Contextual Education and Integration Handbook

*(Information and Guidelines for Students,
Site Educators, Instructors, and Administrators)*

Emmanuel College
Toronto School of Theology
2019-2020

*Contact information:
Samantha Cavanagh
(Instructor of Contextual Education)*
sam.cavanagh@mail.utoronto.ca

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The core goal of Emmanuel College's Contextual Education Program is integrative; students integrate their learning from across the theological curriculum through critical engagement with their practices of ministry and pastoral care. In this way, the program seeks to equip students with the theological acumen, pastoral instincts, and personal/spiritual dispositions that are required for cultivating a sense of call in the flux of 21st century religious life. Questions of gifts, growing edges and discernment of call are inevitably part of this reflective process. Contextual Education intends both to reflect on and to re-imagine modes of religious practice that can contribute to the healing of each other and creation.

The Contextual Education Program at Emmanuel is comprised of two core courses at the Basic Degree level: "Context and Ministry" (EMP 2160) and "Contextual Education and Ministry Integration" (EMF 3020). EMF 3020 combines in-class coursework with supervised practicum hours in ministry/pastoral placements.

Contextual Education and Ministry Integration (EMF 3020) is a required course for students in the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program, and an option for students in the Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) degree program (excluding MPS SCP students) who are not planning on taking an SPE Unit. Context and Ministry (EMP 2160) is its pre-requisite. Students must also have successfully completed the core courses of their program (see [Emmanuel Student Handbook](#)) before beginning this two-semester course. Due to its curricular integrative function, all students – whether enrolled full or part time – are strongly encouraged to take Contextual Education in the final year of their program. Taking it sooner than this will undermine its pedagogical function in relation to the overall program of study. MPS students pursuing their degree full-time may request permission to take Contextual Education concurrently with "Context and Ministry" in order to meet the pre-requisite.

Students wanting to take EMF 3020 must attend an information session in the January prior to the course's start in September, and have their site placements set up by the April prior to the course's start. Failure to attend one of these sessions will result in the student being refused admittance to the course in the fall.

This *Handbook* outlines the expectations for EMF 3020. Because course learning is student led, changes may be made to this handbook prior to the start of each semester.

***

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Expectations

In two consecutive fall and spring semesters, students spend 8 hours/week for twenty-four weeks – for a minimum of 192 hours total to pass the course – in work related to their site placement. These hours include 1 hour/week in theological reflection with a Site Educator, as well as preparation to be in site and actual in-site time. Combined with a 3-hour weekly/bi-weekly seminar at the College (see schedule at the end of this handbook) and reading/writing assignments related to this seminar, this makes a total weekly commitment of approximately 12 hours per week from September to April. Students should consider the heavy demands of the course before they commit to a site placement and/or register for the class.

Time away from the site placement must be negotiated with the Site Educator and course instructor in advance. Students are required to maintain a minimum 80% attendance in class. Class absence should be arranged in advance with the instructor. Absence may require additional work, which will be negotiated with the instructor.

Unsatisfactory completion of reading and writing assignments will result in failure of this course.

Program Participants

The Role of the Student: A student is defined as a person enrolled in a degree program at Emmanuel College. Students in Contextual Education are responsible for integrating all the educational dimensions of their program into their own learning. To facilitate this integration, students are responsible for drawing intentionally on, and forging connections among: (1) their own personal and pastoral experiences; (2) their in site learning from and with their Site Educator; (3) their reflective conversations with their peer group and the Instructor; (4) the readings and writing they do in preparation for class time; and (5) the rest of their coursework at Emmanuel College. Because the peer group process is grounded in materials generated by students out of their pastoral/ministry experiences, on-time completion of all assignments is required of students.

The Role of the Site Educator: The Site Educator is a person working in pastoral/ministry leadership, lay or ordered, usually at the student's site, who is designated and committed to work with the student in a disciplined, reflective, educational process. While the term "Supervisor" is frequently used in Contextual or Theological Field Education programs, at Emmanuel we use the term "Site Educator" to emphasize the mutual project of *educating and equipping* ministers and pastoral care providers in which all the program's participants are engaged. Emmanuel College is careful to work with Site Educators who have already demonstrated competence in ministry/pastoral care, facilitating learning, being open to share insights and feelings, and to learn from and with another, and who value and practice the art of theological reflection. Site Educators are required at times to be mentors, spiritual directors, pastors, and colleagues to students. Being a Site Educator requires, among other things, an awareness of self (both strengths and weaknesses), a commitment to mutuality in ministry, an ability to offer constructive feedback, an awareness of one's own learning styles and expertise, and an ability to work with learning outcomes.

> ***A Note on the Relationship between Student and Site Educator: The shared adventure in intentional learning is rooted in relationship. The Site Educator and student together should focus not only on the various tasks of ministry but also on their own relationship and their shared relationship with the site. The relationship of the student and the Site Educator therefore includes dimensions of both personhood (who we are) and tasks (what we do). Attending only to issues of personhood without tasks is therapy. Attending only to tasks without consideration of personal and vocational identity is administration. When we attend to the integrative relationship between who we are and what we do, we become able to embody our pastoral roles with a fuller conscious intentionality. Site Educators model this embodied intentionality for students by drawing on all the intuitive, emotional, analytical, and theological understanding that they have developed over the years. By responding thusly to situations in which students find themselves, Site Educators can empower students to do the same. When each person sees the other as a resource, learning can be mutually enriching.*

The Role of the Contextual Education Instructor: The Instructor is responsible for facilitating a quality educational experience for all the program's constituents. In conjunction with the Director of Contextual Education, they are responsible for the program's vision, the overall design of the courses, the administrative details and communications for site placements and Site Educators, and for the final evaluation of class assignments and whether a student has successfully passed the course. The instructor facilitates discussions in weekly peer group meetings, grades student work, and is available for consultation with students on assignments. They will convene at least one orientation meeting at the College per academic year for Site Educators, usually to be held during the first meeting of the course. They will also provide resources for and

conflict resolution between students and representatives of their sites should such a need arise. The Instructor will also be available to write School Endorsements for students who proceed to United Church supervised ministry internships and will review all internship reports.

