

**For students who began in academic years 2008-2009 to present*

A. General Purposes of the Cross-Cultural Experience

- Gain familiarity with another culture and models of ministry within that culture.
- Articulate self-knowledge in a new cultural context and to generate awareness of one's own assumed stereotypes and possible prejudices.
- Be able to identify systemic issues that connect the global and local contexts for ministry.
- Gain a deeper awareness of the cultural and religious world in which we minister, as well as a heightened awareness of one's own particular cultural context.
- Demonstrate cross-cultural theological understanding on justice issues.
- Articulate a vision of the church inclusive of social and personal transformation.
- Connect the power of the gospel message with its expressions in other cultures.
- Incorporate into ministry a broadened view of what it means to be human and Christian.

B. Definition of "Cross-Cultural"

The "culture" must expose the student to differences in **race, ethnicity, class, and/or regional circumstances**. The culture may also be a different religious community, such as Jewish or Muslim faith communities. If the different religious community is a community within the larger "Christian" religion (e.g., Catholic), then one of the other elements (race, ethnicity, class, and/or region, and possibly age and disability) must also clearly be a part of the experience.

C. Guidelines for the Cross-Cultural Experience

1. Submit a Proposal for the Cross-Cultural Experience to the CITE committee. (*A proposal is submitted to the CITE committee in all cases, except if it is a CITE-approved class or travel course.*)

This proposal should include:

- a. **Clear identification of the culture** to be experienced and why this is cross-cultural for you.
- b. **Bibliography** of at least 1 book and 5 recent and substantial articles on the culture. The reading needs to address aspects of the economic, social, cultural, political and religious life[†] of the community that you are considering cross-cultural. A film may also substitute for one of the articles.
- c. **Cultural Interpreter(s)**: provide the name(s) and contact information of a person(s) in the culture with whom you will dialogue about your experience
- d. **General Plan** for the experience: this includes the dates for the experience and a plan for how you will be exposed to the cultural inventory[†] (the religious, social, economic, cultural, and political elements of the culture); and a description of your travel and living arrangements (if applicable)
- e. **Statement of how this experience will enrich your current or future ministry**

2. Necessary Elements of the Cross-Cultural experience:

- a. **Reading** done prior to the experience. (I.e., the Bibliography submitted in your proposal or the reading assigned in a CITE-approved class or travel course.)
- b. **Experiential component**: exposure to the cultural experience. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways:
 - **Field education site** that is intentionally cross-cultural. (The reflection paper is submitted to your field education supervisor or advisor.)

- *CITE-approved class or travel course.* (The reflection paper is usually submitted to the professor of the class or travel course, unless it is outside Garrett, in which case it should be submitted to your advisor.)
 - *Independent study* designed by the student and submitted for approval by the CITE committee: the experiential component is satisfied by a minimum of 20 contact hours or a minimum of a 5-day trip. (The reflection paper is submitted to the professor with whom you sign up for the independent study.)
 - *Doing a culturally specific concentration in your coursework* (if relevant as “cross cultural” for you). For examples, concentrations in Urban Ministry or in African American Church Leadership might apply. (The reflection paper would be submitted to your advisor.)
 - *A self-designed experience* approved by the CITE committee. The student submits a proposal to the CITE committee concerning an experience that meets the criteria of required reading, a minimum of 20 contact hours, a cultural interpreter and a theological reflection paper. (The research paper is submitted to your advisor.)
 - *Exchange program* with an institution in a different cultural context. (The reflection paper is submitted to your advisor.)
- c. **Regular Conversations with the Cultural Interpreter(s):** a minimum of 3 intentional dialogues with your cultural interpreter(s) spread out over the experience
- d. **Theological Reflection Paper:** The student will write a 10-12 double-spaced paper that contains the following elements:
- *Theological reflection* on the experience with attention to Scripture, doctrine, and/or Christian experience
 - *Clear References to the Reading* done prior to the experience
 - *Attention to the religious, social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of the culture:* † how you learned from them, was challenged by them
 - *Personal reflection about how this experience challenged you:* challenges to your own self-understanding, how your understanding of the Gospel has been changed by the experience

D. Guiding Questions for the aspects of the Cultural Inventory:

- **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? Which religious symbols play a role in the construction of group and self-identity?
- **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? Social conflict? What is the relationship between local and global economy?
- **Social life:** What are the patterns of social relationship? Do people relate to each other in terms of race, class, ethnicity, age group, sex group, and so forth? What is the basis for inclusion and 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 patterns of thought and behavior? Who influences the system of meaning out of which people live?
- **Political life:** What is the relationship between political life and the system of beliefs constitutive of the local culture? What is the nature of political leadership? Who has voice and decision-making power? What role does religion, the media and/or popular culture have on political life?

† See Section D for guiding questions for the “religious,” “economic,” “social,” “cultural,” and “political” aspects of the culture.