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INTERCULTURAL LEARNING TRIPS

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"The only people who see the whole picture are those who step outside the frame." - Indo-British novelist Salman Rushdie

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's World Mission Initiative organizes intercultural trips to help participants see their own ministry with new eyes by stepping outside their context. These trips are part of a required Intercultural/Experiential Learning course (MI 310) that is offered by the Seminary every January Term. This course will provide pre- and post-experience orientation and reflection in cultural proficiency and anti-racism, intercultural communication, a theology of short-term mission engagement, area studies for the specific context to be studied, and spiritual practices for mission.

Since 2001, WMI has sent 987 individuals to 61 countries.

[Read reflections from previous student participants.](#)

The Seminary's required intercultural experiences for MDiv students puts PTS in a category of its own in U.S. theological education. No other seminary is investing the resources PTS is to get our students and faculty to the cutting edge of where God is engaging in mission today.

HUNTER FARRELL, WMI DIRECTOR

STUDENT RE



Seminarians reflect on their recent intercultural mission trips to Cuba and the Philippines.

JANUARY 2025 TRIPS

NEW YORK CITY: *EXEGETING THE URBAN CITY*

Travel Dates: Jan. 10-19, 2025

Co-Leaders: Dr. Wanda Lundy, Union Theological Seminary (New York City), and Dr. Scott Hagley, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Participants will discover that geographical and social contexts powerfully shape congregational identity and understandings. Urban spaces have a profound social and cultural connection to racial identity. We will learn from culturally competent mission leaders who understand that while the gospel is a timeless truth, it enters ever-changing and diverse human contexts. The trip is being organized with New York Theological Seminary which has pioneered theological education for incarcerated population.

INDIA: *WITNESS IN CONTEXT*

Travel Dates: Jan. 9-21, 2025

Co-Leaders: The Rev. Bala Khyllap, World Mission Initiative, and the Rev. Brenda Henry '17, Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries

The country of India has many cultures, languages, religions, traditions, and ethnic backgrounds. We often see India through the lens of mainstream media, but there is so much more. Students on this trip will be invited to see India through the unique lenses of Indian Christians, a religious minority. Learn from people in Kolkata and Northeast India who come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. Participants will experience the witness of churches contextualizing their belief in a multi-diverse context of India. While struggling with a colonial past, faithful believers seek to witness the gospel as a religious minority in a time of growing religious nationalism.

U.S./MEXICO BORDER: *CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO THE BORDER CRISIS*

Travel Dates: Jan. 11-19, 2025

Co-Leaders: The Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell, World Mission Initiative, and Dr. Emiola Oriola Jr. '18, University of Pittsburgh

Frontera de Cristo is a unique, intercultural border ministry that sees borders as bridges, rather than barriers. Based on 40 years of the daily accompaniment of migrants and the churches and residents of Agua Prieta, Mexico and Douglas, Arizona, Frontera will lead learners to experience life on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border in order to better understand current U.S. border policy and the lived reality of Mexican and Central American families. We will focus on questions of public theology in an intercultural context: how Christians respond to questions of law, ethics, human need and injustice.

SUMMER 2025 TRIP

GUATEMALA: *WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE?*

MI-310 Course Dates: July 15-17 and Aug. 5-7, 2025

Travel Dates: July 19-28, 2025

Co-Leaders: The Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell, World Mission Initiative, and Nancy Carrera, CEDEPCA, Guatemala

What does it mean to love our neighbor when our neighbor is undocumented? How do we share God's love with immigrants in our community in a time of increasing anti-immigrant discourse and violence? Would you like to understand the "push factors" that cause families traditionally rooted to the land to leave everything they know to travel to the U.S.? The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America will lead us to reflect theologically and politically about what is happening in Central America and how Central Americans are caring for 'the sojourner' in their communities. Join us as we travel to bustling Guatemala City, indigenous Quetzaltenango, and touristy Antigua. In the morning we will work with a Catholic missionary order of priests and seminarians who care for migrants and in the afternoon we will study theology.

COST

Please refer to the application form for the cost of each trip.

IMPORTANT DATES

TRIP APPLICATION PERIOD

The trip application will be open from Sep. 3 to Oct. 4, 2024. [Click Here to Apply Now!](#)

INFORMATION SESSION

Want to Learn More?? PLEASE JOIN US on Tuesday, September 10th for:

1. Chapel at 11:30 am in *Chapel*
2. Information session at 12:15-1:00 p.m. in *McNaugher Kadel Dining Room 1*. **RSVP is required.**

CLASS REGISTRATION

J-Term class registration opens Oct. 21, 2024.

OTHER DATES

Save the dates for Sat., Oct. 26 and Sat., Nov. 16, 2024, for the trip orientations in the fall. [Click here](#) for more important dates and events.

TRIP WITH CREDIT

Any PTS student planning to participate in an Intercultural Learning Trip for the first time is required to enroll in the Intercultural Experiential Learning (MI 310) course, which consists of 15 hours of pre-trip orientation (plus preparatory readings) and 15 hours of post-trip reflection and integration. Students will receive three credits or can audit the course.

TRIP WITHOUT CREDIT

Students who have traveled before and completed the course are required to attend pre-trip orientation and post-trip classes.

Non-PTS students are required to register/audit for the course. The three credits are transferable to the Graduate Certificate in Missional Leadership. Non-registered applicants are required to complete five hours pre- and post-trip classroom time.

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