

Community Studies Handbook

Student Copy



Meadville Lombard
Theological School

Changing Lives to Change the World

Academically Rigorous | Spiritually Grounded | Unapologetically Progressive

Draft: April 2010

In Service to Others

Many faith traditions throughout the world either explicitly or implicitly support service to others as a principle component of their beliefs:

- Do not touch the property of orphans, but strive to improve their lot until they reach maturity. Give just weight and full measure. . . **Speak for justice**, even if it affects your own kinsmen. Be true to the covenant of Allah. . . (Qur'an - Sura:6, Ayats: 151-152)
- Not one of you believes until you **wish for others what you wish for yourself**. (The Prophet Muhammad, 13th of the 40 Hadiths of Nawawi)
- To work along you have the right, but never personally to the fruits thereof. Do not be actuated by the motive for return, **do not be sunk in inaction**. (Bhagavad Gita)
- Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, **goes everywhere**: its temple, all space; its shrine, the good heart; its creed, all truth; its profession of faith, divine living. (Theodore Parker, 19th Century Unitarian Universalist minister)
- As long as I have will and am physically capable, So long will **I teach mankind to strive for truth, order and peace**. (Zoroastrian scriptures – The Yasna)
- Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. (Matthew 7:12, King James Version)

Acknowledgements

As you walk through open doors, don't forget those who helped open them.

– Reverend Joseph Lowery; Civil Rights Leader

This Handbook has been compiled from a variety of sources. Meadville Lombard Theological School would like to acknowledge the rich contributions and resources that nurtured this Community Studies Handbook:

Institutions

Andover Newton Theological School

Austin Theological Seminary

Bentley College (Service Learning Center)

Berkley-Hillside Presbyterian Church

Columbia Theological Seminary

Chicago Association of Theological Field Educators

DePaul University (Steans Center for Community Based Service-Learning)

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

McCormick Theological Seminary

San Francisco Theological Seminary Field Education & Integrative Studies Manual

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Publications

Ronald Hornecker. *Choosing a Ministry Placement and Field Supervisor*.

Service-Learning Course Design Workbook. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*. Summer 2001.

Saul Agana (Associate Director) and April Lupo (Outreach and Development Coordinator). *Faculty Guide to Service Learning, Course Construction*. July 1, 2004. Florida Campus Compact. (<http://www.compact.org/resources>)

Marilyn Nash, Circle Family Care HIV/IDS Early Intervention Program, 1996.

William T. Pyle and Mar Alice Seals, eds. "A Guide to Theological Reflection" in *Experiencing Ministry Supervision; A Field-Based Approach*.

Sarena D. Seifer and Kara Connors, eds. Faculty Toolkit for Service-Learning in Higher Education. Community-Campus Partnerships for Health for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

Randy C. Walls (Director of Continuing Education) and Jay P. Taylor (Director of Student Life) The Contextual Education Manual.

Table of Contents

Letter from the Director	vi
Overview of the Community Studies Sequence (CSS)	1
Contextual Theological Education	
Reflections: Linking Theory and Praxis	2
Role of Reflection	
Theological Reflections: Deepening the Presence of the Sacred and Holy in the Ministerial Identity of Students	3
Assumptions and Definitions	
Theological Reflections with the Sacred & Holy	
Application to the Community Studies Sequence	5
Site Selection	
Site Criteria	
Types of Sites	
Selection Process	
<i>Residential Students</i>	
<i>Touchpoint Students</i>	
Process for Identifying a Site for Touchpoint Students	
Responsibilities of Site Supervisors	
Reporting Procedures	
Monthly Contact Form	
Firs Evaluation	
Final Evaluation	
Learning Agreement Covenant	9
Overview	

Goals of the Covenant

Elements of the Covenant

Evaluation of the Covenant

Guidelines for Writing the Learning Agreement Covenant

Guiding Questions

Policies, Procedures and Legal Issues 12

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Unlawful Harassment

EOP Complaint Procedure

Definitions 14

Appendices

A. Memorandum of Understanding

B. Monthly Contact Form

C. Site Log

D. Learning Agreement Covenant

E. Site Evaluation Form for Midpoint and Final Evaluation

Letter from the Director

April 2010

Dear Participants:

We are excited about your participation in our Meadville Lombard Education Model, specifically the Community Studies Sequence (CSS). The CSS represent a new paradigm at Meadville Lombard Theological School using an integrated approach to learning. The primary driving force for the creation of Meadville Lombard Educational Model (MLEM) is to meet the educational needs of our students in the fast-changing realm of theological education. The objective is to create an educational model to utilize the context of ministry as a primary ingredient in the teaching-learning process. Thus, context is identified, described, encountered and utilized as a critical component in our students learning process.

