

Basic Policy: Global Theological Education at Perkins School of Theology

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I. History

The Global Theological Education Program at Perkins School of Theology was initially conceived and implemented by Bishop David Lawson in the year 2001. Subsequently he and other faculty members led the first immersion courses to Africa, El Salvador, Germany, France, and Brazil. When Bishop Lawson fell ill in 2003 a task force including faculty members involved in immersion courses was assigned to oversee and extend his work. In 2004 an acting director of the Global Theological Education program was appointed, and from 2004 to 2005 the acting director worked with the task force to formulate the current guidelines for immersion courses. In May of 2005 the acting director was appointed Director of Global Theological Education and the task force subsequently disbanded, with the understanding that oversight of GTE policy would be the responsibility of the Dean and the Academic Program Committee.

II. Scope

The Global Theological Education program is presently committed to two major goals. The first is preparing future pastors for ministry in our increasingly pluralistic local environment and already culturally plural global church. The GTE contribution to reaching this goal is by providing intercultural immersion courses that allow students to experience first hand Christian life and learning in cultures other than their own. The second major goal is to provide the resources of Perkins School of Theology to Volunteers in Mission groups in order to enhance their theological reflection on and spiritual growth in mission.

III. Intercultural Immersion Programs

The GTE intercultural immersion programs are planned primarily for students, and take place during the January Interterm, Spring Break, and the Summer Term. Immersion programs for lay persons will generally be planned for the summer so that they do not interfere with regular teaching assignments of those who lead them.

A. Immersion Courses for Perkins Students

Immersion Courses are planned and led under the current GTE immersion course guidelines. These include the following provisions.

1. Academic Guidelines

- a) All courses are taught by Perkins faculty and meet the normal academic requirements for a course of either 1.5 or 3 hours credit.
- b) All courses are credited to a student's degree program in accordance with the policies set by the Committee on Academic Programs and the Faculty.

(1) This policy is interpreted to mean: Immersion courses are not considered resident courses unless: a. the student registering for the immersion is registered for other classes in Dallas at the same term. b. At least half of the required hours of instruction take place in Dallas rather than during the immersion. c. The course requires the use of resources found in Dallas at the Perkins School of Theology.

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- (2) *This policy is interpreted to mean: that a student who participates in an immersion as part of a reading course is **not** regarded as resident for the purposes of meeting the residency requirement.*
- (3) *Final application of Perkins policy regarding residence course credit is fully the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.*
- c) Immersion courses are upper level electives and have pre-requisites as specified by the division in which the course is offered.
- (1) *Students must have completed 18 hours of course work before enrolling in an immersion course.*
- (2) *Additional pre-requisites for specific immersion courses may be set by the faculty member leading the course.*
- (3) *Students, particularly those in the MTS program who may not be required to complete basic courses in a division for their degree program, may with permission of the faculty member leading the course, request a waiver from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.*
- d) Immersion courses may be offered in any division and may be cross listed.
- e) New immersion course offerings must be approved by their respective divisions and the faculty.
- f) Provision of faculty for these courses is, like that of all courses, subject to approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs under existing guidelines and contract obligations.
- g) Immersion courses must also be approved by the GTE director, who is responsible for insuring that they meet the guidelines for an immersion course. Those guidelines for immersion courses in divisions II, III, and IV which have already been approved by the faculty are found in the appendices.
- h) The key immersion related academic requirements for all courses are:
- (1) *That the course involve full engagement with the host culture through both daily encounters and planned instruction and interaction with students, church leaders, and others from the host culture.*
- (2) *That each student completes required readings related to the understanding of culture generally and the specific culture in which the immersion will take place.*
- (3) *That each student participates in the GTE immersion course orientation offered in the fall and spring of each academic year.*

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(4) That each student completes a daily journal following the guidelines provided by the GTE director and the instructor. These journals may be reviewed by the GTE director with permission of the instructor.

