

# January Interim 2026 – Opportunities as of 12 November 2025

Wartburg Theological Seminary

This particular document is still a work in progress, to be updated as new information becomes known. Please contact the faculty leader/advisor listed for each J-Term opportunity for more information about that particular J-Term course, including questions of tentative dates and anticipated costs.

See the summary list below (Part B, starting on Page 2) for courses planned for this coming January (or arranged to have travel or be taught in May or August, but still registered for in January). Please follow all e-mailed instructions from the WTS Registrar on submitting the needed preference form to express a request for your interested J-Term course(s). January courses can normally be taken by all Masters students (both degree students and Discovery non-degree students), as well in the case of some travel courses sometimes including spouses or guests of students or the seminary.

For more detailed information on courses, as it becomes available, see Part C of this document.

## PART A – J-TERM REQUIREMENT

**The January Interim Requirement:** All WTS degree students must complete one or more January Interim (aka “J-Term”) courses, one for each year of primary coursework as defined for their program. Master of Divinity degree students currently must complete three (3) J-Term courses. Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry degree students currently must complete two (2) J-Term courses. Students in the current one-year Master of Arts degree program (Fall 2019 and following) need to complete one (1) J-Term course.

**The Cross-Cultural “January” Requirement:** For students in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Diaconal Ministry degree programs, as well as students in the older two-year Master of Arts degree program (but not students in the new one-year degree program), one of your J-Terms currently must be reserved for completing the Cross-Cultural requirement. Normally the means of fulfilling the cross-cultural requirement is by completing a designated course that is designed as a group-based course that involves immersion activities (and often travel of some form). Most of these eligible cross-cultural courses are January courses. Independent studies are normally not allowed for meeting the cross-cultural requirement except in situations approved ahead of time by the Academic Dean upon petition.

**J-Term Course Grading:** All J-Term courses are graded with Credit/No-Credit grading only.

**Limits to January Registration – One “J-Term” Course Per Year.** Due to financial aid restrictions (by the U.S. Department of Education and their Title IV program), only one course per year can be registered for in each January Interim. This includes courses where travel occurs outside of January (such as in August or May) if they are considered meeting the January course requirement and/or the cross-cultural requirement. This restriction includes independent studies. January courses have their own tuition fee.

## PART B – COURSE OFFERINGS

### I. CROSS CULTURAL COURSES

The following courses all meet the MDiv/MADM (and older MA degree) cross-cultural degree requirement when completed as a cohort, including pre- and post-January meetings. The faculty person named is the local contact for the course, and in most cases the person you will work with in completing the pre- and post-trip requirements for the cross-cultural requirement, as well as sign off on the final grade. Please see that person for more information about the specific trip or course. All cross-cultural courses are usually numbered MN 398W unless noted otherwise.

These cross-cultural courses will have some number of cross-cultural travel subsidies available for that course as provided through Wartburg's Financial Aid Office, which can be used by students completing their first cross-cultural experience as required for their degree program to offset some of their travel expenses. (See Barb Roling, Financial Aid Office, for details on how these cross-cultural travel subsidies work and your eligibility.) The number of these travel subsidies is currently left unspecified, to allow for some flexibility in reassigning monies to a different trip if one is over- or under-subscribed as compared to another.

**FOR ALL TRAVEL COURSES, PLEASE CONTACT DIRECTLY THE LEAD INSTRUCTOR LISTED FOR THE LATEST DETAILS ON SPACE AVAILABILITY.**

#### **2026 International Cross-Cultural Travel Trips (travel and course in January):**

- **Germany** (MN 398W-L1) - led by Prof. Martin Lohrmann, [mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:mlohrmann@wartburgseminary.edu) *See further details in Part C below.*  
**I BELIEVE THE GROUP TRAVELING IS ALL SET FOR THIS TRIP.**
- **Egypt** (MN398W-L2) – led by Prof. Troy Troftgruben, [ttroftgruben@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:ttroftgruben@wartburgseminary.edu) *See further details in Part C below.*  
**I BELIEVE THE GROUP TRAVELING IS ALL SET FOR THIS TRIP.**
- **Indonesia** (MN 398W-L3) – Led by Prof. Man Hei Yip, [myip@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:myip@wartburgseminary.edu) *See further details in Part C below.*