Practice-based education allows faculty and students to establish and sustain continuity between theory and practice—dialogue, and participation that fosters reflection on personal experiences and others experiences in the student’s ministerial formation. These learning experiences assist the students in identifying their academic strengths and weaknesses as well as their pastoral strengths and weaknesses early in their formation. MLEM solidly establishes praxis as a priority, thus inducting the student into a culture of praxis and reflection. This process helps students learn public ministry while seeing what it is like through the use of theological reflections and experiences.

Meadville Lombard remains faithful to ethical standards and behaviors that enable its students to develop awareness and esteem that embodies the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings in all walks of life. Through careful guidance and nurturing, students will be encouraged to integrate these principles in their ministerial formation. It is my hope that we all grow into a deep understanding and fully appreciate the collaborative and symbiotic model.

Our faculty and staff are eager to answer any questions you may have.

I hope that this handbook may serve as a guide to better understand the CSS and form a bridge to ongoing relations. Please contact our administrative staff for support and questions you may have at 773 256 3000 ext. 228.

Warmest regards,

Rev. Dr. Qiyamah A. Rahman,

Director of Contextual Ministry

qrahman@meadville.edu - 773 256 3000 ext. 242

Responding to the needs of others is vital to being fully human.

--website of Office of Religious Life – Clark Atlanta University

Overview of Community Studies Sequence (CSS) ¹

The CSS provides students with the opportunity to engage in integrated practice and reflection in their theological education, thus enriching their academic study and their ministerial formation and identity. CSS is a teaching method where students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized sites which are supplemented with faculty-led reflections. CSS is structured to meet the real needs of the community. CSS helps foster a rich ministerial identity and reinforces civic responsibility. The teaching/learning experience is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of seminarians and includes structured time for students to reflect on their site experiences.

Contextualized Theological Education

Emphasis on the integration of learning and praxis requires the creation of an environment where students and faculty can, in fact, reflect on the student's site placement. Using the site as the primary text for learning, students seek to apply meaning against their growing ministerial formation. While the classroom is the primary vehicle for weekly reflections it is by no means a traditional classroom. Diverse learning approaches and strategies are utilized.

Thus, self-referent case studies, readings, field trips, presenters, and collaborative projects symbolize the assisted learning/teaching that is fostered in this unique learning process that combines traditional learning with distance learning.

¹ Adapted and edited from: American Association for Higher Education (AAHE): Series on Service-Learning in the Disciplines (from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993).

We must go beyond text books, go out into the paths and untrodden depths of the wilderness and travel and explore and tell the world the glories of our journey.

-- John Hope Franklin

Reflections: Linking Theory and Praxis

Learning requires more than experience, and so one cannot assume that student involvement in the community automatically yields learning. Harvesting academic and/or field education requires purposeful and intentional efforts. This harvesting process is often referred to as “reflection” in service-learning literature.² Reflection is the process by which students think critically about their site experiences using an array of reflection techniques.

Role of Reflection

Reflection has been called the “hyphen” that links theory and praxis in field education. It provides the time and opportunity for students and faculty to grow and evolve as a result of their experiences. Reflection is the most effective forum for students to link what they learn in the classroom with what transpires in the community environment, and vice versa. In other words, reflection is the intentional consideration of the experience in light of a particular learning objective. Reflection also provides the opportunity to practice and enhance one’s capacity for critical thinking. Lastly, reflection can function as a means to celebrate oneself and the accomplishments of a site experience.

Reflection can also provide a channel for professional development. While reflection may not necessarily make someone more knowledgeable, it can certainly help someone reach a better understanding and make connections more clearly. Furthermore, reflection can be a way for students to associate in different ways with the larger community and make crucial observations, analyses and connections. Reflection also helps students step away from the proverbial “ivory tower” syndrome and engage with their communities and to think more clearly about some of their beliefs.

² Service-Learning Course Design Workbook. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Summer 2001.

