

## Cross-Cultural Engagement Contract Course (IDIS-290)

### Description and Contract Form

This contract must be completed and receive CCE committee approval **prior to** the CCE experience.

#### Course Description

The new core curriculum was approved with a new requirement in **cross-cultural engagement**.

**Description:** a core requirement that can be met by any course of 0 or more credit hours in which students interact directly with members of a different culture over a significant period of time.

Courses fulfilling this requirement may also satisfy other core requirements.

**Objectives:**

1. to gain skills in cross-cultural communication
2. to understand how the world might look from the standpoint of another community of interpretation and experience
3. to learn how to discern and, where appropriate, adapt to the cultural expectations of the other
4. to learn how to distinguish between the enduring principles of human morality and their situation-specific adaptations
5. to witness other cultural embodiments of faith, and thus to reflect on the substance and definition of one's own faith by comparison.

The four components of orientation, direct experience, reflection, and evaluation, all described below, are curricular criteria for fulfilling the CCE requirement.

**Orientation:** An introduction to cultures (specifically the cultures for placement) *via* readings, films, or other materials as a part of class requirements. This initial orientation should also review Biblical grounds for pursuing cross-cultural understanding.

It is often assumed that all students in a given class come from the same culture, and that this culture is different from the one to be engaged with. Therefore, CCE proposals to be submitted need to build in an answer to the following questions: 'How can students who are from the given culture, or are from a culture different than that of the majority of students in the class, be included in this course? How will the objectives of the course be met by them?'

**Direct experience:** A minimum of 20 hours of personal engagement with persons of a culture significantly different than the student's own culture, designed to help the student as much as possible to meet the 5 CCE objectives listed above. These hours should be in a setting of the other culture and where persons of the other culture are active in shaping the experience. (For example, if the personal engagement is in a course including tutoring persons of another culture, some of the experience should also be in church, family, or other cultural settings related to the person being tutored.)

"Personal engagement" implies the following:

- it is more than just observation, or learning about the other culture, although those are important components, as well.
- there needs to be face-to-face human interaction with people from the other culture.
- there should be active involvement and discussion with people from the other culture.

**Reflection:** A careful, specific reflection component, including some written work that will be evaluated by the instructor of the course. This should include reflection on other cultures, including worldviews, expectations, traditions, and embodiments of faith, as well as on what the experience has taught students about themselves, their culture, and their own faith. [cf. "Reflection Resources" at: <http://www.calvin.edu/admin/fdrn/cce.htm> ]

**Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on the basis of both participation and written work. This course will be graded **CR** (Completed as Required) and **NC** (Not Completed).

## Rationale

The experience of Calvin faculty and staff who have been involved in cross-cultural engagement courses suggests that 20 hours of interaction with people from another culture is the bare minimum needed to begin to understand that culture in any depth. Given the logistics of placement and the need to introduce students to the culture with which they are going to be engaged, the committee estimates that students in a semester-long course would be able to spend approximately 10 weeks in a particular setting. Considering the demanding nature of many students' schedules, two hours of direct experience a week for 10 weeks appears to be a reasonable minimal expectation. It is assumed that additional time will be spent in class engaging in the knowledge and reflection components of the experience—components also necessary if the objectives are to be met.

In addition, the requirement that the engagement be in a culture “significantly different from one’s own” requires justification. It is difficult to define what would be a “culture significantly different from the student’s own culture” for students at Calvin College. Proposals for courses intended to meet the CCE requirement should outline the nature of culture differences that exist between the students in the class and the community of engagement. For all such courses, the dimensions of time, intensity, and cultural difference should be seen as related. That is, for experiences of short duration or limited intensity, the culture differences should be greater; for semester or year-long experiences, smaller differences may be able to accomplish the same purpose. For Caucasian, North American students, if the engagement is done in North America, it should be with a different racial or linguistic community (e.g., African American, Hispanic, or non-English speaking immigrant.) In cases where significant cultural difference is not apparent, the proposal should explain how there are sufficient differences to enable the goals of the course to be met, and how the course will use these differences to meet the goals for the CCE requirement.

### Post Script:

Cross-cultural engagement does not mean that students can engage with just anyone, as long as that person is different from them in some way (e.g. socio-economically). The definitions have layers of meaning, which cannot be articulated into a simple checklist of items. The committee sees **cross-cultural engagement** as implying more than tourism or an encounter with cultural artifacts alone (those of high culture, such as paintings and monuments, or those of more everyday culture, such as different colored mailboxes or methods of buying bus tickets). There has to be real interaction with humans, where the people from the other culture have a role in setting the agenda. There needs to be a de-centering and a re-centering.

**Culture** refers not merely to particular sights, sounds or artifacts (paintings, towers, foods, dances, etc) but more broadly to the underlying patterns of beliefs, values and interpretations which motivate differences between communities. **Engagement** refers to a form of direct encounter in which the learner’s sense of self is brought into play and challenged through questioning and listening to others who are different. Taking culture on its own could lead to a tourist approach – seeing the sights and noting surface differences without direct personal engagement with the ways in which others see the world. Taking engagement on its own is too broad – it is particularly engagement with **cultural** differences that is in view here. There is also an implicit third strand, which is our particular interest in **religious beliefs** (“belief” is also a broad term – not all “beliefs” are equally deep or significant, and for students to simply acknowledge that there are differences in beliefs, all equally valid, would not meet the criterion of **engagement**).