The Instructor is always available for consultation and conversation with any program participant should the need arise. Please simply email her at sam.cavanagh@mail.utoronto.ca to schedule a time to talk.

The Role of Peer Groups: Each student will be part of a peer group that meets weekly with the Instructor for the classroom portion of the course. Students generate assignments – including, but not limited to: incident reports, verbatims and an integrative project – all of which serve as the foundations for peer group conversation. Peer groups allow students to offer support and reflective feedback to each other, and provide a location in which to deepen and expand theological engagement with pastoral practices. During the first semester of the course, peer group time focuses on engaging students' experiences in their site. During the second semester, while peer group time will continue to provide space for site-related 'check-ins,' its main purpose is to provide space for students to integrate the work they're doing at their site (including the work of theological reflection with their Site Educator) with their learning across the theological curriculum.

The Role of Contextual Education Program Administrator: The Contextual Education Program Administrator primarily works with students to set up their site placements, and to complete all the tasks for formalizing their roles in their sites (e.g., all relevant paperwork, any legal documents, etc.). The Program Administrator also supports the Program in all administrative matters, and is available for consultation with students about such matters.

TIMELINE

Arc for the Year

Student involvement with Contextual Education actually begins in the academic year prior to their placement beginning. In January of the academic year *before* a student wishes to start a placement, they attend a mandatory information session about the course and learn about the steps involved in setting up a placement. From January to April students complete these steps (outlined below) in order to set up and finalize their placement arrangements, so that they can begin their placement the following September, after the summer break.

Setting Up Your Placement

In Contextual Education, agreements are arranged between the College and the site to facilitate student learning. After attending the initial information session and researching potential sites, students submit their top choices to Shawn Kazubowski-Houston (Administrator) and the Director, who then contact the site to begin discussing the educational arrangement.

**Students should not therefore make any arrangements to begin or terminate a site placement on their own, without the knowledge and express consent of the College. This process ensures that all sites and Site Educators are aware of the course and program requirements before any agreement is finalized.

There are 4 initial steps involved in setting up a site placement, and an additional 3 steps involved in finalizing a site placement. Please note the dates by which each step **must** be completed if you want to be able to enroll in the class for the 2019-2020 academic year. **Failure to complete these steps on time will result in you being unable to start your site placement in September 2019 and, thus, unable to take EMF 3020 Contextual Education that year. In some cases this may delay the time to completion for your degree.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have completed all tasks on time to begin their course of study.

> **Step 1**: Attend mandatory information session to ask any questions you have, and discuss your learning goals with the Director and Administrator. The info session will be offered on Tuesday, January 15, 13:00-14:00 (EM105) and Thursday, January 23, 15:30-16:30 (EM108).
>
> **Step 2**: Research potential placement sites.
>
> **Step 3**: Submit your top 3 placement choices to the Administrator. The Administrator and the Director will then contact the sites and speak to the potential Site Educators about what the placement entails and what is involved in the role of Site Educator.
>
> **Step 4**: Meet with your potential Site Educator at the site.

Deadlines for these steps:

Due Date	Step in Set-Up Process
January 15 or 23, 2019	Attend info session and discuss learning goals
February 12, 2019	Top 3 site choices submitted to Shawn
By March 8, 2019	Meet with potential Site Educator

Finalizing Your Placement

After all the steps above have been completed, and the College, site, and student have reached an agreement about the site placement, there are three additional steps to finalize the placement. **These steps must be completed by the end of the academic year <u>prior</u> to the Fall in which you will start your placement.**

Failure to complete these steps on time will result in you being unable to start your site placement in September 2019, and thus, unable to take Contextual Education (EMF3020) in that academic year. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all steps are completed on time.

Finalizing Step 1: Submit your **POLICE CHECK** to the Administrator in the Main Office. Most of you will have submitted a police check to Emmanuel College when you entered your first year. If you have not done so, please see the instructions in the *Contextual Education Handbook* (available online… see link below) on how to obtain a police check.

Finalizing Step 2: Pick up your **WSIB FORMS**. During your placement, you will have health care coverage in the event of an accident or injury while you are at your Site Placement. A claim form only needs to be completed in the event of an accident or injury, but you must pick up a WSIB package from the Administrator and sign a form indicating that you understand our policies and procedures.

Finalizing Step 3: Submit completed **SITE AGREEMENT**. This form can be found on page 11 of the *Contextual Education Handbook* and on Emmanuel's website at www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/academics/Contextual_Education/Handbooks_and_Forms.htm

Deadlines for these steps:

Due Date	Step in Finalizing Process
April 5, 2019	Submit Police check
April 5, 2019	Pick up WSIB package
April 5, 2019	Submit Site Agreement

PAPERWORK

Police Checks

All students in Contextual Education are required to have a Vulnerable Sector Police Check completed. Police checks are due at the end of the academic year prior to the year in which you will begin your placement. ****You will not be permitted to begin your placement until a completed police check is submitted to Emmanuel College.****

> ****Note for potential Site Educators on police checks and privacy:** It is the practice of Emmanuel College to request police checks from our Contextual Education students, however, privacy regulations prevent us from releasing any information contained in or pertaining to those reports. If a site requires a police check from a student, the responsibility lies with the site to request a copy of the police check directly from the student. Emmanuel College will not be able to supply the site with a copy of a student's police check, or provide any information about the results of the police check. Students should be prepared to present your police check to your site if requested.