Theological Reflections: Deepening the Presence of the Sacred and Holy in the Ministerial Identity of Students

Reflections have become an integral part of the field education process because research has shown that the most efficient learning is derived from not merely the experience but integrating reflections on the experience. Thus theological reflection facilitates the richness of one's perspectives, understandings and skills.

Assumptions and Definitions

Theological reflection involves scrutinizing ones motives and assumptions of action. This in turn pushes students and faculty to look beyond the action itself and to investigate the accuracy and validity of their assumptions and motives. This disciplined approach helps students make sense of their ministry by examining their faith in light of their actions.

Theological reflection means many different things to different people. In this context it means:

- Focusing on what one believes and how one lives out that belief.
- Presenting questions about where the Sacred and Holy is present in one's life and the implications of that Presence.
- Bringing the narratives of the Sacred and Holy along with the narratives of human experiences in order to discern the values and principles out of which we live our lives and express our ministries.
- Facilitating the assessment of the experience.
- Calling upon historical, psychological, sociological, and theological resources to understand the human social condition and to discern the power, action, and will of the Sacred and Holy in the world and in the student's ministerial identity.
- Examining one's faith in the context of experience and experience in the context of faith – what are the implications of this sustained faith and the consequences on one's spiritual practices?

Theological Reflections with the Sacred and Holy

Students will be engaged around the following questions, which will be addressed concurrently by faculty in Signature courses:

- Where, how, when do you see hope most alive in this community? Congregation? Your own life and ministry?
- Where, how, when is love alive in this community? Congregation? Your own life and ministry?
- Where, how, when, what is holy in this community? Congregation? Your own life and ministry?

- Where, how and when do you see do you see brokenness in this community? Congregation? You?
- Where, how, when do you see faith most active in this community? Congregation? Your own life and ministry?
- Where, how, and when does worship happen in this community? congregation? you?
- What do we believe? Whom do we serve? To whom are we accountable?

Site Selection

Diversely rich learning experiences will hopefully be initiated around the country. Students will participate in a New Student Orientation at the beginning of the Fall semester where they will be oriented on how to select a community site. Furthermore, they will participate in a community tour that showcases various examples of the potential sites. However, how those sites will be selected will vary for TouchPoint and Residential students.

The criteria for CSS-approved sites include the following:

Site Criteria

1. Social services to culturally diverse communities (race, class, nationality and sexuality);
2. Accommodate learners coming in at different levels of experience and maturity;
3. Non-profit status;
4. Demonstrate community support (annual report, letters of support, viable presence in community);
5. Mission and vision compatible with Meadville Lombard's;
6. Provide a site experience for eight hours a week for two semesters;
7. Willing to enter into a memorandum of agreement with Meadville Lombard

Types of Sites

The following categories provide some basic examples of possible sites:

- Anti-racism/multicultural awareness
- Criminal Justice
- Economic development
- Education
- Employment and Work Force Development
- Environment
- Health
- Housing
- Immigration
- Special populations (aging/senior citizens, disabilities)
- Youth activities (including violence prevention)

Selection Process

Residential Students

Students residing in Chicago will be provided a pool of community organization sites. During the new student orientation, students will visit several sites. Within a month, students will select their site.

TouchPoint Students

TouchPoint students will primarily be responsible for selecting their community sites with final approval from the Director of Contextual Ministry.

The Process for Identifying a Site for TouchPoint Students

- Utilizing information from orientation and adhering to criteria for community sites, student will identify potential sites.
- Contact organization to schedule appointment to discuss potential partnership.
- Send follow-up letter (email is acceptable) with information about proposed partnership, e.g., FAQ and list of supervisor and student responsibilities.
- Participate in initial informational meeting with site personnel (preferably director) to explore involvement in Community Studies Seminar.
- Determine whether a potential match is possible. Things to discuss include purpose of praxis, list of supervision and student responsibilities.
- If potential, move toward a draft submission of Memorandum of Understanding via email that supervisor would complete.
- If not a match, begin the process anew until a match is found.
- Once the Memorandum of Understanding is signed submit it via LiveText.

Responsibilities of Site Supervisors

To finalize an agreement between the student and a community organization an intentional conversation should take place about the following responsibilities as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A):

- Commit to a one-time online orientation or conference call with Meadville Lombard faculty/staff for approximately one to two hours.
- Commit to a one-hour monthly supervisory meeting with the student.

