

Contextual/Cross Cultural Immersion Courses

All Master of Divinity students are required to complete three (3) credit hours in a local, national, or international Contextual/Cross Cultural immersion course before graduation. Courses are taught by PSR faculty and approved adjunct faculty, or by an educational provider approved by the faculty. Approved courses are published by the Contextual Learning Program each fall (see “*Immersion Courses*” link: <http://www.psr.edu/cross-cultural-immersion-courses>). The majority of immersion courses are offered during January intersession.

Contextual/Cross Cultural Immersion Courses provide for experiential learning around a cultural inventory that includes:

- a. **Historical life:** What is the history of this country? Has this country been under foreign domination? If this country has been colonized, how has this affected the people, the culture, and the religious and socioeconomic situation?
- b. **Economic life:** What are the characteristics of the systems 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?
- c. **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 group, and so forth? What is the basis for inclusion/exclusion in social groups? What are the dominant social problems? What is the general outlook on life held by different social groups?
- d. **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? How is cultural identity expressed in art forms?
- e. **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 a voice and decision-making power? What role do religion, the media and/or popular culture have on political life?
- f. **Religious life:** What is the religious climate of the local group? Are categories of thought religious, secular, or both? How does religion give expression to the cultural group’s needs and concerns, dreams and desires? How are religious belief and practices expressed by people in the local setting? What religious symbols play a role in the construction of group and self-identity?

Learning Objectives

Students participating in a Contextual/Cross Cultural immersion course will be able to:

- Reflect on their social location for critical social analysis and theological construction that takes seriously context and partnerships with communities.
- Articulate how this immersion contributes to one’s formation as a religious leader in one’s future context in ministry
- Identify the systemic issues that interconnect the global and local contexts for ministry.
- Demonstrate cross-cultural theological understanding on issues of justice.