



## **CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION COURSE**

### **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Amended May 2016**

**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 REQUIRMENT INSTITUTED IN THE FALL TERM 2002 FOR ALL M.DIV. CANDIDATES.**

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

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## I. Cross-Cultural Rationale for the MTSO Curriculum

The Methodist Theological School in Ohio's aspiration, identity and purpose guide the school's academic pursuits and common life:

### Our Aspiration

In response to the grace and call of God in Jesus Christ, Methodist Theological School in Ohio will prepare and invigorate transformational leaders to engage the church and the world in leadership and service.

### Our Identity and Purpose

Methodist Theological School in Ohio is a center for rigorous theological inquiry, spiritual formation and professional development which is rooted in the scriptures and traditions of the Christian faith. We provide a vibrant learning environment for the preparation of skilled, passionate transformational leaders for churches, religious institutions, emerging faith communities, and the wider world.

Grounded in our Wesleyan tradition and influenced by our ecumenical and interfaith commitments, we attend to the theological, spiritual, and vocational formation of a diverse group of students involved in a wide range of pursuits. Expecting active participation in our community of learning, we maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness, teaching how to engage in conversation with the past and with others so that new and faithful perspectives may emerge. We strive for our graduates to demonstrate a deep understanding of the heritage disciplines of religious study, to be highly competent in areas of practical theology, and to show evidence of thoughtful reflection. We are committed to individual wholeness, social justice, inclusiveness, and religious diversity. We take seriously our responsibility for stewardship of the intellectual life of the church and our commitment to a just and sustainable world.

### Rationale for the Cross-Cultural Immersion Programs

As a foundation for learning to respect the rich diversity of beliefs and practices in the wider church, extend hospitality to ecumenical partners, and nurture a global perspective, the MTSO cross cultural course seeks:

- To create a teaching/learning environment respecting 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 with an inter-religious worldview;

- 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.

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**

1. To become familiar with cultures that differ from the dominant cultural sensibilities that may be unexamined through education in our Midwestern mainline theological seminary. The pedagogical goal is the cultivation of resources for education, mission and vocation through sharing common meals, worship, conversation and shared living experiences for a continuous period, normally at least two full weeks.
2. To examine the systemic issues connecting global and local contexts for ministry.
3. To expose justice issues intersecting with social, historical, economic and cultural peculiarities of communities.
4. To engage specific issues in 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 the universe of human discourse.

The idea of ‘cultural immersion’ requires a definition of culture. Sociologists of culture Chad Richardson and Rosalva Resendiz define culture as consisting of “the patterned ways that a society collectively interprets or understands things,” including shared understandings of right and wrong, truth and error and appropriate ways of behaving. Richardson and Resendiz explain that the collective interpretations that comprise culture exist within social structure, a concept that they distinguish from ‘culture’ thus understood. In contrast to culture, they define social structure as “patterns of established relationships among [a society’s] recognized components or parts.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, structure refers to the manner in which all the social parts fit together, or the web of relationships that make up a particular society, whereas culture to the collective mentality (or mentalities) that are part of that organizational web. The cross-cultural knowledge and experience that this program seeks to facilitate for participants is thus related to both culture and structure.

The Methodist Theological School in Ohio immersion experiences understand the cultures and structures in any particular immersion context to exist in both their own particularity and in global processes of connection and change. Immersion experiences are designed for students to engage in cultural and structural discernment in conversation with local peoples, politics, social structures, religious understandings and economic structures. The practices of discernment desired in the cultural immersion are not those of a critic, determining the value or desirability of other people and other cultures. The MTSO cultural immersion seeks to cultivate self-awareness, revealing prejudices and other deeply held beliefs that inhibit students in their growth in vocation as religious leaders.

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 cultures (as specified in this Handbook). While the Committee strongly affirms mission trips to be valuable opportunities for Christian service, they do not meet the requirements for graduate credit for the MTSO cross-cultural program.

