

Master of Arts in Christian Outreach Practicum THY583 – Planting the Worshiping Community

The mission of Concordia University, St. Paul, a university of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, is to prepare students for thoughtful and informed living, for dedicated service to God and humanity, and for the enlightened care of God's creation, all within the context of the Christian Gospel.

The vision of Concordia University is to be an exemplary Christian university.

Instructor-various

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Catalog Course Description

An individually tailored experience arranged by the student to practice skills and theories related to church planting/beginning small groups. Students will be asked to plan and implement a church plant/small group ministry. A final paper will describe and evaluate the experience.

Please note:

This syllabus is designed to be used in conjunction with the **MACO Practicum Handbook**. Throughout the syllabus are references to the handbook that offers additional details about the sections, which are cross-referenced.

I. Purpose of the Field Practicum (see Handbook: page 1, #2)

The field practicum is a central learning experience in the Master of Arts in Christian Outreach (MACO) program. Students have the opportunity to apply knowledge gained through coursework in a Christian ministry setting under the direction of the MACO Practicum Professor and mentorship of an experienced church professional.

Christian outreach is more than applying knowledge. It requires the thoughtful application of values and skills in diverse situations involving people and organizations. Students are confronted in the field practicum, as in real life, with law and Gospel dilemmas, making professional choices ever more complex. Through the encouragement and guidance of the MACO Practicum Professor and the Field Supervisor, students will have an opportunity to “put together” what they’ve learned about values, knowledge, and skill.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Student

- i) Apply in a variety of outreach ministry contexts, the outreach knowledge, skills, and values found in curriculum content and informal studies.

- ii) Learn about and function responsibly within the congregation/mission agency and toward its members and staff.
 - iii) Interact in a competent and professional manner with both prospective members and target programs/systems.
 - iv) Develop increased self-awareness and an objective view of personal strengths and areas needing attention, as related to applied outreach ministry.
 - v) Utilize supervision and other learning opportunities in an effective manner.
 - viii) Support the three-way partnership between the student, Practicum Professor and Field Supervisor in order to provide an in-depth, effective, and comprehensive professional learning experience.
 - ix) Complete all practicum assignments by the due dates.
- b) Practicum Professor (See Handbook: page 2, #5)
- i) Make certain that all practicum sites and Field Supervisors meet the required criteria.
 - ii) For each practicum site, maintain a file, which contains a general description of the congregation, Field Supervisor credentials and experience, and an outline of agency expectations and learning assignments.
 - iii) Conduct the practicum seminar.
 - iv) Be available to students in person, by phone, via email, and/or via postal mail for ongoing consultation and advice concerning practicum selection and during the practicum experience.
 - v) Monitor implementation of the practicum objectives.
 - vi) Be available for consultation should problems arise during the student's practicum experience.
 - vii) If a serious problem arises, visit the practicum site for a consultation with the student and the Field Supervisor.
 - viii) Collect, read, and provide appropriate feedback for student practicum exercises and return them to students in a timely fashion.
 - ix) Based on the Field Supervisor's evaluation and an evaluation of the student's completed practicum project, assign the student's grade.
- c) Field Supervisor (See Handbook: page 3, #6)
- i) Provide the student with a thorough orientation to the congregation/mission agency.
 - ii) With the student, and in consultation with the MACO Practicum Professor if desired, define the learning activities which are consistent with the course description and mission and service goals of the congregation/mission agency.
 - iii) Be aware of the student's progress regarding assignments, and, when necessary, help the student develop a plan to complete them in a timely fashion.
 - iv) Provide a work area, furnishings, and supplies adequate for the student's role and responsibilities in relationship to the practicum project designed for the congregation/mission agency.
 - v) The choice, planning, or organizing of your practicum is not the responsibility of the Field Supervisor. Remember, your supervisor is only advisory.
 - vi) The success or failure of your practicum is not the responsibility of the Field Supervisor.
 - vii) The Field Supervisor is not the one who grades your practicum work and experience.

- viii) Encourage the student, congregation and community to cooperate in making the practicum a success.
- ix) Meet with the student for a minimum of one hour per week in private supervisory sessions.
- x) Evaluate the student and the project during and at the end of the practicum's completion and forward the evaluation to the MACO Practicum Professor.

