

I. General Purposes of the Cross-Cultural Experience*

In one or more of the following ways, participation in a cross-cultural experience will help a student to:

- A. Demonstrate a familiarity with another culture and models of ministry within that cultural context.
- B. Articulate self-knowledge in a new cultural context, especially to relate beliefs and attendant patterns of action and interaction rooted in stereotypes of persons and cultures.
- C. Expand his/her worldview by having to identify the systemic issues that connect the global and local contexts for ministry.
- D. Gain a deepened awareness of the cultural and religious world in which we minister, as well as a heightened awareness of one's own cultural context and one's own personal identity.
- E. Demonstrate cross-cultural theological understanding on justice issues.
- F. Articulate a vision of the church inclusive of social and personal transformation.
- G. Connect the generative power of the gospel message with its expressions in other cultures.
- H. Incorporate into ministry a broadened view of what it means to be human and Christian.

A cross-cultural experience, whether inside or outside of the United States, ought to enable students to understand another way of life from the perspective of the host community. This experience must expose students to differences in racial/ethnic, class and/or regional circumstances. Because of the increasingly pluralistic environment in which ministry occurs, participants may also select a Jewish or Muslim faith community for their cross-cultural experience. Only in the future will experiences with other traditions (such as Buddhism or Hinduism) be accepted.

By the end of the experience, 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. Furthermore, participants should become more critically aware of their own cultural settings and appreciate the richness of cultural diversity and human interconnectedness both nationally and internationally. Hence, the cross-cultural experience design will include dialogue with hosts and experiential learning. It is important to note that any learning in this cross-cultural process should revolve around the religious life of a community. As part of that learning, students must explore the relationship between a group's religious life and other aspects of a "cultural inventory" that considers the following four factors:

* For student entering in academic years 2006-2007 or 2007-2008.

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 cultural context? 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/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?

These considerations of facets of a community's religious life, the primary area of inquiry, will attempt to answer questions such as the following ones: 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?

II. Proposal Content

- A clear identification of the culture to be experienced, how this culture is cross-cultural for you, and why you want an in-depth experience there
- Proposed dates
- The name and contact information of a person in the culture who will serve as your “interpreter” of the experience
- A brief reading list that you have prepared to acquaint yourself with that cultural context and its history. The reading list must consist of two books (one of which may be a work of nonfiction such as a biographical exploration of the culture) and five recent and substantial articles that address different aspects of the cultural inventory. A film, representing the world view of a person or persons within that culture, may be substituted for one of the articles. Your list must be approved by the person directing your project or by the CITE committee.
- A clear description of your living arrangements, if relevant
- Detailed plans on how you will be exposed to the religious life of a community and the other aspects of a cultural inventory
- A plan for your time that includes the experiences, the persons, and the places to which you will be exposed
- Indication of how this experience will enrich and resource your current or future ministry.

Each student that must complete the requirement has to submit a proposal and, as described here, that requirement has both experiential and scholarly components. In other words, neither a conventional academic course nor an immersion experience alone will meet the requirement. The completed proposal form goes to the registrar’s office for filing in the student folder prior to the experience.



*Cross-Cultural Proposal**

Name: _____

Garrett e-mail address: _____ @garrett.edu

Degree Program (circle): MA MDiv

Proposed place for Cross-Cultural Experience: _____

Starting and ending dates of proposed cross-cultural experience: _____

Name of cultural interpreter: _____

Deadline for reflection paper: _____

Brief summary of proposed cross-cultural experience:

SIGNATURES:

Student: _____ Date: _____

Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Supervising Faculty Member: _____ Date: _____
(or CITE Committee Member)

* For students entering in academic years 2006-2007 & 2007-2008.

Return to the registrar's office to be filed in the student folder.

III. Cross-Cultural Experience Guidelines

Because Garrett-Evangelical is preparing spiritual leaders for local churches in the United States as well as for the Church worldwide, we have a commitment to do theological education with religious pluralism and the global context in mind. The cross-cultural requirement is seen as integral to that education process.