Obtaining a police check: Students who live in Toronto must complete a "Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information" form with an authorized signature from Emmanuel College (i.e. the Registrar or the Director of Contextual Education) before you can mail it in along with payment (money order or certified cheque payable to Toronto Police Service. The cost is $20.00). These forms are available in the Main Office at Emmanuel College. Students who live outside of Toronto will need to contact your local police department to complete the process.

Workplace Safety

Contextual Education students have health care coverage in the event of an accident or injury while working at their site, either via the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) or via private insurance through Victoria University in the University of Toronto (ACE INA). In all cases, the cost of this coverage is paid by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, and *never by the placement site*.

The way in which we determine what type of coverage each student has depends on what type of coverage each site has for its *paid employees*:

- If the site has WSIB coverage for its *paid employees*, this coverage also extends to the Contextual Education student.
- If the site does not have WSIB coverage for its *paid employees,* the student is covered by the University of Toronto's private insurance (ACE INA).

In the event of an accident or injury, several forms need to be completed:
- A *Postsecondary Student Unpaid Work Placement Workplace Insurance Claim* form must be completed by the student, placement site, and College
- A *Letter of Authorization to Represent Employer* must be completed by the Site Educator or Site Representative
- A *Students on Unpaid Work Placements Incident and Accident Report* form must be completed by the Site Educator or Site Representative

All of these forms are contained in the WSIB package that you will pick up from the Main Office.

If you have an accident or are injured at your site, contact the College as soon as possible and we will work with you to complete the appropriate forms and file a claim.

EMMANUEL COLLEGE
CONTEXTUAL EDUCATION SITE AGREEMENT
2019-2020

The Site Agreement must be completed, signed by both the student and Site Educator, and submitted to the College before your placement can begin.

Student Name: _____

ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS

Site Educator Name: _____

ADDRESS (please include name of site)	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS

General Agreements

- The student and the Site Educator agree to meet weekly for theological reflection on current pastoral experiences arising from the student's learning outcomes;
- Students and Site Educators agree to prepare a mid-year (December) and a year-end (April) evaluation report. All parties agree that if any part of the learning process encounters difficulties or breaks down, the course Instructor will be notified in order to initiate reconciliation or terminate the placement.

**Sexual Harassment Policies and standards of professional behaviour of the United Church of Canada and the University of Toronto apply to all persons and sites involved in this program. If the site is not a UCC congregation please affix the appropriate site policies to this agreement.

Signatories:

Student: _____ Date: _____

Site Educator: _____ Date: _____

RESOURCES

Theological Reflection in Contextual Education

For students to experience the *integrative* theological work of the course, they need to engage closely with both the work of their site *and* the ways that this work connects with their wider theological coursework learning. They need to be able to reflect on the personal, pastoral and practical dimensions of their ministry practice *and* on the broader social and theological implications of that practice. They need to work on who they are and how they act as pastoral/ministry leaders *and* on understanding how broader religious, theological and theoretical traditions shape their vocational identity and agency.

All the theological reflection students do in this course will most likely contain aspects of both sides of these dyads. But we have also found that students are better able to integrate their practices of ministry with their theological coursework when they focus their in-site theological conversations with their Site Educators on the former task, and use their peer group conversations to work towards the latter task.

In site, with their Site Educators, then, students do a type of theological reflection that is deeply local, close-to-the-ground, focused on self-awareness and vocational understanding, and oriented through questions about their theological *action*. In the first semester of the course, peer group time seeks to echo and amplify these on-site conversations through peer-to-peer conversation. Here all the students bring their site-specific learning into critical conversation with each other. The diversity of sites within which students are placed thus helps the whole peer-group experiment with and expand their pastoral repertoire beyond what their single site placement could facilitate.

In the second semester, students continue with the type of close-to-the-ground reflection on action with their Site Educators. But the focus of the peer group work shifts. Each student articulates an integrative theological question emerging from their site placement activity upon which they bring the resources of their theological curriculum to bear. Students work collaboratively throughout the semester to explore their particular theological questions, each producing an integrative theological paper by the end of the term. This paper serves as the capstone assignment of their program.

As students move back and forth between these different kinds of theological reflection and integration, they become better equipped to integrate theory with practice, and to embody their own pastoral or vocational identity in ways that form them as creative and adaptive leaders. The goal at the end of the course is to have equipped graduating

students to be able to draw deeply on the resources of their theological degree in their ministry and pastoral work.

Guidelines for Weekly On-Site Theological Reflection

Most, if not all, Site Educators already have some form of experience – either as teacher or learner – with the practice of supervisory theological reflection. This section is therefore intended to expand upon, or to offer a conversation partner to, the practices of theological reflection that the Site Educator already engages.

Each week the student spends a dedicated hour in theological reflection with their Site Educator. The work that students and Site Educators do together is often intense, busy, and it can be difficult to find the time to set aside this hour. We've found that students and Site Educators who **mark their time together ritually** – with opening and closing prayer or by lighting a candle or by transitioning from the tasks of planning and supervision with a period of intentional silence, for example – are able to sink deeper into their conversation, and are thus able get more out of their time together.

In most cases, the **student will submit a written agenda to the Site Educator** 1-2 days before the meeting, usually by email. This recognizes the student's agency in shaping their own learning process, while also enabling the Site Educator to prepare for the meeting. This written agenda should centre on a slice of real life – some particular experience the student has had in their ministry site that week or the week prior that they want to process with the Site Educator.