III. Selection Criteria

- a) Field Supervisor Selection Criteria - each Field Supervisor should:
 - i) possess a professional degree in the church as a Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Christian Outreach, Director of Parish Music, Lutheran School Teacher, Deaconess, Missionary, or other church professional designation. However, if the Field Supervisor possesses the appropriate education and experience, an exception may be considered.
 - ii) have sufficient time, commitment, and support to serve as a supervisor.
 - iii) appreciate what you are trying to do.
 - iv) have at least two years of experience in outreach work, or a closely allied helping profession, and possess a thorough knowledge of the congregation's or mission's purpose, programs, policies, and procedures, as well as an informed understanding of community outreach services.
 - v) possess requisite skills for implementing a mentoring relationship and consultation reflecting the three-way concerns of the practicum site, Field Supervisor, and the student.
- b) Site Selection Criteria – each congregation, mission, etc. should:
 - i) enable a student experience that is relevant to the organization and practical to the student's learning.
 - ii) provide a climate in which student mentoring is expected and encouraged.
 - iii) commit necessary physical, spiritual and mental resources to the student learning experience, e.g. prayer, learning opportunities, cooperation, adequate physical space, desk, supplies, etc.

IV. Instructional Goals and Objectives

- 1) **BEING (Spiritual Formation) Objectives:** The student will:
 - a) exhibit characteristics of a spiritual missionary, whose way of life and ministry centers in the Lord Jesus Christ found in Scripture;
 - b) demonstrate characteristics of a missionary who recognizes the Mission of God (*missio Dei*) as the centerpiece from which the lives of people are changed through God's Means of Grace;
 - c) be a missionary who is continuous in Bible study;
 - d) recognize that a missionary develops the essentials of spiritual authority based in Jesus Christ for outreach and mission;
 - e) be a missionary who prays;
 - f) recognize Scripture as the revelation from God whose main priority is seeking and finding the lost.
 - g) realize that engaging in the *missio Dei* is a priority function of the Christian's life.

- 2) **KNOWING (Cognitive Formation) Objectives:** The student will:
 - a) demonstrate in writing an understanding and knowledge of small group methods and/or church planting;
 - b) articulate how to communicate the Gospel through small group methods and/or church planting;
 - c) be able to distinguish cues for open and effective communication of the Gospel.
- 3) **ATTITUDE (Affective Formation) Objectives:** The student will:
 - a) express an appreciation for those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior;
 - b) evaluate personal desires related to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
 - c) be confident and able to fully participate in small group and/or church planting opportunities as both learner and teacher;
 - d) develop confidence and acceptance that mission work can be enhanced by the removal of barriers and replaced by bridges for effective evangelistic communication.
- 4) **DOING (Conative Formation) Objectives:** The student will:
 - a) participate in a local outreach ministry;
 - b) develop and participate in small group outreach methodology and/or church planting activities;
 - c) interact with past, present, and future mission leaders through reading and reporting on their written works;
 - d) analyze evangelistic opportunities to determine appropriate small group and/or church planting responses;
 - e) apply theory, evaluate, and report results from actual small group and /or church planting efforts and projects.

V. Instructional Philosophy

As suggested in the course description and objectives above, the study of small groups and church planting within a particular context is more than simply an academic exercise. Learning the essentials for planting the church or beginning small groups requires the collective wisdom of past, present, and future outreach leaders, both in written and spoken form. This breadth of knowledge and application requires not only cognitive information, but also affective changes and conative skills. These dynamics in the learning process develop through the appreciation of knowledge and experiences gained and applied in the field. All participants enter the learning environment as learners, each contributing to the learning process through their appropriate roles. Everyone treats them with respect. Since you have chosen a program that develops people for further service in the church, it is assumed that you have appropriated an adult education posture, eager to learn in order that you become a well-equipped professional in the field.

