Additional Academic Information

Mentored Ministry

Description and Purpose of Mentored Ministry

Mentored Ministry (MM) at Eastern Mennonite Seminary refers to a variety of experiential learning opportunities within the overall curriculum. The purpose of Mentored Ministry is to serve the overall seminary curriculum by providing opportunities to practice ministerial and public leadership that becomes transformative as one increasingly integrates wise interpretation, maturing practice, and discerning communication to engage God’s saving mission in the world, embodied in Jesus Christ. Common to each of the programs within the Mentored Ministry Curriculum is an individual mentor relationship.

Requirements:
Six (6 SH) of MM credit is required for the MDiv, normally 6SH in Formation in Ministry. Six (6SH) of MM credit is required for the MACL degree.

Core course: 601/602 Formation in Ministry I&II (6SH):

This “core” of the MM curriculum is a two semester (3SH per semester) course that includes an internship. Participants normally spend at least half of their ministry practice time in a congregational setting. Formation in ministry is required of MDiv and MACL students.

Guidelines/Requirements:

1. A minimum of 6SH of Mentored Ministry (MM) credits are required for the MDiv; a maximum of 15SH of MM may be earned.
2. Normally, a minimum of 3SH of the Mentored Ministry credits shall be earned in a congregational context. This is typically achieved through FS 601/602 Formation in Ministry. Students in the MDiv Pastoral Ministry Track shall earn a minimum of 6SH of MM credit in the congregational context.
3. FS 601/602 Formation in Ministry (6SH) is to be taken in the middle phase of a student’s seminary program. A prerequisite is FS 501/502 Formation in God’s Story I&II and approval of degree candidacy.
4. SMFE 601 Clinical Pastoral Education (6SH) may be taken at any point during the seminary experience excepting when a student is enrolled in another MM program. CPE is recommended for students in the Chaplaincy or Pastoral Counseling concentrations in the MDiv Specialized Ministries Track.

A student with significant congregational ministry experience (5 years or more) may petition to substitute SMFE 601 Clinical Pastoral Education (6SH) in place of FS 601/602 Formation in Ministry I&II to meet the Mentored Ministry “core” requirement.

Cross-Cultural Experience

Eastern Mennonite University educates students to live in local and international contexts. Thus, Eastern Mennonite Seminary requires each student to engage in one intentional cross-cultural experience. The university also teaches students to embrace environmental sustainability as a core value. Because the travel industry is particularly environmentally and economically taxing, students and faculty are encouraged to make use of local contexts that are most conducive to cross-cultural learning.

Cross-cultural experiences have the potential to equip students for ministry in our diverse world by increasing students’ cultural intelligence, which is crucial to transformational leadership. Cultural intelligence (CQ) is the capability to function effectively in intercultural contexts. It involves serious analysis of our motivations, interests and drive to adapt cross-culturally. CQ requires wise interpreters with knowledge of the similarities and differences between cultures. It also demands mature practitioners who have strategies for interpreting cues and planning for multicultural interactions. And CQ encourages discerning communicators to develop skills that will enable them to behave appropriately in cross-cultural situations. If entered into with these possibilities in mind, the context of cross-cultural experiences can provide fruitful dimensions for theological reflection.

There are strong biblical interests and motivations for learning to adapt cross-culturally. In the biblical world, people were at times called by God to encounter new cultures. We remember Abraham wandering towards the promise. Moses and Israel in the desert, Jesus moving about the fringes, Paul in the heart of the pluralist Roman Empire. All of these journeys required motivation, knowledge, strategies, and behaviors for effectively navigating intercultural contexts. Jesus sent his followers into all the world, not only to teach others but to listen and learn as they went. Following this call can create a sense of “wilderness,” where one struggles with God, self, and others. People often grow as disciples of Christ where they do not have the usual securities and support to alleviate intellectual, spiritual and physical discomfort.

Intentional cross-cultural experiences have the capacity to help students grow in cultural self-awareness, which is crucial to effective cross-cultural relating. Cross-cultural engagement can also help students become aware of their own negative attitudes towards difference so that they can begin to develop positive attitudes about difference that will contribute to healing and reconciliation across religious and ethnic divisions in the communities where we live and work. Our Anabaptist convictions regarding reconciliation and peacebuilding call us to help alleviate suspicion among diverse peoples that can so readily result in alienation or escalate tensions that explode into dangerous violence.