Site Educators may find the following model for engaging student narratives helpful:

1. **CLARIFY**: Ask your student questions intended to enhance your understanding of what happened, but not yet delve into the deeper issues. Ask the student to describe the event in as much detail as they can. As you transition to the next step in discussion, you might also clarify whether the student is sharing this narrative as a 'low' point in their week or a 'high' point or something more neutral, as a way to shift toward emotional engagement with the story.

2. **ENGAGE EMOTIONALLY:** Try to understand why this particular 'slice of life' has meaning for the student. Why did they choose to share this story in particular? This stage will likely begin with talking about the student's emotional responses *within* the story. How did the event make them feel as it was happening? And then, what are their personal feelings about it now, with some distance? How do they feel about how they felt? As you begin to transition to the next area for discussion, you might find that the student's emotional response can be further explored through careful engagement with the core ethical, pastoral, theological, etc., issues – note the connections among these for yourself or aloud to your student as you go.

3. **EVALUATE** the experience's core ethical, pastoral, theological, etc., issues in a non-judgmental way, prioritizing a particular focus for discussion. Ask what the student contributed to the event, what they would want to change about their action, what they could learn from their decisions in the moment. Try to discern where in the student's self-evaluation it would be best for you to focus your shared attention. Consider relating the event to the student's own learning goals.

4. **ANALYZE** why the student did what they did. If they describe themselves as acting intuitively, try to unpack why particular actions felt intuitive for them to do. Explore how their own social privilege or disadvantage played a role in their actions. Analyze the experience in light of the student's own understanding of pastoral/ ministry leadership, and ask how it supports/challenges/transforms the student's understanding. Reflect on what they would do differently next time, or what they'd maintain about their actions.

5. **EXPAND THEIR IMAGINATION** by seeking ways to grow personally from the experience. Here you may draw on texts and themes appropriate to the student's particular religious stream of study (Christianity, Islam or Buddhism) that can help the student imagine possibilities beyond their own immediate context. Look for moments of transformation in the student's self-understanding and articulate those for and with them. Help them understand their present action in light of their past actions, and in ways that help them imagine their future action. During this part of your reflection, you may consider incorporating liturgy, art, meditation, music, movement or other forms of creative exploration for imaginative theological engagement.

6. **ENCOURAGE DEEPER COMMITMENT** by discerning together what next steps in pastoral action the student could engage. Consider outlining a brief action plan for what the student would do next time in a similar situation. Consider praying aloud for the student to support their continued commitment.

During this theological reflection time, Site Educators might find themselves providing – and thus modeling – pastoral care or spiritual direction to their student, challenging and mentoring their student along a path for growth and development, or strategizing collegially with their student on how to pursue shared ministry tasks.

Criteria for Useful Feedback

The learning that takes place in Contextual Education can be intense. Feedback can sometimes be difficult to hear and integrate into the experience in a positive way. This section offers some guidelines for Site Educators for making their feedback to students hearable and helpful. Students might also find themselves needing to offer feedback to their Site Educators, and these guidelines can also be helpful in that process. If a conflict arises however, for which mediation is required, the course Instructor should be consulted immediately.

Good feedback, because it comments on our effect on others, can help us make behavioural changes. Feedback names areas of strength and growing edges. It is best offered within relationships of trust and respect. The Learning Covenant that students develop with their Site Educators and for their work in peer group provides a baseline framework and permission to offer feedback in specific areas, but sometimes feedback is required beyond the bounds of the covenant too.

Feedback is useful when it is:

1. **Descriptive Rather than Judgmental:** By describing your own reaction, you leave the other person free to use the feedback as they see fit. It can therefore be helpful to frame feedback using the following structure: "When you said/did…I felt…. And because I value…I would like…"

2. **Specific Rather than General:** For example, to be told one is "dominating" will not be as useful as to be told that "just now when we were deciding the issue, I felt you were not hearing what others were saying." Directing feedback toward behavior the receiver can do something about empowers them to change.

3. **Appropriate:** Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the receiver. What we offer needs to be supportive and responsible. Example: "I know that speaking in large groups is difficult for you. I appreciated the effort it took for you to make your contribution to the meeting."

4. **Requested:** Because the Learning Covenant has implicitly requested feedback on the learning outcomes, try to relate feedback to those outcomes. Example: "In relation to your outcome to learn more about offering pastoral care, I noticed that when you responded to (name) in our Bible Study group, she seemed to withdraw. What do you think is going on there?"

5.Timely: Feedback should be timed carefully. Feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity, depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it and the availability of support from the giver/others. Example: "I didn't find the process we used in Bible Study tonight as helpful as it could have been. Have you time to sit down and talk about it a bit now or can we set up a time to talk soon?"

6.Clear: Check to ensure that you are communicating clearly. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback to see if it corresponds to what the giver had in mind. Example: "Let me see if I understand what you are saying to me…"

7.Accurate: Check for accuracy. When feedback is given in a group, both the giver and the receiver have an opportunity to check with others about the accuracy of the feedback. Example: "In this evaluation time, one of you said that more printed resources would have been helpful. What do the rest of you think about that?"

Working explicitly with these guidelines for feedback during in-site theological reflection time will equip students to be able to use them with each other during their peer group reflection time as well. It is to this process that we now turn.

Guidelines for Peer-Group Reflection Time

Students meet in a peer group of 4-6 members weekly for a conversation facilitated by the Instructor. Most weeks, time is provided for brief, site-related 'check-ins'. These 'check-ins' provide space for students to reflect with each other on the social and theological dynamics of their site experiences. They also make possible the types of conversations by which students can learn from each other's site placements. The majority of peer group time, however, is spent engaging with the written assignments that students produce out of their site experiences. Ideally, the experiences students present during peer group time are the same experiences they have already discussed with their site educators. Having already engaged, and come to some understanding of the emotional, personal, pastoral, and contextual theological dimensions of these events with their Site Educators, students are better able to put those experiences into conversation with the experiences of the other peer group members and, in the second semester, with their own coursework learning.