VI. Student Goals and Objectives

This practicum is grounded in the principles and practices of adult learning. The instructional model is to be collaborative, making use of student experiences to enrich and enliven the learning. Knowledge will be constructed in the dialog between experience, reflection, and theory. Part of the class process is a deliberate effort to incorporate student goals and objectives into the practicum. Your goals and objectives include:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

4)

Project/Thesis Connection: How will this course connect with your MACO project/thesis? You should begin to plan how this particular course might support the final project/thesis. Though you may still not know exactly what it will be, you should begin to think how this course might support it.

VII. Course Outline

Since this course is a self-directed practicum, there is no course outline prepared by the instructor. However, students will develop a practicum plan including: goal, objectives, strategies and a detailed timeline for implementing their project for this course.

VIII. Planning for the Practicum: (See Handbook: Page 4-5 for examples)

- a) Choose a project within the guidelines of the chosen practicum.
- b) Develop your **practicum plan** in terms of:
 - 1) Goal
 - 2) Objectives
 - 3) Strategies
 - 4) Timeline
- c) Put together a practical **practicum plan** with a chosen goal that lays the foundation for the entire practicum plan. Thus, the goal is the most basic. The chosen objectives will be a natural blossoming of the goal in the direction of strategic reality. The strategies will grow directly out of the objectives and clearly show the way to the expected concrete outcomes of the practicum plan. The timeline will be a well thought through and specific month-by-month list in chronological order of the concrete outcomes that are expected of, in and through the practicum project. **In that timeline, you should also include the due dates of all of the assignments for the practicum.** Merging these two timelines will be to your benefit. It will keep requirements concise and will eliminate the confusion of trying to follow two separate timelines.
- d) Thus, the **practicum plan** must include:
 - A full description of the goal and objectives of the chosen practicum project.
 - A full description of the strategies to be used in accomplishing the goal and objectives of the practicum project.
 - A well thought through, clear and specific month-by-month timeline, chronologically ordered, of when and in what order these strategies will be carried out.

Assignments and Basis for Student Grading

Choosing a Practicum, Supervisor and Site

Each student will complete the choice of a **Practicum, Field Supervisor and Site**. The site choice will be accompanied by a **general site description** document which demonstrates that the site meets the site criteria. Send those choices in to the Practicum Professor for approval by September 15 of the year in which the practicum is being started.

Planning for the Practicum

The choice of a practicum, the preparation of a practicum plan, the choice of a field supervisor/site and the site description should be completed by September 1 in the year in which the practicum is being started.

Each student will submit the **Practicum Plan** according to the specification on page 5 of this syllabus and with the guidance and assistance of the **Practicum Handbook**. The fully developed **Practicum Plan** must be sent for approval to the Practicum Professor by **September 1** so that the practicum professor can respond with his feedback by September 15 of the year in which the practicum is being started.

Consultation and Final Practicum Approval

On the basis of any revisions suggested by the Practicum Professor, each student will complete the suggested revisions in their choice of **Practicum, Field Supervisor/Site**, and in their write up of the **Site Description** and **Practicum Plan**. These revisions must be submitted to the Practicum Professor in time to obtain final approval by October 1 of the year in which the practicum is being started.

Monthly Reports/Reflection

Each student will complete monthly report/reflection of 1-2 pages to be emailed to the practicum professor. A total of 8 reports, each potentially worth 25 points, will be completed. The first is due October 1; the final report is due May 1. Reports received by the practicum professor on time have the possibility of receiving 25 points.

Each report should share progress regarding the final project for this practicum. The report might include frustrations, challenges, exciting developments, joys, conversations with your Field supervisor, as well as how problems and roadblocks were overcome. Items 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 should normally be written about each month. Feel free to highlight or downplay other categories as they are or are not relevant to the overall practicum picture in a given month. As you prepare your eight reflection papers, the following questions might guide your thinking:

- 1) **Getting Started:** What has happened in your practicum this month? What have you learned about yourself in the process? How will this experience inform experiences that you will have in the future?
- 2) **Organizational Timeline:** How do the outcomes of this month's practicum fit or not fit with your projected goal, objectives, strategies and timeline? What new things are coming to light in terms of meaningful strategies and additional or reordered timeline items as the practicum unfolded? How should you handle these new understandings? What adjustments should you make in your practicum activities and organizational timeline?

A practical way to report on the organizational timeline is to cut and past the monthly section from your approved timeline into your monthly report/reflection and then comment on what has been accomplished and what yet needs to be done. This may even lead to a suggested adjusting of the timeline.