In academic pursuits, our strategies for engaging the “other” too often present them as objects of study rather than as true conversation partners. In contrast, intentional cross-cultural encounters offer the possibility of life-changing mutual growth and change. We grow spiritually when we learn to interpret cues and are open to discovering the presence and work of God within the “other.” Therefore, we seek to cultivate in our students the ability to claim their own identity (personal, family, ethnic, confessional) while extending hospitality (respect, space, time, openness) to others. This tension must not blur or obliterate genuine distinctions. Rather, these cultural distinctions should be explored and celebrated.

We intend for our students to be mature in their ability to behave appropriately in cross cultural situations by discerning which of their own cultural patterns and perspectives are, or are not, consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Intentional cross-cultural experiences can magnify our own distinctives and convictions so that we no longer see them as normative, but as part of a cultural context. In this light, we also note that difference is a fact of every community, local and international. We need safe spaces to learn about diversity, within diversity, and from diversity. Ironically, the more “at home” we become in the diversity of our own identity and tradition (tested in encounters with various “others”) the more generous of spirit we can become toward diverse others.

EMS requires that students engage in one intentional cross-cultural experience for academic credit. The experience may involve a variety of learning strategies such as ministry in a context different to one’s own, living with a host family while learning another language, or interfaith interaction. More specifically, students may fulfill the curriculum requirement in one of the following ways:

1. Cross-cultural experiences
2. Study-abroad experiences
3. Internships
4. Mission experiences
5. Service-learning experiences
6. Other experiences approved by the university

These experiences must be approved by the Division of Academic Affairs and the student’s academic advisor.
1. participating in a cross-cultural experience led by seminary faculty;
2. completing the course CM 613 A – Cross Cultural Church Experience; or
3. arranging a mentored ministry internship or directed study with significant cross-cultural dimensions;

Each cross-cultural experience will demonstrate integration of the four key components of Cultural Intelligence. The integration of these components will show evidence of a robust experience that contributes to increasing the capability of EMS students to function effectively in cross-cultural settings:

1. Motivation, interest, and drive to adapt cross-culturally. (self-awareness)
2. Knowledge of the similarities and differences between cultures. (other-awareness)
3. Strategies for interpreting cues and planning for multicultural interactions. (planning to engage difference)
4. Skills that foster the ability to behave appropriately in cross-cultural situations. (developing skills)

In cases where students bring significant prior intentional cross-cultural experience, they may meet the cross cultural requirement by taking the 1SH CM 572 – Cross Cultural Integration Seminar for further reflection on their maturing Cultural Intelligence. This alternative should be made available to international students comparing and reflecting on ministry within the U.S. context.

Hybrid Courses

The seminary offers a number of courses in a hybrid format (combination of distance learning and face-to-face format). These hybrid courses are structured in such a way that they meet the residency requirement for a degree. Typically hybrid courses will begin with an intensive week of study on campus. The course continues for the duration of the semester online. Such hybrid courses allow individuals at a distance to work towards a seminary degree without necessarily making a permanent move to campus.

Summer Offerings

May and June offer a variety of summer school opportunities. A Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation is offered in the month of June. In addition, every May and June courses are offered in a variety of formats. An intensive unit of CPE is offered from mid-June to mid-August.

Students who qualify may take directed studies in areas not covered by courses offered in the curriculum. Also, ministry internships may be arranged through the director of field education.

School for Leadership Training

This annual event the third week of January has a long-standing tradition on the university campus. It has developed from a "Ministers Week" into a "School for Leadership Training" for lay leaders, pastors and current seminary students.

Many classes on a variety of subjects are planned. Bible studies, workshops and inspirational addresses round out the event. The program is integrated with the seminary schedule, allowing students to interact with attenders. Continuing education credit is offered to those attending the entire event. For students the SLT classes and plenary addresses normally replace the regular class work for the week.

More Information on School for Leadership Training