Some thoughts about "theology": typically, Contextual or Theological Field Education guidelines for theological reflection position the "theological" moment as distinct from the "clarification," "description," "evaluation," or other moments from the reflective process outlined above. Such models presume that clarification, description, or evaluation, for example, should or, even, could be done in an atheological way. In other words, they bring theological analysis in *after the fact*.

Theologians are increasingly recognizing, however, that as religious practitioners, none of us ever sees or experiences things in a neutral or atheological way; put simply, pastoral experiences are *always already theological*. Indeed, the ways in which we have pastoral – or any religious – experiences are already shaped by our prior conscious and unconscious, implicit and intuitive, theological (not to mention also political, social, etc.) commitments.

So what does this mean for the practice of theological reflection?
It means we need to acknowledge the messy dimensions of religious and pastoral experience! It means that we both recognize that we can never find definitive answers to our deeper theological questions *and* that we have to keep trying to articulate preliminary answers nonetheless. It means that we will most often be left somewhat unsatisfied by our theological activity, but that our dissatisfaction will stimulate our desire to pursue the goods of our own religious traditions more fully.

The following guidelines are intended to help with this messy process:
* Rather than *applying* theological concepts or sacred stories to the context, as if a one-to-one correlation can be forged between concept and context, try asking what theological concepts and commitments are already *embedded* within the context, and

which themes from sacred stories might *illumine* it. In other words, look for overlap between concept and context by asking:

- o What does my experience reveal about my own religious beliefs or commitments and the religious beliefs or commitments of those around me?
- o Where is there agreement and disagreement, consistency and inconsistency, between my and others' beliefs/commitments in this context?
- o How did our divergent and shared theological beliefs/commitments create or defuse conflict in this situation?
- To help uncover the theological commitments at play in the experience, try to avoid asking broad questions like, "Where is God here?" These questions tend to narrow our conversation by leading us to over-identify God with anything in the context that seemed to "go right"! Instead, try asking more specific questions like:
  - o What would God need to do in the context to bring about redemption, and how could I partner in that process?
  - o What resources from my religious tradition can best help me understand and respond to the particular dynamics of suffering in this context?
  - o How do the spiritual practices of my tradition shape my agency towards healing in this context? How do they keep me from having a healing impact? What needs to change?
  - o What would hope be in this context, and what dynamics of sin/evil/selfishness/delusion/etc. – understood in personal and/or structural terms – is working against that hope?
  - o What structural wounds obscure the presence of God's work/goodness/healing/etc… in this place?
- When asking how the experience connects to one's own religious practices, be sure to pay attention to the historical, cultural trajectories – both inside and outside religious communities – that give shape to those practices. Try asking questions like:
  - o Who does this religious practice advantage and disadvantage socially, economically, politically, etc.? And how can the practice be reimagined more justly?
  - o Which theological commitments in this place or this tradition have been wielded as weapons by and against whom in our history? What theological commitments can liberate in this context? What would such liberation look like? And, how can the damaging commitments be re-imagined so that they are no longer weapons? What do we keep and what do we let go?
  - o Why does this theological commitment hold power for me in particular? Should it? Why or why not? How can I hold it anew or find a way to let go?

Ministry Reflection Groups

Site Educators and students may wish to organize a Ministry Reflection Group to enhance and support the Contextual Education experience for the student, the site, and the members of the site's community. A Ministry Reflection Group is a group of three to five lay people who are open to engaging in reflection on ministry with an Emmanuel College Contextual Education student, and agree to meet every 4-6 weeks (2-3 times per semester) for approximately 1.5 hours.

The Ministry Reflection Group can help to orient the student to the site and surrounding community, to do theological reflection based on religious/faith experience, to develop and work on specific learning outcomes, and to help students see themselves as they are perceived in their public role. Ministry Reflection groups also participate in student evaluation by submitting a group evaluation report. They are most commonly used in churches, but could be adapted for any site placement location.

More information on organizing such a group can be found in the *Ministry Reflection Group Handbook*:

www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/academics/Contextual_Education/Handbooks_and_Forms.htm

***

Forms

An electronic copy of this *Handbook* and the following forms can be found on Emmanuel's website at:

www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/academics/Contextual_Education/Handbooks_and_Forms.htm

Time Sheet
Evaluation Report (Students)
Evaluation Report (Site Educators)
Evaluation of Student Outcomes (Site Educators)

ASSIGNMENTS

Fall Semester

1. Learning Covenant (Date TBD)

Each semester students – in consultation with their Site Educators – prepare a Learning Covenant for the year. The learning covenant is open to revision at any time, but must be revised and resubmitted in the second semester. The Learning Covenant consists of at least one outcome related to self, two to three site-related outcomes, and at least one peer group outcome, for a <u>total of four to five outcomes</u> (each complete with their action plan, evaluation criteria and resources). The 'self' outcome should help the student to reflect on their own personality, sense of vocation, or patterns of relating to others, etc., both in the site and in the peer group. The site-specific outcomes facilitate student learning around the practices of ministry. The peer group outcome should help the student to reflect on their participation within the interpersonal dynamics of the in-class group.

A Learning Covenant helps students frame goals both for how their Contextual Education experiences in particular, and their theological education in general will shape their future pastoral/ministry practices. It provides a framework for the student, Site Educator, and course Instructor regarding the learning areas in which the student is seeking critical feedback. A good Learning Covenant is both specific and flexible. It provides criteria for articulating successes and growing edges in ways that can deepen learning.