2. Guidelines for Planning and Leading Immersion Courses

- a) The GTE program will offer six immersions in each academic year, two in the J-term, two in the Spring Break, and two in the summer term.
- b) The GTE program will balance immersions that have a higher cost per student with those that have a lower cost per student to remain within our overall budget.
- c) The GTE program will offer at least one immersion course per year within the United States to meet the needs of students who cannot travel abroad.
- d) The GTE program will require (beginning in 2009) a minimum enrollment in each immersion course of 8 persons, of whom 5 must be Perkins students registering for academic credit. Courses that do not reach the minimum enrollment by the deadline set by the GTE program will be cancelled immediately to give students the opportunity to enroll in other courses.
- e) The GTE program will set a maximum enrollment of 15 per immersion unless the lecturer requests a lower enrollment maximum **or two or more lecturers lead the course.**

f) Procedure for initiating immersion courses. (modified 1/22/09)

- (1) ***At least 24 months prior to the proposed immersion the lecturer must request that the proposed course be tentatively placed on the GTE long-range planning calendar.***
- (2) ***Once the course is tentatively scheduled the lecturer is responsible for completing the course approval process and associated form. (See Appendix – GTE Course Approval Form)***
- (3) ***Once the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs has placed the course in the schedule of the upcoming year(s) the GTE director will work with the lecturer to plan the course as detailed elsewhere in these policies.***
- (4) ***Whether and when the course will actually be scheduled will depend on the requirements of the proposed course itself, as well as how it fits into the overall GTE program. GTE program goals include:***

- (a) Encouraging the widest possible range of faculty involvement in leading immersion courses.
- (b) In so far as possible offering immersion courses in all of the divisions each year.

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- (c) Offering courses within the larger curricular goals of the MDiv program.
- g) Transportation to and from Immersion courses
 - (1) *Providing transportation to and from immersion courses is the responsibility of the GTE director.*
 - (2) *All air transportation will be booked by the director through Colwick Travel, the official travel agency of Southern Methodist University*
 - (3) *All immersion courses originate and end in Dallas, Texas. Participants or instructors who do not choose to join the immersion group flying from and to Dallas, and who are given permission by the GTE director, may make alternative travel arrangements only through Colwick Travel. Any cost for travel above the cost of the group tickets booked in and out of Dallas will be paid by the participant or instructor.*
- h) Responsibilities of Instructors
 - (1) *Planning of all academic aspects of an immersion course, including provision for required readings, provision for lectures, seminars, site visits, tutorials, and grading are the responsibility of the instructor(s) of the course.*
 - (2) *Immersion course instructors are expected (in accordance with existing guidelines) to be responsible for providing the primary instruction during the course.*
 - (3) *Immersion course instructors are expected to travel with the students and to accompany the students throughout the course. However, students are responsible for their personal behavior, personal security, and personal property during the immersion. Outside of planned immersion activities students need not be accompanied by the instructor but should travel in pairs or small groups. Complete guidelines for behavior, property, and security are provided by the GTE Director to students on a course by course basis at the Immersion Course Orientation held prior to the immersion course. Faculty members should be aware that the SMU Student Code of Conduct governs behavior on all university sanctioned trips, including its provisions for adjudicating complaints about individual behavior.*
 - (4) *Instructors are discouraged from bringing family members with them on immersion courses, as the instructor is expected to give his or her full time and attention to the work of teaching and managing the course.*

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(5) *Instructors who choose to make their own travel arrangements need to discuss these arrangements in advance with the GTE director, and may be responsible for paying the difference between their cost of travel and that of the cost of travel with the group.*

(6) *Instructors are expected to stay in the same housing provided for the group, and will be provided with a private room. Instructors who choose their own accommodations are expected to be accessible to the group and need to discuss these arrangements in advance with the GTE director. Instructors may be responsible for paying the difference in the cost of their accommodations and the cost of a private room in the group accommodations.*

(7) *Instructors are expected to dine with the group during pre-arranged meals, and are responsible for their own meal costs if they choose to make their own meal arrangements.*

(8) *In order to make provision for insurance while traveling and reimbursement of miscellaneous costs while on the immersion experience instructors must submit a personal travel report for the dates of the immersion to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for approval prior to travel.*

(9) *It is the responsibility of the GTE director in cooperation with the instructor to provide for transportation to and from the immersion, housing, in-immersion transportation, meals, such guides or local translators as are necessary, as well as full compliance with SMU Risk Management guidelines for SMU students abroad.*

(10) *In consultation with the GTE director instructors are encouraged to carry mobile phones that can be used internationally in case of emergency. In some cases purchase of a local "pay as you go" cell phone may be approved by the GTE director in order to insure ease of management for the group while at the immersion site. Neither instructors nor students should expect ready access to fax, email or phone communication at the immersion site(s).*

i) Responsibilities of the GTE director

(1) *The GTE director is responsible for cultivating relationships with possible immersion sites and recommending to the appropriate divisions and their faculty new immersion course offerings.*