- Participate in an on-site orientation to welcome the student into organization; help them get acquainted by sharing the history, mission of the organization and a tour; introduce student to staff and help them get settled into the site.
- Have student shadow organizational staff in the first month to achieve an overview of the larger organization and how things work in conjunction to the various tasks and projects they may be assigned. Attending board/staff meetings would be helpful. This time is included in the student's eight-hour-a-week schedule.
- Student and supervisor will develop a weekly schedule assigning the eight hours in whatever time allotment is mutually agreeable e.g., one eight-hour day or two-four hour days.
- Help the student develop a mutually agreed upon Learning Agreement Covenant that includes hours, tasks, obligation and workplace etiquette by the end of the first month.
- Monitor the Learning Agreement Covenant in monthly supervisory meetings with the student.
- Provide support by affirming the students' presence and work and offer feedback, particularly when mistakes are made. This should be done in a timely manner and in descriptive language.
- Observe the student in their interactions and performing tasks and provide that feedback in your observations and insights. If your responsibilities require your being away be sure to utilize the contact supervisor for feedback on the student's progress. (A contact supervisor is a staff person that serves as the student's contact person due to periods of site supervisor's absence).
- Complete a monthly one page contact form due two weeks after meeting.
- Two evaluations due during the academic year, December 15 and April 15, that includes observations and insights, to be reviewed with the student.
- Share any concerns that you might have, first with the student and then with the Director of Contextual Ministry, along with any solutions that were generated.

Reporting Procedures

The reporting procedures are an essential component of the site process. The primary reporting includes the following: Monthly Contact Form (Appendix B) and Site Evaluation Form for Midpoint and Final Evaluation (Appendix E).

Monthly Contact Form

The Monthly Contact Form is the primary feedback mechanism for the monthly face-to-face supervisory meeting between the student and site supervisor. The Director of Contextual Ministry will review this form to monitor the progress of the student's site experience.

First Evaluation

The Midpoint Evaluation provides a “big picture” in-depth assessment of the student’s site experience using the Learning Agreement Covenant (Appendix D) as the primary basis for evaluation. It is due on LiveText by the end of the Fall semester. The student will inform the supervisor of the exact date.

Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation is a comprehensive assessment that reflects the student’s overall site experience. It comprises an integral part of the student’s pass/fail grade for the academic year. It is due on LiveText by the end of the Spring semester. The student will inform the supervisor of the exact date.

Learning Agreement Covenant

Overview

The Learning Agreement Covenant (Appendix D) is designed as the plan of action by which the student, site supervisor and Director of Contextual Ministry articulate their vision and expectations for the outcomes of the learning process. It is a statement of goals and objectives for the site experience. It makes explicit what is to be learned and how, what skills are to be developed and how they are to be measured, and how progress and/or expected outcomes are to be assessed and evaluated. The Learning Agreement Covenants are as unique as the students who prepare them. They should reflect their sites and personal agendas in partnership with their site supervisor and Director of Contextual Ministry.

Because it is an educational tool, the Learning Agreement Covenant is fluid in its design. It is a framework within which the student, site and the Director of Contextual Ministry can establish some basic criteria for the site and participation for all the partners involved. Yet within the framework there is room for negotiation, adjustment and change as is deemed appropriate and necessary by the partners involved.

Goals of the Covenant

- The relationship shall primarily be one of learning for the student and facilitate the student's development and professional identity.
- All parties involved bring gifts which should be recognized and respected.

Elements of the Covenant

The Learning Agreement Covenant includes, but is not limited to, several essential elements:

- learning goals of the student;
- process (objectives) by which those goals will be achieved;
- basis for assessment and evaluation of the student's progress.

A **goal** is a quantitative statement of an end result to be accomplished. It is meaningful, understandable, actionable, measurable, and attainable. For example, in the area of site discernment a goal might be: "to gain an understanding of how agency work is carried out."

The Learning Agreement Covenant contains clear statements of goals for learning and ministerial formation, for the acquisition and appropriation of knowledge and skills, for personal growth and spiritual development, and for reflection and integration.

An **objective** is often defined as a strategy that is developed to accomplish a goal. Well-written objectives are observable and measurable and give direction to the "how to" of achieving a goal.

For example, objectives for the above goal in the area of site discernment might be:

- To observe staff meetings;
- To attend Board of Directors meetings;
- Read minutes of Board and know the mission statement and what projects are currently underway;

A plan for implementation of the goals is then developed. It is possible that more than one goal will be identified in each area.