Developing a goal for a Learning Covenant involves (a) setting an *outcome*; (b) creating an *action plan* by which that outcome can be achieved; (c) articulating *evaluation criteria* by which the outcome will be deemed as successfully completed; and (d) establishing specific *resources* that will assist students in achieving the outcome.

A. How to Set an Outcome

An outcome names a concrete skill or disposition that you will embody at the end of your experience. It might seek to establish clarity about your pastoral identity, or your confidence in a leadership role. It might articulate the skills or comfort level you want to achieve within a certain set of ministerial practices. Learning outcomes are most helpful when they are concrete and specific, when they afford the possibility for observation of self and others, when they are intentional, time limited and invite feedback, when they address self and skills, and when they are realistic within the set timeframe.

To set an outcome, ask yourself:
1. What specific skill, ability or disposition do I want to learn, develop or come to embody through participation in the practices of this site?

Example: I want to develop confidence and ease in spontaneous conversations.

B. How to Create an Action Plan

An action plan outlines the specific methods, tasks and actions that you will need to perform in order to come to embody your desired outcome. They are best when they set parameters to attempt, experience and practice your outcomes.

To create an action plan, ask yourself:
1. What are some *specific* ways to work on this outcome?
2. What *specific* task(s) would best support my learning?
3. What *specific* actions do I need to initiate to make this happen?

Example: I will set aside at least 1 hour each week at the site's drop-in centre, and will try to have at least 3 spontaneous conversations in that hour.

C. Evaluation

Conscious, reflective engagement with one's ministerial practices in the midst of doing them is difficult. This task is greatly aided by establishing some preliminary (revisable) evaluative criteria to keep in view while the practice is being performed. Evaluative criteria are best when they are realistic, given the possibilities that the site offers, and when they can be observed in your actions by both you and others.

To establish evaluative criteria, ask yourself:
1. What does it look like to be successful/unsuccessful at this outcome?
2. What are the markers of this task done well? What markers can chart its improvement?
3. How will I know that I am learning, developing or coming to embody the outcome or disposition I have named?

Example: I will know that I have become more comfortable in spontaneous conversation when a) I feel eager to talk to people rather than afraid and b) when my conversation partners and/or my Site Educator articulate enjoyment at speaking with me.

D. Choose Resources

Figuring out in advance what resources we need to achieve our outcomes helps us to find and engage those resources more efficiently. Resources can include readings, people, courses, etc., that can help you achieve your outcome.

To articulate resources, ask yourself:
1. What resources will I need to do the tasks required to achieve my outcomes?
2. What resources can help me evaluate my learning process?
3. How can I best engage these resources to achieve my outcomes?

Example: I will experiment with using the guidelines from my pastoral care textbook for asking leading questions in conversations. I will need to memorize these guidelines so that I can remember them in conversation, but I will need to practice them as well so that they can become natural to me.

2. Incident Reports (2-3pages, single spaced)

Describe a recent incident **from your site placement** from the past few weeks that has significance for you. This does not mean that the experience needs to be atypical; rather, it's good to focus on something that communicates the more typical flavour of your site. An incident report can therefore be on something that you found stressful or joyful, something that left you questioning your vocation or affirmed in it, something that shook you or gratified you... Most of all it should communicate either a "high point" or "low point" of the past few weeks.

In the report, you must cover the following topics/questions, giving approximately equal space to each:
1. **Describe the event in ample detail and as factually as possible.** Give a sense of the location, time, people present, etc. Pay attention to any verbal and non-verbal communication that took place in the event and your responses to that communication. Provide, in brief, any relevant details required to contextualize the event within your overall site placement experience.
2. **Describe the emotional dynamics of the event**. How did you feel prior to, during and after it? What emotions did you perceive in others and how? For example, rather than just saying something like, "he seemed angry to me," note how/why he seemed angry: "his face turned slightly red and he increased the volume of his voice in a way that led me to perceive him as angry."
3. **Analyze and evaluate your role in the event.** Try to step back from your experience to analyze your actions constructively. If you see the event as a low point, why? What do you think was a problem with your response? What did you do well? What would you change if you could do it again? If you see the

event as a "high point," why? What did you do well? What if anything would you change? What new insights did you gain from the experience?

4. **Wider Socio-theological analysis/evaluation.** What social dynamics/forces were at play in the event – gender, race, sexuality, economics, class, ethnicity, etc…? What dynamics of privilege/disadvantage were prevalent for you and for those with whom you were interacting? How would you interpret these dynamics in light of your religious traditions and practice?

3. Verbatim

Whereas the incident report focused on a particularly significant *event* from the past few weeks, your verbatim should focus on a particularly significant *conversation* from the past few weeks. The purpose of a verbatim (literally, "word by word") report is to capture a snapshot of a ministry/pastoral interaction with your own subjective experience of that interaction minimized. Of course, we can never erase our subjective experiences from our reporting, but the nature of the verbatim – a word-for-word reporting – keeps its author from choosing which aspects of the conversation to highlight and which to leave out. This means that verbatims are best written up immediately after the experience occurs or, at the latest, within the same day. It is best to avoid writing them up days or even a day after the incident. Your memory will perform a subjective distortion on the event with each hour that passes after it.