MTSO immersion programs may take place in contexts that are either located outside of the U.S. or that are distinct minority cultures within the United States. All students are required to participate in pre-immersion and post-immersion components of the course, which will take place during the term immediately before and after the immersion experience itself. Pre-immersion and post-immersion course sessions will normally be led by MTSO faculty.

## **B. Design**

An immersion experience enables 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. The forms of learning might include academic lectures, informal conversations around meals, visits to significant <sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chad Richardson and Rosalva Resendiz, *On the Edge of the Law: Culture, Labor & Deviance on the South Texas Border* (University of Texas Press: Austin, TX, 2006), 3.

cultural sites, and engaging activists working for significant economic and political change.

By the end of the immersion, participants ought to be able to provide a working description of cultural groups encountered. These include understandings of religions, economies, politics and other pressures encountered by the communities visited.

Some questions to keep in mind in the midst of a cross-cultural context include:

**Economic life:** What are the systems of production, distribution, and consumption? Who owns? Who controls? Who pays? What patterns of ownership, capital, resources and decision-making are identifiable? What local economic patterns are discernible? Does the distribution of wealth and goods result in conflict? What relationships are discernible between the local, national and global economies?

**Social life:** What patterns of social relationship can be observed? What are the demographics of the immersion context? How does ethnicity, race, age, gender or economic status influence social interactions? What appears to be a basis for inclusion/exclusion in social groups? What dominant social problems are easily known? What is the general outlook on life? Is this affected by ethnicity, gender, race, etc.?

**Cultural life:** What cultural themes have emerged in conversation with local people? What dominant beliefs or ideas appear to have influence in the meaning making systems of local peoples? 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 in local cultures? What is the nature of political leadership? Who has a voice and decision-making power? What role does religion, media and/or popular culture have on political life?

**Religious life:** What instances of religious expression have you observed? What religions, if any, are practiced? What religious symbols play a role in the construction of group and self-identities?

## **IV. Immersion Experience Guidelines**

### **A. Registration**

- The Cross-cultural Immersion Experience involves three courses, worth a total of three semester hours. 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 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. 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 (CC-601-x and CC-603-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 as 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 (e.g., 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:
  - CC-601: Cross-Cultural Experience: Pre-Immersion Session (1 credit hour)
  - CC-602: Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience (2 credit hours)
  - CC-603: Cross-Cultural Experience: Post-Immersion Session (0 credit hours)
- Credit for the Cross-cultural Immersion Course will be awarded on a pass/fail basis when all 3 courses are completed.
- The cross-cultural course is open to all students at MTSO. All students in the Master of Divinity program are required to complete an immersion experience in an approved cross-cultural setting.
- Spouses, partners and/or other family members may 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.

### **B. Fees**

- Full cost of the Cross-cultural Immersion Course includes 3 full hours of tuition and all student trip costs.
- The cost of three semester hours of tuition (at the current MTSO tuition rate) for the Cross-cultural Immersion Course will be assessed as one hour for pre-immersion and 2 hours for the immersion segments of the course.



- Costs of the trip will be covered in part by means of an assessed program fee for each M.Div. student. This fee is collected for a maximum of six semesters. Upon rare occasions, the trip costs may be completely covered by the program fee.
- Students are responsible for all costs for their cross-cultural. If a student drops the course after their airfare, lodging or other expenses incurred in planning, they are still responsible for those costs.
- The final cost of the immersion experience as determined by the cross-cultural course instructor in consultation with Cross-Cultural Coordinator will be charged to the respective students' account during the term that they are enrolled in the immersion session. These costs are typically determined within two weeks after the completion of the immersion.
- Therefore, those who enroll in the course before they have contributed the maximum amount to their program fee will use what amounts to an advance from the cross-cultural fund to finance their immersion experience.
- The students 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, he/she will be billed at the beginning of the semester in which they are enrolled in the post-immersion course for the remaining additional expense.
- 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 has contributed to the cross-cultural account and transfers to another degree (MAPT, MACM, or MTS) or certificate program at MTSO (for which the cross-cultural course is not a requirement), or if the student withdraws from school, contributed funds will be applied to the student's account. In the case of withdrawal, if there is a surplus, the amount will be refunded to the student.
- If a student withdraws from MTSO after the cross cultural trip has been taken or trip expenses have been incurred, he/she will be billed for the balance of the amount owed for the trip.
- 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 business office.