- 3) **Theory vs. Real:** How is the outreach work of your practicum different from what the books say about doing outreach work? Reflect a bit on what this means and how it affects what is to be done?

- 4) **Environmental Analysis:** Describe the physical space at your practicum site. Does it support the purposes of the ministry? What impression does the ministry's layout give to people? What, if any, changes would you recommend? How does the working space impact the lives/work of the workers? What, if any, changes would you recommend?
- 5) **Comparison:** Think about other outreach ministry tasks that you have developed, led or been a part of in the past. What was trouble-free or problematic for you in them? Are you experiencing the same situations again? What can you do to break the problematic cycles and to increase the trouble-free cycles?
- 6) **Supervision:** What is going well in your relationship with your supervisor? What would you like it to be different? How are issues of power, authority, and control handled in your relationship with your field supervisor, with congregational leadership? What kind of support are you receiving? What steps might you take to improve the supervisory experience?
- 7) **Highs and Lows:** Describe the high point and low point of your field experience this month. How is conscious knowledge of these highs and lows useful to you? What might you do with this information (e.g. seek out support from peer or supervisor, ask for changes, plan to do more of what went well)?
- 8) **Failure:** What have you blown in your practicum? How did you handle this? What did you learn from it? How did you respond to failure in the people you are leading? What strategies can you use to keep working with people when some of them make choices that damage what you are doing together?
- 9) **Success:** What have you done that went well? How did you handle this? What did you learn from it? How did you respond to success/strength in the people you are leading? What strategies can you use to bring out the best in the people who are part of your practicum?
- 10) **Policy:** Describe a congregational/ mission policy that you would like to strengthen or change? What are the goals of that policy? What are the actual consequences of the policy? How would you like to see the policy strengthened or changed? What steps can you take to strengthen or change the policy?
- 11) **Use of Self:** What relevant life experiences did you bring to your practicum this month? In what way are these experiences helpful, in what way unhelpful? How do you keep the relationship with the people you lead helpful without being fake or artificial?
- 12) **Closing:** As you reflect on this month's report, what is the most important thing that you have experienced? What is the most important thing that you have learned? What is the most important thing that you have done? How will these things make a difference in your outreach ministry in the future?

Field Supervisor's Report

The Field Supervisor's report is due at the end of the practicum (May 1). It is a 1-2 page letter addressed to the Practicum Professor which states that the practicum has been completed and includes the Field Supervisor's impressions, thoughts, and evaluation about the impact that the practicum has had upon the student and the people who cooperated in making the practicum happen or/and were affected by the ministry of the practicum.

Book Report

You will be required to read two books of your choice and write book reports. The books are to be significant contributions in the area of small group ministries and/or church planting. You may choose them from your own library, research, suggested by other outreach leaders, or in consultation with your Practicum Professor or Field Supervisor. Each report should be between 3-5 pages in length. The first report is due November 15, the second is due February 15. **Please follow the format below for full credit.** The reports constitute 50 points of the total points for the course (25pts for each report).

Book Report Format

Title and Publication Information:

Pages Read:

Your Name:

Professor:

Date:

Statement of the Major Thesis/Goal (a quotation with pg.#):

An annotated List of the Major Topics Covered in the book: (**This is the book report section**)

Concerns You Have about the Book:

Strengths You Found in the Book:

Relevance for Outreach Today:

How this Book Relates to Your Practicum:

Write Out Three or Four Personal Meaningful Quotations (include page #) and Why They Are Meaningful for You:

Final Practicum Project Paper (See Handbook page 7, # 11)