The purposes of evaluation are to:

- describe and assess the student's site experience in the overall context of ministerial formation, as well as provide additional relevant information such as attendance, quality of performance of duties, initiative taken, etc.;
- evaluate the student's progress; reflect upon the student's understanding of and participation in site activities (personal and professional), to the extent possible; and
- comment upon the student's needs for further growth and development in specific site areas.

General Guidelines for Writing the Learning Agreement Covenant

- The process of developing a Learning Agreement Covenant moves from the general to the specific. That is, goals are developed from the areas identified in the covenant in which the student will work, objectives formulated, and then a plan created.
- Goals and objectives should be consistent with the level of leadership which is also identified through the Learning Agreement Covenant.
- Evaluate the usefulness of an objective for a goal by asking questions such as: is it meaningful? Understandable? Actionable? Measurable? Attainable? If answers to these questions are not forthcoming, either the objective needs more work or the goal needs to be redefined.
- The Learning Agreement Covenant is a resource for interaction between the student, supervisor, faculty and the Director of Contextual Ministry. It is the role of these partners to discuss, negotiate, and give approval.
- The Learning Agreement Covenant should be signed and dated by the student, the site supervisor and the Director of Contextual Ministry.
- The Learning Agreement Covenant is an organic document that can be revised in consultation with the Director of Contextual Ministry and/or Teaching Pastor.

Guiding Questions

The following questions will be helpful as you prepare to write your Learning Agreement Covenant:

- What do I need to learn? (goal)
- What could I do to learn this? (strategies)
- What resources do I need in order to learn this? (resources)
- What step do I need to take in order to learn this? (action steps)
- How will I, my site supervisor, peers, faculty and Directory of Contextual Ministry know that I have accomplished my learning goals? (evidence of learning/evaluation)

Policies, Procedures and Legal Issues

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Meadville Lombard Theological School is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of the School that employment shall be based on individual merit, qualification and competence and to treat all job applicants and employees in a fair and non-discriminatory manner without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, sex, affectional orientation, age or any other basis protected by law. This applies to the recruiting, hiring, training, compensation and promotion of all persons in every job classification. Additionally, it has always been our policy that all employees should be able to enjoy a work environment free from all forms of discrimination or harassment, and any conduct contrary to this policy is prohibited. Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to immediate discipline, up to, and including, discharge. The Vice President for Finance and Administration is our equal employment opportunity officer and is available to answer any question or deal with any problem you may have with regard to our equal employment opportunity policy.

Unlawful Harassment

The School is committed to providing a workplace free of sexual harassment, as well as harassment based on such factors as an individual's sex, race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, affectional orientation, physical or mental disability or any other legally-protected characteristic. The School's anti-harassment policy applies to all persons employed by the School and prohibits unlawful harassment by any employee or supervisor. The School will not tolerate harassment of employees by faculty, supervisors or coworkers. The School will also protect employees from harassment by officers, students, or constituents of the School.

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome or unwanted advances, requests for sexual favors or any other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, retention, promotion or other aspects of employment; or this conduct substantially interferes with an individual's employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Prohibited harassment includes, but is not limited to the following behavior:

1. Verbal conduct such as epithets, pervasive or repeated demands or threats, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or;
2. Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, electronic material, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
3. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interference with work;
4. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests in order to keep your job or avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors; and
5. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

EOP Complaint Procedure

MLTS Employee Handbook – Adopted June 4, 2005 Revised February 2008

If you believe that the School's equal opportunity policy has been violated or that you have been harassed, it is your responsibility to provide a written complaint to your supervisor, who will be responsible for investigating the matter. If the alleged harasser is the supervisor, the employee should report the facts to the Vice President for Finance and Administration who will undertake an investigation. Your complaint should include details of the incident or incidents, names of the individuals involved and names of any witnesses. Supervisors will refer all harassment complaints to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. If the Vice President for Finance and Administration is unavailable or is the source of the complaint, you should report the problem to the President of the School. The School will promptly investigate the equal employment opportunity complaint or harassment allegations. The School expects your full cooperation and truthfulness during any investigation. All such complaints and all investigations of complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible and consistent with the School's need to conduct an appropriate investigation.