### C. Pre-immersion and Post-immersion Sessions

The pre and post-immersion seminars are integral parts of the entire course. Each of these will consist of at least five sessions of 1 hour 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 worldviews, our theological understandings, and our concepts of ministry. (Sample syllabi for pre-immersion and post-immersion sessions are available online).

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 session 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 no less than 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 cross-cultural course instructor) listed for each section (trip), from the Coordinator of the Cross-Cultural Program or from Academic Affairs.
- 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 the semester prior to the intended substitute course (at least 3 months prior to the start). (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 cross-cultural course instructor as soon as possible in the program of studies. In some cases, specific documentation may be required as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student has a documented disability then he/she must complete the steps detailed in the MTSO ADA and Disability Services Handbook. Upon completion of the steps detailed in the ADA handbook, the student and the Cross-Cultural Coordinator will work together to develop a proposal for an alternative program which will meet the cross-cultural requirement. The alternative 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. If a student has received previous graduate credit in a cross-cultural immersion course from another theological institution, then an exemption may be warranted. 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. If sufficient concerns are raised about a student’s ability to function well with a travel group, the trip leader, or a cross-cultural setting the student may not be allowed to participate in a particular trip.
- Students will be assessed at the pre-immersion stage and must be approved by the cross-cultural course instructors before they will be allowed to go on the immersion experience.
- Because this course is experientially based, 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.
- Violations of the Standards of Conduct found in the MTSO Student Handbook remain in force during the cross-cultural immersion. The cross-cultural immersion leader has the authority to remove a student from an immersion trip if student behavior is in violation of these standards. Students have the opportunity to appeal upon return but will not receive credit for the immersion section of the cross-cultural requirement.
- The written component of the immersion experience generally requires a daily journal of reflection serving 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 cross-cultural course instructors.
- The written component is due on the date assigned by the cross-cultural course instructor. If no date is assigned then the paper is due by the second post-immersion session.
- The faculty member who leads the immersion experience will issue a grade of pass or fail for the course following completion of the post-immersion sessions.

## **H. CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE TIMELINE**

### **Preparing for an Immersion Experience**

#### **Pre-registration semester:**

- Apply for passport (passport applications available at larger post offices and photos available at AAA, Walgreens, etc).

#### **Pre-immersion semester:**

- By Friday of week 1- bring passport, completed health form, and MTSO Release of Liability to Office of Academic Affairs for copying and flight reservations.
- Start preparatory reading for your experience (check individual trip syllabi)
- See a healthcare provider for check-up/shots, check the U.S. State Department website for vaccines specific to the country of your immersion experience.
- Look into your personal insurance coverage to make sure you have coverage in the country you are traveling to. The school's travel insurance offers bridge coverage for expenses not covered by your personal policy, you must have health insurance or the bridge coverage is invalid.

#### **Pre-registration during pre-immersion semester:**

- Enroll in both the immersion and post-immersion terms for the cross-cultural course

#### **Final pre-immersion session:**

- Bring passport to final session for verification
- Bring completed Emergency Contact Information Forms and leave with Academic Affairs
- Arrange for transportation to and from the airport, you may want to coordinate with others in course

