program or as an “add-on” experience that might be incorporated into the program?

B. PROVIDING BASIC INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR PROGRAM NOTEBOOK

At that meeting (or soon thereafter) the leader should provide the committee with printed information that could be included in our program notebook, which will be a resource for the committee and for future leaders. That material should include the basic information requested for the meeting with the committee, such as program outline and daily itineraries. It should also include basic contact information: for the organization(s) which organized the program. Any specific recommendations for the future should also be included.

X. IMMERSION CERTIFICATION

Student _____

Type of Immersion _____

Dates of Participation _____

This form is submitted to certify completion of the three components of the Cross-cultural Experience Course

SIGNATURES:

Student _____ Date _____

Pre-immersion Leader _____ Date _____

Immersion Leader _____ Date _____

Post-immersion Leader _____ Date _____

Submit this form to the Cross-cultural Administrative Assistant immediately following completion of the post-immersion sessions.

Coordinator _____ Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL

Methodist Theological School in Ohio Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience

HEALTH AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

FIRST/LAST NAME (1) _____
Birthdate (1)

ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP

() _____ E-mail: _____
Phone Number (Please print legibly)

Do you have any physical conditions that would prevent you from getting into and out of our large passenger vans used on this program? If yes, please explain:

Do you have any health conditions (i.e., allergies, chronic conditions), or special circumstances (i.e., religious convictions or legal arrangements), that we should know prior to emergency treatment? If yes, please explain:

Is there anything else that we should know about you prior to your coming on this program?

Whom do we notify in case of an accident or medical emergency?
(Please do not include anyone accompanying you on this program)

Name/Relationship () _____
Phone

Name/Relationship () _____
Phone

MTSO Program: _____ Program Dates: _____

HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE CARRIER(S):

Name of Carrier (1): _____

Policy #: _____

Name of Physician: _____

Phone Number: _____

Do you or have you recently experienced any of the following (A "x" indicates yes)

- ____ Asthma
- ____ Cardiac Surgery/heart problems (1-2 yr.)
- ____ Respiratory Problems
- ____ Shortness of Breath
- ____ Bad Back
- ____ Bad Hips/knees
- ____ Chest pains/pressure
- ____ Fainting Spells
- ____ High Blood Pressure
- ____ Seizures
- ____ Stroke

Please Bring Required Medication With You To The Program

Signature

Date

**XI. RELEASE OF LIABILITY AGREEMENT
FOR THE CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE
OF METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO**

Nature of the Program

Methodist Theological School in Ohio (“the School”) is pleased to offer its students the opportunity to participate in international educational opportunities, such as the _____. As described in the course description, the year’s Immersion Experience involves residence in _____. Please see the Cross-cultural Handbook for a more detailed description of the Immersion Experience.

Like all other School-sponsored activities, participation in the Immersion Experience is subject to the School’s code of conduct and a participant’s failure to adhere to the Immersion Course requirements and the School’s rules may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination from the Immersion and return home at the participant’s expense.

In addition, while the School will attempt to take every reasonable precaution to assure the safety of the Immersion Course participants, there are certain unavoidable risks associated with traveling abroad. These risks include the possibility of serious physical injury, disease, food poisoning and abduction, which the School has no way of anticipating. Consequently, like virtually all other institutions that sponsor study abroad programs, the School requires that each participant execute a Release of Liability (“the Release”). A student will not be allowed to participate in the Immersion Experience unless he or she executes a Release.

With this in mind, please read carefully the Release of Liability set forth below and execute it if you wish to participate in the Immersion Experience. You are advised to consult your attorney if you have any questions about the meaning of this Release of Liability Agreement.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

In consideration for the privilege of participating in the _____
_____ of Methodist Theological School in Ohio I
agree to the following:

1. I have been informed about and understand the nature of the Immersion Experience.
2. I expressly assume the risk of any injury to my person or property that could result from participation in the Immersion Experience.
3. For myself and on behalf of my executors, administrators, heirs and assigns, I hereby release and forever hold harmless the School, its employees and agents from any and all claims that may result from any damage to my person or property, whether accidental or through the negligence of the School, its employees or agents, arising in any way from my participation in the Immersion Experience.
4. Should there be any dispute or claim arising from my participation in the Immersion Experience that would require the adjudication of a court of law, such adjudication will occur in the courts of Delaware County, Ohio and shall be determined by the laws of the State of Ohio.
5. This Release of Liability Agreement represents my complete understanding with the School concerning its responsibility and liability for my participation in the Immersion Experience, supersedes any other understandings I may have had on this subject, and cannot be changed in any way without mutual written concurrence.

Student Participant

Date