The format for the verbatim is as follows:

Page 1 (focus your attention most on the "observations" section)
1. **Preparation for the Visit:** Provide a brief description of what you knew before visiting about the person, their culture, their faith, their situation (use initials to refer to interviewees to protect confidentiality).
2. **You and Your Role:** briefly describe how you felt in advance of the visit. What role or relationship did you already have with the visitee? How did you prepare yourself? What was your outcome or plan for this visit?
3. **When, Where, Why:** Briefly say when, where and why the visit took place.
4. **Observations:**
   a. **Observations of the Visitee** – briefly describe what you saw/observed about the person at the beginning, during and end of your exchange; note posture, mood, feelings expressed, feeling tone or affect, facial expressions, physical mannerisms…
   b. **Observations of yourself** – briefly describe what you were aware of at the beginning, during and end of your exchange; note posture, mood, feelings expressed, feeling, tone or affect, facial expressions, physical mannerisms, etc.

   c. **Length and Pattern of the Visit** – approximately how long did this visit last? What portion of the conversation have you recorded? How is it related to what is not recorded?

Pages 2-3 (focus your energy on this section):
   5. The Conversation *(single space the transcript)*: record, to the best of your memory, using the actual words spoken by you and the person that you visited, what you consider the most significant portion of the conversation; use a separate paragraph for each portion of the conversation; identify each speaker by initials; note any non-verbal behaviour in parentheses.

Page 4 (be sure to give this full attention, approximately a full page)
   6. Evaluation: analyze what took place; indicate insights gained, subsequent observations, critiques of your own responses, what you might do differently next time, what went well or could be built on in future. How was your interaction with the visitee congruent with their tradition and culture? What questions or follow up do you need to pursue, for yourself? For the visitee? Etc…?

Page 5 (Socio-theological analysis)
   7. What social dynamics/forces were at play in the event – gender, race, sexuality, economics, class, ethnicity, etc…? What dynamics of privilege/disadvantage were prevalent for yourself and those with whom you were interacting? How would you interpret these dynamics in light of your religious traditions and practice?

Winter Semester

In the winter semester, students write a 20-25 page paper integrating learning from across their theological curriculum in relation to a particular theological question arising from their site experience. We will explore each others particular questions together over the course of the semester, using them not only to focus our conversations about each student's site experiences, but also using them to expand our theological imaginations with regards to the particular religious traditions each student has studied and in critical dialogue across those traditions. Please note, because the focus of this work is curricular integration of your program requirements, if you are enrolled in a program that is not your own particular religious tradition, it is the program you are integrating, not your personal religious beliefs/practices.

1. Paper Proposal (Due Date TBD)

Students will submit a proposal for their final paper (approx. 1-2 pages), briefly naming: (1) the context they will be addressing and the theological issue that arises from it; (2) which core areas of the curriculum they plan to engage/integrate and a preliminary understanding of how they will do so; and (3) a hunch for the direction that their 'pastoral response' will go.

> *Your reading for "seminar leadership" is also due at the time of your proposal. Ideally, you will choose a reading that you have already studied in one of your core curriculum courses. The reading should be one that will be pivotal in the argument of your final paper. It should be no more than approx. 20-25 pages in length. Please email a pdf of the article/chapter to the instructor for posting on Blackboard. Be sure to mark the front page of your reading with its full bibliographic information.*

2. Seminar Leadership

Strictly speaking, this is not a presentation; it is the leadership of a discussion. Take about *5 minutes only* to frame the reading you have assigned to the group. Give the group any necessary background information, a quick summary of the reading's salient parts and argument, and provide them with guiding questions for conversation. Let them know what it is you are struggling with in the reading, and where you need help. Be sure to connect the reading with your site-related theological question; how does this help you understand your site situation better, or how does your site situation complicate/challenge/illuminate the reading? Then guide the discussion for the remainder of the time. Guiding discussion on a reading requires that you have read it multiple times yourself, thought through it carefully, mapped it out and understood the structure of its argument, thought about the implication of what the author has said, and have considered ways to respond to the different paths another reader might take with it. Be sure to guide discussion in a way that draws connections between the

reading and your site, but which also digs into the particularities of each. The more you put into preparing for this discussion, the more you are likely to get out of it for your own research purposes.

3. Final Integrative Theological Paper (20-25 pages, due date TBD)
The goal of the integrative paper is for the student to demonstrate the ability to synthetize knowledge, skills and critical thinking from diverse parts of their program in relation to their ministry/pastoral practice. Little new research should be undertaken. The paper should reflect the stated learning outcomes of the program as stated in the BD Handbook.

Please use the following parameters to structure your paper:

a. **Thick Description**: Up to a quarter of the paper should develop a "thick description," present a vignette or narrate a story of a pastoral issue out of your pastoral experience, but oriented towards the context for which you are preparing (e.g., congregation, hospital, prison, military, social service agency, etc.). Be sure to choose a particular event, and use the guidelines from the first semester assignments (incident reports and verbatims) to help you figure out how to narrate it. Avoid moving into analysis and evaluation of the event, however – this portion of the paper should stay at the level of description only.

b. **Theological Integration:** The middle half of the paper should develop and integrate at least two, preferably 3 or 4 of the following kinds of reflection through a thesis/argument that interprets the story in relation to: (i) cultural context/analysis; (ii) historical context/analysis; (iii) Scriptural context/analysis (with attention paid not only to Scriptural narrative, but hermeneutics too); (iv) one or more of the tradition's theological doctrines/concepts/tenets/laws/etc. as relevant to the student's program; (v) appropriate ethical theories. The task here is integrative. The paper should not address each of these interpretive modes in distinction from each other, but should craft a thesis at their intersection. This section should draw intentionally on materials studied in program areas related to (i) Scripture; (ii) Theology/Law/Ethics; (iii) History (typically understood as the first three areas of the theological curriculum).

c. **Pastoral Response.** Having engaged such deep "practical theological" reflection/construction, the final quarter of the paper should develop a pastoral response that (i) arises from the earlier intersectional analysis and/or (ii) demonstrates how the issue and the traditions fall short of and exceed each other in meaning. This section should draw intentionally on materials studied in the program area of Pastoral Theology. (i.e., typically understood as Area 4 of the curriculum).