## 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. Information on vaccines necessary can be found at the US State Department travel site. < <http://www.state.gov/travel/> >
- 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 cross-cultural course instructor 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).
- Airline policy concerning passenger size and weight may require students to purchase two airline seats. Please be aware and proactive.
- MTSO provides limited insurance through Chartis for international cross-cultural courses. This insurance is an extension of the property and casualty insurance that the school carries for normal operation. This insurance has extended benefits for faculty, staff and students traveling overseas on the school's behalf. The coverage limits are \$100,000.00 for medical (accident and sickness with a \$250.00 deductible). Repatriation and medical evacuation costs are also covered, to a \$100,000.00 maximum. Exceptions (things not included) are any losses related to mental health conditions or substance abuse. Also, coverage for treatment related to a pre-existing condition is limited to \$1500.00 total. Domestic cross-cultural courses are not covered by this policy.
- Each participant is to have their own primary medical insurance carrier. This insurance is required by MTSO for all students (see student handbook). Participants should call their health insurance policy carrier to determine the coverage available for your particular cross-cultural immersion course. Chartis coverage is supplemental to this primary policy for international immersion courses only.

### B. Identification and Passports

- Student should apply for a passport in the semester prior to the pre-immersion. Applications are available at many post offices. Passport pictures are available at AAA or at stores with photo processing departments.
- If immersion experience is within US, student should be familiar with documentation required for airlines or other forms of travel. A US passport may not be required but is still an accepted (possibly preferred) form of identification. 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. If a student does not

have a valid passport in time for visas and other travel documentation, they will be dropped from the immersion course.

### **C. Exertion Scale for Cross-Cultural Immersion Experiences**

Regardless of the estimated exertion scale published in a particular syllabus, each student should be able to comfortably walk 3 miles in one hour prior to any cross-cultural immersion course. Participants should begin a regular walking plan upon enrollment in pre-immersion.

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.

**\*\*\*Participants should be aware that altitude can have adverse effects on a person's perception of fitness, please work to exceed guidelines if immersion course occurs at high altitude\*\*\***

### **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 carry-on 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, and be prepared to observe regional gender-specific conventions of modesty and appropriateness for attire in public. Your cross-cultural course instructor will offer additional guidelines on clothing for your contexts.
- A backpack will be useful for daily excursions.
- Do not take any valuables. Do not take anything that you are not able and willing to lose!
- A notebook for your daily journal is required as a preparatory tool for your final paper.
- Bug repellent, pain killers, Band-Aids, hand sanitizers, kaopectate are recommended.
- Bring along a refillable water bottle to take on daily excursions.
- Plastic shower sandals are recommended.
- Laptops and other electronic devices are discouraged. If you choose to take them, you are solely responsible for their safekeeping. If they disappear, you bear full responsibility, there will be no investigation into their disappearance.

- Cell phones are discouraged and depending on the cross-cultural context and the student's carrier, may not function in the immersion contexts.
- 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 Assistant for Academic Affairs 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 Assistant for Academic Affairs 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 Assistant for Academic Affairs will arrange for a return flight at the expense of the student.
- Students should travel with their medical insurance information.



## VI. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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?

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SIGNATURES:

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cross-Cultural Committee \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## VII. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Respond to the following questions on attached pages:

1. Briefly describe the cross-cultural graduate course. Attach a copy of the syllabus provided by your instructor.
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?
5. Please attach all academic work produced as part of this cross-cultural course for review by cross-cultural committee

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SIGNATURES:

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII. 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.

## IX. MTSO Cross-Cultural Immersion – Confidential Health & Emergency Information

**Location of immersion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates of travel:** \_\_\_\_\_

First Name	Last Name	Birthdate
Street Address	City	State
( )	ZIP	
Phone Number	E-mail (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:

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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:

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

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

Name	Relationship	( )	Phone number _____ home, work or cell#?
Name	Relationship	( )	Phone number _____

### 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" to the left indicates yes)

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

**Please Bring Required Medication With You To The Program**

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**X. RELEASE OF LIABILITY AGREEMENT FOR THE  
Cross-Cultural Immersion Experience of Methodist Theological School in Ohio**

**Nature of the Program**

**Location of immersion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates of travel:** \_\_\_\_\_

Methodist Theological School in Ohio (“the School”) is pleased to offer its students the opportunity to participate in international educational opportunities. 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 above immersion experience with the 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**