If the School determines that an equal employment opportunity policy violation or unlawful harassment has occurred, appropriate remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. Any employee determined by the School to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. With regard to harassment by non-employees, any appropriate corrective action will be taken after investigation by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

A School representative will advise all parties concerned of the results of the investigation. The School will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint and will not knowingly tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting an equal employment opportunity policy violation or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

The School encourages all employees to report any violations of its equal employment opportunity policy and any incidents of harassment forbidden by this policy immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved. You should also be aware that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment in employment. If you think you have been harassed or that you have been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest IDHR office is listed in the telephone book and may be contacted by phone at (312) 814-6200.

Anyone can be great because all people can serve.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Definitions

Civic Responsibility – The lessons we all learn when we work collaboratively to build community on the micro level and society on the macro level.

Contact Supervisor – Serves as a site contact for students placed at a non-profit organization that typically has multiple sites requiring the site supervisors frequent absences. The contact supervisor's duties include serving as an on site contact in lieu of site supervisor.

Contextual Ministry – Contextual ministry aka as field education is a practical learning approach to ministry in which a seminarian's/participants are exposed to varied aspects of learning in approved/structured contexts that integrate praxis and theory – experiential learning and classroom or site environment. Contextual ministry provides an opportunity for reflection on the theology of practice of ministry during the participants' ministerial formation.

Learning Covenant/Contract – (aka Terms of Participation in the Memorandum of Understanding) The learning covenant is an agreement between the student, site supervisor and the Director of Contextual Ministry that describes the learning outcomes. It also defines the content and the process of the learning experience. The Learning Covenant is the basis for the student's assessments that include observations and insights.

LiveText – The web-based component to the classroom where assignments and evaluations are uploaded

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – The document that is created for each site participating in the CPP. The Memorandum includes the following: the purpose, concept, scope, understanding, agreements, support, resource needs, contract period, monetary and performance terms, monitoring component and effective date. The MOU is signed by the Director of Contextual Ministry and the designated individual at the site.

Monthly Supervisory Meetings – Monthly meetings held between student and site supervisor to monitor progress or lack of same, to problem solve and to offer feedback on learning covenant.

Non-Profit Organization – A non-governmental organization whose purpose is to address human, environmental and other community concerns and needs. Most not-for-profit agencies are tax exempt, tax-deductible, and classified as 501 ©(3) institutions. Not-for-profit agencies cannot sell stock, declare dividends or pay their officers or directors other than through salary.

Partnership – A close mutual cooperation between parties having shared interests, responsibilities, privileges and power.

Reflections – Contemplation and discernment about the site, work performed, meaning and value applied toward in the larger context of ministry. Structured reflection can take place in an individual or collaborative basis, and is a process that makes meaningful connections of the student's site experience to

the course content, the community issues, one's values and the impact on both the individual performing the work as well as the larger society.

Reflection Groups – The reflection groups comprise the primary pedagogy by which faculty and the students create an integrated class room and learning experience to apply the theological concepts to the work of ministry using sites.

Service – Work performed through the student's site for the mutual benefit of the student, the site and the community.

Site – The non-profit organization in which the student is placed.

Site Supervisor – Primary designated contact for student at designated site.

Teaching Pastor – An experienced minister assigned to students at the beginning of their matriculation and remains with the student until completion. The pastor serves as a mentor and coach and helps the student grapple with ministerial formation through theological reflections.

Tridas – Are weekly groups comprised of student cohorts that process and complete weekly assignments and engage in site reflections.

Directory of Appendices

- A. Memorandum of Understanding**
- B. Monthly Contact Form**
- C. Site Log**
- D. Learning Agreement Covenant**
- E. Site Evaluation Form for Midpoint and Final Evaluation**

Appendix A: MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING

between

Meadville Lombard Theological School

and: _____

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set forth the terms of the Community Studies Sequence contract agreement between Meadville Lombard Theological School and _____.
2. **Concept.** Meadville Lombard Theological School prepares ministers for the challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. To do so requires an effective balance of theory and practice inspired by curiosity, introspection, reflection, compassion and collaboration. We hope to create a truly transformative experience to change lives in order to change the world through this Community Partnership Program.

Our faculty at Meadville Lombard is embarking on a learning process where students learn and develop through an eight hour weekly placement in a structured organizational setting that is supplemented with a weekly group reflection process over two semesters. This coordinated partnership between our educational institution and _____ links service experiences with course content and fosters a sense of service to others and a deepening commitment and insights into human conditions. Students will be working in the community to render active and responsible services.