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- (2) *The GTE director is responsible (in consultation with the immersion instructor) for making all logistical arrangements for immersion courses, including the provision of transport to and from the immersion, transport at the immersion site, housing and meals at the immersion site, and provision of international insurance for SMU related participants in the immersion.*
- (3) *The GTE director may also act as an immersion course instructor.*
- (4) *The minimum number of students necessary for an immersion course to be offered will be set by GTE director in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and will reflect SMU policy on course sizes as well as financial constraints related to travel costs. Courses that do not meet minimum enrollment criteria will be cancelled and student deposits or fees will be returned.*

j) Responsibilities of Student Participants

- (1) *Student participants in immersion courses are responsible for registering with both the University and the GTE director, according to the timelines and guideline provided by each. See 4.c. concerning rules concerning registration for academic credit.*
- (2) *Students are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the immersion course, and to fulfill all requirements set by their instructor. This includes traveling with the immersion group both from Dallas, Texas and returning to Dallas, Texas. (See A.2.f)*
- (3) *Students are expected to be familiar with the advice and guidelines in the document “Preparing to Travel Abroad,” and to both show sensitivity and respect for their host and host culture, as well as the guidance of their instructor. Students should be aware that the SMU Student Code of Conduct governs behavior on all university sanctioned trips, including its provisions for adjudicating complaints about behavior.*
- (4) *Non-student participation in immersion courses is governed by guidelines found in III.C of this document.*
- (5) *Students are required to participate in a pre-immersion orientation of approximately 4 hours in length.*
- (6) *Students are required to participate in a self-development exercise related to cultural intelligence, and provided by the GTE director.*

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3. Guidelines for Managing Individual Immersion Expenses
 - a) Overall accounting for immersion expenses takes place under the rules for Travel found in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 in the Faculty Handbook.
 - b) In so far as possible the GTE director will arrange direct payment from SMU to those agencies that provide room, board, and transport for immersion groups.
 - c) It is advisable that a trusted agency in the immersion location pay all honoraria, entrance fees, and tips on behalf of the group and submit a detailed bill for services provided to the GTE program for direct payment from SMU.
 - d) Honoraria for guest lecturers and institutional hosts must be approved in advance by the GTE director in order for adequate provision to be made in the GTE budget.
 - e) When it is necessary for the faculty leader of the immersion group to personally pay expenses for the group then these expenses much be documented (with receipts) on the GTE Immersion Expense Report provided by the GTE director.
 - f) Meals provided as part of the immersion experience will include no more than one beverage in addition to water. Students or immersion leaders much purchase additional beverages at their own expense.
 - g) All faculty leaders should, in consultation with the GTE director, request an adequate cash advance and have that cash available either through ATM withdrawal, credit, or traveler's checks to cover both anticipated cash expenses and emergencies. Please note that SMU provides 24 hour international travel insurance covering medical and other emergencies.
4. Guidelines for Managing GTE Finances
 - a) Provision for the cost of lecturers and guest lecturers for immersion courses takes place under existing guidelines for regular course offerings. Lecturers are encouraged to teach immersion courses within their normal load. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the GTE director must approve courses offered above the normal course load. Payment of the instructor for teaching courses over normal load is made through the GTE budget..
 - b) Policy beginning in the academic year 2008-2009:
 - (1) *MDiv students will receive a full travel stipend covering all immersions costs less one meal per day and personal expenses if and only if they register for academic credit.*
 - (2) *All registrants must pay a \$200.00 non-refundable application fee into the GTE program, and assume responsibility for all costs incurred by the GTE program on their behalf.*