One additional clarification: when we speak about allowing people from the other culture to ‘set the agenda’ for our Calvin students, it is implied that it would be inappropriate to expect very young children to be the transmitters of culture to our students. That is, when Calvin students are in a setting that involves very young children (K-6), there must also be intentional engagement with adults in that culture (e.g. parents, teachers, supervisors, etc.)”

The goal of cross-cultural engagement for our students could entail somewhat different learning goals for different students. It is also important to see how a proposal fits within a department’s overall goals for its students. Therefore each department needs to make an argument for how its proposal is cross-cultural.

This option recognizes that students become engaged in cross-cultural experiences or programs while at Calvin. Furthermore, if planning and guidance (in terms of prior orientation, identifying a protocol for reflection, and specifying the type and extent of engagement) by a faculty member is included, monitoring and evaluation of that experience can lead to a granting of CCE credit or designation.

Departments whose students regularly participate in off-campus cross-cultural experiences during the summer or during a semester away from college could develop a 1-semester hour or 0-semester hour seminar for students that provides orientation, reflection, and evaluation related to that experience. The goal is that a student or a group of students would meet together with the professor to be oriented to the prospective culture and to the 5 CCE objectives, and to compare and reflect on their experiences. These courses could be open to all students who have had related experiences. Students and faculty members would contract for this course prior to the experience, and engage in reading and reflection during and after the experiential portion. They are to complete the CCE contract (IDIS 290) together and receive CCE Committee approval prior to the CCE experience. CCE credit / designation should not be given just for the experience, but for careful, informed reflection on that experience with the guidance of faculty. Examples might include these: a PE/Recreation seminar for students who work in a cross-cultural recreational program; missions seminar for students who work in a missions setting; and a foreign language seminar for students who work in another country over the summer. \*\*\* See **NOTE** at bottom of page.

Departments whose students regularly participate in affiliated off-campus cross-cultural programs (e.g. for language study) during the summer or during a semester away from college could develop a 0-semester hour or 1-semester hour seminar for students that provides orientation, reflection, and evaluation related to that experience. These students are already getting credit for the program they are in, and thus would not necessarily need CCE credit (hence the option of 0-s.h. and 1-s.h.), but the work they are doing fits exactly within the goals of CCE at Calvin. The goal is that a student or a group of students would meet together with the professor to be oriented to the prospective culture and to the 5 CCE objectives, and to compare and reflect on their experiences. These courses could be open to all students who will have related experiences. Students and faculty members would contract for this course prior to the experience, and engage in a short seminar prior to departure. They are to complete the CCE contract (IDIS 290) together and receive CCE Committee approval prior to the CCE experience. Upon return to Calvin, the students would submit to the professor a paper reflecting on their entire experience, focusing specifically on the 5 CCE objectives. CCE designation should not be given just for the experience, but for careful, informed reflection on that experience with the guidance of faculty. Examples might include these: Central College (Iowa) programs, Goethe Institute, IDEA ministries, etc.

IDIS 290 provides the necessary avenue for making pre-arrangements for these off-campus cross-cultural experiences or programs. The IDIS 290 option provides 1 semester hour or 0 semester hours of credit to students.

\*\*\* **NOTE** : Students who are doing an off-campus independent study need to contact the Off-campus Program office for possible additional paperwork.

**Note to Students and Faculty: It is important to complete this form together and get CCE Committee approval prior to any experience intended to fulfill the CCE requirement. Please submit this completed contract to Prof. Lissa Schwander of the Sociology/Social Work for approval.**

Title of Proposed Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Academic Term: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Semester Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ (0 = Designation Only, 1 = Credit)

Off-campus Programs Office has been contacted:  Yes  No  Not necessary

Type of Contract:  Student-initiated  Faculty-initiated

**After consulting the course description and rationale, use a separate sheet to respond to the next five items to describe how this CCE experience will meet the criteria for satisfying the CCE requirement. Please attach a sample course syllabus and bibliography to this form.**

1. Describe the projected direct experience activities and the intended time span. (A minimum of 20 hours of personal engagement [see definition in course description above] with persons of a culture significantly different from the student's own culture, designed to help the student as much as possible to meet the 5 CCE objectives)
2. How will these experiences be cross-cultural? (For clarification of what is a culture "significantly different from one's own," see paragraph 2 under "Rationale" above.)
3. How will students be oriented to the culture(s) and to the 5 CCE objectives? Describe how, where, and when (how many meetings) this orientation will occur.
4. How will faculty guide reflection? Describe the frequency of meetings or communication planned throughout the duration of and after the experience. Give some sample reflection questions.
5. How will faculty evaluate student attainment of CCE objectives? At what date will the grade be given?

**Submitted by supervising faculty member and all students participating:**

	Student ID # & Email Address	Signature (and printed name)	Date Signed
Faculty	--		
Student 1			
Student 2			
Student 3			
Student 4			
Student 5			
<i>Please attach sheet for additional students.</i>			

**This course (IDIS-290) will be graded CR (Completed as Required) and NC (Not Completed).**

**For Office Use Only**

Review Date and Approval by CCE Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of CCE: \_\_\_\_\_

Term: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Section: IDIS-290- \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Semester Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval results in forwarding this form to the Registrar for inclusion in each student's registration.**