Concept. (Insert mission of site here.)

3. **Scope.** This partnership will include the following criteria:
 8. Social services to culturally diverse communities (race, class, nationality and sexuality);
 9. Accommodate learners coming in at different levels of experience and maturity;
 10. Non-profit status;
 11. Demonstrate community support (annual report, letters of support, viable presence in community);
 12. Mission and vision compatible with Meadville Lombard's;
 13. Provide a site experience for eight hours a week for two semesters;
 14. Willing to enter into a memorandum of agreement with Meadville Lombard:

Meadville Lombard Theological School will:

- enter into a memorandum of agreement with _____;
- provide technical assistance during site placement;
- provide a student volunteer from September, 2009 to May, 2010.

_____ **will:**

- provide a site placement for student(s);
- provide a minimal of monthly supervision of two hours for the duration of the summer ministry;
- submit appropriate documents;
- enter into a memorandum of agreement with Meadville Lombard Theological School.

Understandings, agreements, support and resource needs. The understandings, agreements, support and resource needs, and responsibilities of Meadville Lombard Theological School and _____ include:

- Participate in initial conversation to explore involvement in Community Studies Sequence;
- Commit to a one hour monthly supervisory meeting with the student;
- Welcome the student into your organization; help them get acquainted by sharing the history, mission of the organization and a tour; introduce student to staff and help them get settled into the site;
- Help the student develop a mutually agreed upon Learning Awareness Covenant that includes hours, tasks, obligation and workplace etiquette;
- Monitor the Learning Awareness Covenant in monthly supervisory meetings with the student;
- Provide support by affirming the students' presence and work and offer feedback, particularly when mistakes are made. This should be done in a timely manner and in descriptive language;
- Observe the student in their interactions and performing tasks and provide that feedback in your observations and insights;
- Complete a one page monthly report and final assessment that includes observations and insights, to be reviewed with the student;

- Share any concerns that you might have, first with the student and then with the Director of Contextual Ministry along with any solutions that were generated.

15. **Contracting period.** The contracting period will be from _____ to _____.);

16. **Monetary and performance terms.** No financial compensation will be required of _____ for participation in the Community Studies Sequence. Furthermore, no financial obligation shall accrue;

17. **Monitoring component.** If the terms of the MOU are not being fulfilled, a termination clause permits termination of this MOU. A discernment period will be initiated so that negativity is not carried over and proper closure is provided;

18. **Effective date.** The following individuals are dually authorized to execute this MOU that becomes effective on date stated:

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Learning Agreement Covenant

INSTRUCTIONS: *The purpose of this Learning Agreement Covenant is: (a) to clarify what the student seeks to learn in their site experience, (b) to establish a plan and how it will be supervised, and (c) to clarify expectations of the student and supervisor. The Learning Agreement Covenant should reflect a consensus of both supervisor and student.*

Student: _____

Dates of Site Participation: _____ to _____

Supervisor: _____

Site: _____

Address: _____

Part I. Goal Development

Learning Goals List learning goals achievable in this site experience.	Activities For each learning goal, state specific activities or strategies that will enable the student to have that goal.	Plan for Accountability For each learning goal, indicate the ways the student plans to present experiences or issues to the supervisor and/or reflection group.

(additional space on next page)

Learning Goals	Activities	Plan for Accountability
----------------	------------	-------------------------

--	--	--

Appendix E: Site Evaluation Form

For Mid-Point and Final Evaluation

Use this format for both mid-point and final evaluations. Extra pages can be added as needed. We expect the results of these evaluations to be shared and discussed with student and site supervisor. After the evaluations are discussed, dated and signed by both the site supervisor and the student, please upload this to LiveText.

Evaluator (please check one)

Supervisor

Name of Student: _____

Dates of Site Placement: From: _____ to _____

Date Shared: _____

Name of Evaluator/Site Supervisor: _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Evaluator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please list the student's learning goal(s) for this site experience:

I.

II.

III.

How have the learning goals been met? (What work has been done?)

Please comment on the student's abilities (competencies) as they relate to the learning agreement covenant.

What challenges/growing edges has the student demonstrated and engaged?

What challenges/growing edges have been revealed or need to continue to be addressed?

In your opinion, what learning has taken place?

How did you experience the student, that is, what is your impression of the student?

Additional Comments: