

Community Studies Seminar Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Community Studies Seminar?

In this year-long course, students volunteer eight hours a week at a community service organization in the student's home community. The coursework engages students in reflection on issues of community, border-crossing and ministerial formation through the lens of their community site.

What types of community service sites are available?

Community sites are not limited to a particular focus, but cover a broad number of issues, including: Economic development, Education, Cultural Pluralism, Criminal Justice, Employment and Work Force Development, Environmental development, Health, Housing, Special Populations (aging/senior citizens, disabilities), Youth activities (including violence prevention).

The sites are selected with approval from the Director of Contextual Ministry. In general, they should be non-profits that provide social services to culturally diverse communities (race, class, nationality and sexuality).

What are the expectations of the site supervisor?

Site supervisors spend a minimum of one hour a month in direct supervision and feedback with student, develop and sign a Learning Agreement Covenant with student, and provide a midpoint and a final evaluation of student.

What will I learn?

We hope sites will provide rich opportunities to learn and grow. We hope you will gain an understanding of the complexities and possibilities of contemporary social issues; enhance your understanding of the issues that exist in multicultural, multi-racial community

and, generally, engage in the day-to-day rhythm of an organization which we believe will positively shape your ministerial formation.

How will I apply what I am learning?

You will be involved in weekly reflection groups with other students that focus on areas such as: religious education, ethics, arts in ministry and theology. You will use your service experience to examine what it means to immerse yourself in the range of human experiences as you form your ministerial identity.

How would I be evaluated?

You will receive a mid-point and final evaluation from the Site Supervisor which is based on the Learning Agreement Covenant. This will be combined with discussions with Meadville Lombard faculty and staff. You will also be evaluated at the end of the semester by the Community Studies Faculty.

What are the Benefits for the Community and Sites?

- 25-30 weeks of dedicated volunteer service from the same person.
- Opportunity to incorporate and model values of justice, equity and compassion within a community agency while modeling and demonstrating the efficacy of the program.
- Establish a partnership of good will and collaboration while extending fiscal resources.
- Helping to prepare a minister for doing real ministry in the real world.