- A. At a minimum, the cross-cultural experience must include the following elements:
1. Appropriate reading to be done prior to the experience or as assigned in a course. These books and articles are identified by the student and approved by the person directing the project or the CITE committee
 2. An experiential component that exposes the student to the cultural setting during an approved period of time
 3. The participation of a cultural interpreter who can help the student to understand his/her experiences in that setting
 4. A theological reflection paper (12-15 double-spaced pages)
- B. The experiential component of the cross-cultural requirement can be met in one of the following ways:
1. Field education site that is intentionally cross-cultural and addresses issues of pastoral formation
 2. An exchange program with an institution in a different cultural context (ideally for a semester)
 3. Independent study that includes an experiential component and opportunity for theological reflection. An intensive travel course may be used to complete the cross-cultural requirement if it is part of an independent study that includes readings to be completed before the experience and conversations with a cultural interpreter during the experience.
 4. A regular course offering (for example, cross-cultural hermeneutics) that includes adequate exposure to a particular culture
- As part of a semester-long course offering or independent study, a student must have 10 experiences with the cultural environment, for a total of at least 30 contact hours. Such experiences should include exposure to a range of cultural practices such as worship, foods, and artistic expression. Such an experience must also include at least three conversations with the cultural interpreter during that same time period.
- C. At the conclusion of the cross-cultural experience, each student will prepare an integrative paper (12-15 double-spaced pages) which presents the student's reflection on the experience from a theological perspective: scripture, doctrine, and Christian experience. Included in this reflection should be a discussion of the cultural inventory of your cross-cultural context (at least five of those pages). In addition, the ways in which you more clearly see yourself as a

person of your own culture should be addressed. Indicate the places in your self-understanding that were challenged by this experience. How has your understanding of The Gospel been changed or broadened by this experience? The paper must also include references to the reading done prior to the experience and insights gained from conversations with the cultural interpreter.

The student will submit the reflection paper to the faculty member involved with the project. More specifically, if the cross-cultural experience is done as part of a regular course offering or an independent study the faculty member teaching the course or directing the study will read the paper. If the experience is within a field education assignment, a person from the field education office is responsible for reading the paper. Under any other circumstances, the student's faculty advisor will receive the paper. After reviewing the paper, the faculty member will sign the "Cross-Cultural Requirement" form and submit it to the Registrar's office.

IV. Cross-Cultural Completion Form*

GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
MA & MDiv

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPLETION FORM

Students live in a world of differences (cross-cultural in terms of ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, religion, ideology, assumption, gender, nationality, etc); therefore cross-cultural dimensions are intrinsically part of the whole curriculum at Garrett-Evangelical. In addition, each student must complete a cross-cultural requirement in a culture other than one's own. The purposes of this requirement include both the need to gain a deepened awareness of the cultural and religious world in which we minister, as well as a heightened awareness of one's own cultural context and one's own personal identity.

This requirement can be met in a variety of ways. Each includes an immersion, a structured process by which a student is prepared for and debriefed after the immersion, and theological reflection. Students are expected to demonstrate the ways in which their own cultural perspectives are clarified and challenged. This requirement must be met while students are actively enrolled in a degree program and before students begin their last year of the program. It can be completed in the following ways:

- travel course (either local or overseas), with both an immersion experience and theological reflection
- field education site that is intentionally cross-cultural and addresses issues of pastoral formation
- regular course offering (e.g., cross-cultural hermeneutics) that includes an immersion component beyond a field trip (e.g., participating in Orthodox Church worship over several weeks and engaging in dialogue with persons from that tradition)
- exchange program with an institution in a different cultural context (ideally for a semester)
- independent study that includes an immersion component and theological reflection.

Alternatives to this requirement must be approved by the Cross-Cultural and International Theological Education Committee after reviewing a student's prior cross-cultural experience.

I certify that _____ has completed the cross-cultural requirement completing the following:

Faculty's signature

(by the faculty member overseeing the project/course)

date

Return to the registrar's office by the deadline listed on the academic calendar.

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