***

POLICIES

Contextual Education is a pass/fail course, which means that a student's final grade will be either pass or fail, not a letter grade. Individual writing assignments are, however, graded with a letter grade in order to help students gauge their progress in the course, and to help calculate a student's final pass or fail grade. All assignments will also receive substantive written feedback to help students engage their own experiences more deeply and broadly, and to help them make connections between their coursework and their in site experiences.

Students in Contextual Education are expected to observe all academic regulations found in the *Emmanuel College Basic Degree Handbook* and the *Toronto School of Theology Basic Degree Handbook.*

Unless instructed otherwise, all assignments must be submitted by email attachment, ***sent from a University of Toronto email address.***

LATE POLICY: In general, particularly in the first semester, assignments are written to guide peer group conversation. Therefore, they must be submitted on time. In cases where the assignment is not intended for use during classroom conversations, the following late penalty applies: prior approval from the course instructor must be obtained at least 48 hours in advance of an assignment's due date, otherwise late papers will receive a 1/3 of a letter grade deduction per day from the grade received (i.e., an A paper will be reduced to an A-; a B+ to a B). Extensions will only be granted in emergency situations. Computer issues **will not** qualify as an "emergency."

ACCESSIBILITY: Students with need for accommodation due to disability (including physical, learning, and mental health disabilities) should develop an individual plan in partnership with the professionals at Accessibility Services at the University of Toronto. Please visit http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/ to find out more or to make an appointment with Accessibility Services.

PLAGIARISM. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student

plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the *TST Basic Degree Handbook* and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges.

Other academic offences*. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.*

COURSE OUTCOMES

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

	Learn how to articulate the theological questions that rise out of my pastoral practice…	…and how to answer those questions using the resources of my theological education…	…so that I learn how to use the goods of my theological education to face the challenges of my future pastoral work.
Religious Faith and Heritage	…that are engaged with the theological questions with which the historical and contemporary traditions of my program …	…engaged with the un/satisfactory ways our traditions have answered my questions, or questions like it, throughout history…	…so that, while I don't have all the answers, I can still engage my religion traditions for understanding my contemporary context…
Culture and Context	…and in dialogue with careful, contextual analysis of the pastoral sites out of which the question surfaces and the broader culture in which they are situated, to…	…in dialogue with the needs and hopes of the pastoral context in which I currently live and work, and the broader culture in which that context is situated…	…in ways that help bring the wisdom of those traditions to bear on a contemporary context that could benefit from their wisdom…
Spiritual and Vocational Formation	…cultivate theological imagination so that I desire, rather than fear, engagement with the challenges of being a religious practitioner in the contemporary world…	…so that my theological education serves to bolster, rather than damage, my faith…	…so that, having developed skills and instincts (rather than simply answers), I can face the joys and challenges of pastoral work in the 21st century…
Practices of Church Leadership	…so that I can help the communities I serve cultivate a similar desire.	…so that I can trust that those I serve will also benefit from questioning and seeking.	…and so that I have a sense of how to lead others in doing the same.

SCHEDULE 2019/2020

FALL SEMESTER

Week	PREPARATION/ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Sept. 9, 2019	Orientation to course (w/ SEs) Introductions to peer group	
Sept. 16, 2019	Check-ins Group norms Assignment sign ups	
Sept. 23, 2019	Check-ins Group norms (conclusion) Learning Covenant conversations Incident Report assignment discussion	Learning Covenants
Sept. 30, 2019	Check-ins Incident Reports	
Oct. 7, 2019	Check-ins, Incident Reports	
Oct. 14, 2019	Check-ins, Incident Reports	1st quarter time sheets due (total: 48 hours)
READING WEEK: students do not need to be in site.		
Oct. 28, 2019	Check-ins (with covenant focus), Incident Reports Verbatim assignment discussion	
Nov. 4, 2019	**NO CLASS**	
Nov. 11, 2019	Check-ins, Verbatim Assignments	
Nov. 18, 2019	Check-ins, Verbatim Assignments	
Nov. 25, 2019	Check-ins, Verbatim Assignments	
Dec. 2, 2019	Check-ins, Verbatim Assignments	
Dec. 9, 2019	Check-ins, Verbatim Assignments Prep for second semester (share preliminary integrative questions) Wrap up activity	Mid-year evaluations (submit **hard copies** signed by student and SE) 2nd quarter time sheets due (total: 48 hours)

NOTE: Students do not need to be on site for Winter Break

WINTER SEMESTER

Week	PREPARATION/ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Jan. 6, 2020	Re-orientation to new semester Group norms – re-evaluation Learning covenants – re-evaluation Finalize Integrative Questions Sign-ups	Resubmit Learning Covenants, as necessary
Jan. 13, 2020	Check-ins Discuss proposals—peer feedback	Submit Integrative paper proposals Submit course readings
Jan. 20, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
Jan. 27, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
Feb. 3, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
Feb. 10, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings 3rd quarter time sheets due (total: 48 hours)
READING WEEK: students do not need to be on site.		
Feb. 24, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
March 2, 2020	NO CLASS	Work on Integrative Papers!
March 9, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
March 23, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions	Student readings
March 30, 2020	Check-ins Student reading discussions Course wrap ups, evaluations	Student readings
April 6, 2020	NO CLASS	Integrative Paper due

By Friday April 10th – Due to main office:

- Final time sheet (total: 48 hours for min. 192 hours total to pass the course)
- Year-end evaluations – hard copy, signed by student and SE