- a. The final project report is an ideal way of pulling your practicum project together into an integrated unity. Start your final project report early by keeping a diary and filing important pieces that you may want to include in your final project paper. This paper is to anticipate your capstone in that it should be done according the scholarly and academic standards set by the Modern Language Association (MLA) (Simon and Schuster, Handbook for Writers, pg. 561-613).
- b. Your final 15-25 page paper will be descriptive but it must also evaluate what has been done in terms of what was proposed in your practicum plan. It should not simply be a journal/diary of the project's implementation and outcome. It should critique the outcomes suggested in the original organizational plan, both positively and negatively. It should reflect upon what these outcomes mean for the ministry achieved and also for your own personal future ministry. Finally it should include a comprehensive assessment of the project, together with ideas for appropriate follow through, continuation or discontinuation, and suggestions for other initiatives in ministry that might naturally proceed from what has been done.
- c. Your final paper should include a title page, abstract, clear outline of topics to be covered, table of contents, scholarly text (not less than 10, nor more than 20 pages), in-context notes, footnotes or end notes, and a references cited section with any helpful appendices. Charts, graphs, pictorial illustrations, etc., may be included where helpful but not as a substitute for substantive scholarly text material.

- d. The final practicum project paper will be graded according to standard academic practices and requirements.

Practicum Assignment Check Chart

- Please note that these assignments and due dates should be included in your overall practicum planning timeline which is your overall working timeline.

Assignment	DATE DUE	Date Completed
Choose a practicum	September 1	
Prepare a practicum plan	September 1	
Choose a Field Supervisor and ministry site	September 1	
Complete site description	September 1	
Submit practicum choice, practicum plan and supervisor/site form for approval	September 15	
Final practicum plan approval	October 1	
Reflection paper #1	October 1	
Reflection paper #2	November 1	
Book Report #1	November 15	
Reflection paper #3	December 1	
Reflection paper #4	January 1	
Reflection paper #5	February 1	
Book Report #2	February 15	
Reflection paper #6	March 1	
Reflection paper #7	April 1	
Reflection paper #8	May 1	
Field Supervisor evaluation	May 1	
Final practicum project paper	May 15	

Grading Policy

The assigning of the final grade for the practicum will be the responsibility of the MACO Practicum Professor. It will be based on the following criteria:

- 1) Practicum plan **a)** goal **b)** objectives **c)** strategies **d)** timeline = 75 points
- 2) Eight monthly reports at 25 points for each report = 200 points
- 3) Two book reports at 25 points for each book = 50 points
- 4) Field Supervisor’s evaluation = 50 points
- 5) Final practicum project paper = 125 points

TOTAL POINTS = 500 points

The following scale is used to assign grades:

A = 90-100% C = 70-79% F = below 60%

B = 80-89% D = 60-69%

In-Progress Policy

Students who are unable to finish all of the required coursework for a course, may request an in-progress (I) for the practicum. After discussion with the instructor, you must fill out a REQUEST FOR IN PROGRESS GRADE form before the last day of the course. A copy of this form can be

downloaded from CSP's homepage (if near campus, students may get the form from the registrar). You should negotiate with your instructor the completion date for your coursework. Include this date on your REQUEST FOR IN PROGRESS GRADE form. **This form is now considered a contract between yourself, the instructor and Concordia University for the completion of your work.** Students who are unable to complete the work by the contracted date, are responsible to contact the instructor and resubmit the request for an extension. The maximum extension for an in-progress grade is six months from the last day of class. If the agreed upon date expires, the registrar will automatically assign the student an "F". Except for unusual circumstances, all successful requests and completions of in-progress grades will receive a one-grade markdown for the final grade.

Required Texts

Since each student determines which textbooks are most important for their particular practicum project and context of ministry, there are no required texts.

Keywords

Use the following words to search for information on internet: *Small group ministry, evangelism through small groups, church planting, contemporary worship, church growth*

Primary Sources of Information in the Field

Journals: *Strategies for Leaders, NetResults, Leadership, Missiology, and Mission Frontiers.*

Webpages: *Bill Easum, George Barna, Rev. Ed Krueger (Mission Exec – California-Nevada-Hawaii – LCMS), Dr. Paul Mueller (Director of OHSCO), World Mission – LCMS, Center for US Missions, US Center for World Mission.*

Other resource people: *Dr. Robert Scudieri – Executive for North American Missions – LCMS, Dr. Eugene Bunkowske – Fiechtner Chair Professor of Christian Outreach-MACO Director, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN., Mission/Evangelism Executives in each district of the LCMS, Dr. Kenneth Behnken, Director of Center for US Missions, Irvine, CA., Mission/Evangelism Executives in each district of the LCMS*