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- (3) *A \$500.00 cancellation fee will be assessed if a participant withdraws from the course or fails to complete the course after academic registration. This fee will be charged to the student's SMU account.*
- (4) *Instructors and participants will be responsible for the cost of their travel documents, international health insurance, and all other personal items and purchases used on the immersion.*
- (5) *All participants are responsible for paying tuition and general student fees for the course, which are paid directly to the registrar's office.*
- (6) *Non-MDiv students and others seeking to participate in second or subsequent immersion course must consult with the GTE director concerning the cost of their participation in an immersion course. This cost will be based on the individual cost of participation in the specific immersion and funding available for that immersion.*
- c) It is solely the responsibility of the GTE director to determine the overall cost of each immersion experience (apart from academic tuition and fees) as well as the cost to individual participants in those experiences.
- d) The GTE director also determines the schedule of payments by students for their immersion courses, including provision for non-refundable deposits.
- e) Receiving and disbursing all funds for GTE immersion experiences is accomplished through and managed by the Perkins financial officer in accordance with University policies and procedures. Immersions are funded through the budget of the *Theology Immersion Account (237811)*
- f) General costs for maintaining the GTE director's office, including communications with and travel to potential immersion sites, are provided from the *Theology Global Mission Fund (237815)*.
- g) The GTE program will receive gifts from individuals and groups for its *Perkins Global Mission Fund (437805)*. All such funds will be received through the Perkins Development office.
- (1) *Gifts may be given in honor of an individual or class. The GTE director will keep a roster of all such gifts received, and as appropriate will inform recipients of travel stipends that their stipend came in part from such gift(s). The GTE director may choose to publicly recognize such gifts as appropriate within the guidelines of University policy.*
- (2) *The GTE program will also establish endowments in cooperation with the Perkins Development office following appropriate university guidelines.*

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- h) Non-MDiv students, or MDiv students taking a second immersion course, may apply for and be granted travel stipends on the basis of need.
- (1) *Travel stipends will be granted only to students who register to take the course for academic credit.*
- (2) *The distribution of travel stipends will be based solely on need.*
- (3) *The total dollar amount of travel stipends granted in an academic year will not exceed budgeted funds for that year.*
- (4) *The distribution of travel stipends to students in different courses will seek to equalize the cost to students when courses have varying travel costs because of destination or time offered. Greater stipends will be rewarded for more expensive travel costs.*
- (5) *Distribution will take into account whether a student has participated in an immersion course previously. Travel stipends will be distributed so as to maximize the number of different students able to participate in immersion experiences.*
- (6) *A student applying for travel stipends will provide the GTE director:*
- (a) His or her FASFA student aid reports.
- (b) Her or his letter stating the reasons for pursuing an immersion experience.
- (c) The name of the student's home church or current church appointment, and permission for the GTE program to approach that body for a contribution to the Travel Stipend fund.
- (d) An agreement to write a letter of thanks to one or more of the donors to the Travel Stipend fund.
- (e) An agreement to allow the student's name and photo to be used in publicizing the GTE program.
- (7) *The GTE director will be responsible for determining the travel stipend amount for each student, in consultation with the registrar if necessary. Decisions by the GTE director will be final and not subject to appeal.*
- (8) *Travel Stipends are funded from the Theology Immersion Account (237811)*

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(9) The GTE director, in consultation with the Perkins' financial officer, will determine the amount to be distributed as travel stipends in any given year consonant with the budgeted funds available.)

B. Immersion Courses for Persons outside the Perkins Community

Perkins alumnae and persons outside the Perkins community will be offered the opportunity to participate in immersion courses as auditors, following the *Policy on participation of non-degree and auditing students in immersion programs*.

Appendix: GTE Course Approval Form

GTE Policy on Immersion Course Scheduling.

- (1) *At least 19 months prior to the proposed immersion the lecturer must request that the proposed course be tentatively placed on the GTE long-range planning calendar.*
- (2) *Once the course is tentatively scheduled the lecturer is responsible for completing the course approval process and associated form at least 18 months prior to the proposed immersion.*
- (3) *Once the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs has placed the course in the schedule of the upcoming year(s) the GTE director will work with the lecturer to plan the course as detailed elsewhere in these policies. The completed form should be copied, with one copy given to the GTE director, one returned to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and one retained by the lecturer.*

Lecturer(s):

Course Title: Division

Location:

Proposed Course Dates:

Academic Year: Term: (NB – Summer is first term of the academic year.)

Note, as of September 1st, 2009 and until further notice submission of this form indicates that the immersion course to be offered is within the lecturer's normal course load. Overload immersion courses will not be accepted.

	Signature of:	Date
1. Course has been placed on the long term GTE planning calendar and fits within the overall GTE program goals.	GTE Director:	
2. Course has been approved by the appropriate division	Division Head:	
3. Course has been approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs	Associate Dean	
4. Course has been placed on the final GTE calendar	GTE Director	

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