#### **2026 Domestic Cross-Cultural Courses (Travel and Course in January):**

- **Civil Rights Pilgrimage** (MN 398W-L5) – Led by Prof. Craig Nesson in partnership with United Lutheran Seminary. Limited to 8 WTS students, with the rest being ULS students. [cnesson@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:cnesson@wartburgseminary.edu) *See further details in Part C below.*  
**I BELIEVE THE GROUP TRAVELING IS ALL SET FOR THIS TRIP.**

#### **2026 International Cross-Cultural Travel Trips (travel and course in May 2026, but still registered for in January as your “January” course for the year):**

- **Islands in the Atlantic** (MN 398W-L4) - led by Prof. Samuel Giere, [sgiere@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:sgiere@wartburgseminary.edu) , and Prof. Samantha Gilmore,

sgilmore@wartburgseminary.edu See further details in Part C below.  
**I BELIEVE THE GROUP TRAVELING IS ALL SET FOR THIS TRIP.**

## II. Other January-Held Courses that can meet other degree (or concentration) requirements:

- **MN 397W-L1 J-term Rural Immersion:** North Dakota, Western Iowa, and Shalom Hill Farm  
**Instructor:** Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen  
**Probable Dates:** To Be Determined.  
**Fulfills:** Open to all students; will fulfill the MDiv Rural Requirement  
**Course Description** Students, together with clergy and lay persons from small town and rural congregations, study issues affecting America's small town and rural (STaR) communities in a highly experiential learning environment. Clergy and lay persons from STaR congregations and communities are engaged as part of the course. Contexts include southwestern Minnesota, western Iowa, eastern South Dakota and North Dakota. The first week of the experience will be centered at Shalom Hill Farm [www.shalomhillfarm.org](http://www.shalomhillfarm.org). Implications for ministry and leadership in these contexts are explored.
- **MN 103W-SD South Dakota Pastoral Practicum.** Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen is the point of contact, but not the instructor, as this will be locally led by the South Dakota Synod office in conjunction with congregations in their state. Open to all students; will fulfill the MDiv Rural Ministry requirement. Details are still being worked out. Students will be placed in an active, thriving congregation, where they will learn not only about the ministry of the congregation, but the specific context that shapes its character. Students will be matched with a seasoned pastor or deacon, who can serve as a mentor. This person will not only mentor the student, but also make sure that the expectations for both congregation and student are realistic, and give confidence and structure for the student.

## III. ELECTIVE J-TERM COURSES

### A. Elective Courses Held during January

**Watch for more courses to be announced throughout the Fall Semester in 2025.**

- **MN 396W-L1 Contemporary Worship in Lutheran Context** Taught by the Rev. Dr. Clayton Faulkner, WTS Dean of the Chapel, January 6-23, with both classroom/synchronous Zoom and asynchronous course pathway options. *Further details will be added to Part C below as they become known.* **THIS COURSE APPEARS TO POSSIBLY BE FULL – no guarantee that you can get in, but you can still try adding your name to the “wait list” just in case.**
- ~~**MN 396W-L2 Fund-Raising in the Church.**~~ Taught by the Rev. Rahel Mwitula-Williams. ~~ASYNCHRONOUS. Specific dates still being worked out. Further details will be added to Part C below as they become known.~~ **THIS COURSE HAS BEEN CANCELLED – SORRY! We expect a course on the same topic to be taught**

*possibly in the upcoming Spring or Fall Semester (as a 1-credit elective) or offered again in January 2027.*

- **MN 103W Pastoral-Diaconal Practicum** (arranged between you and a pastor/church, with a faculty member's oversight). A specialized independent study whereby the student focuses on ministry in a church setting (e.g., "shadowing" a pastor, or completing a specialized ministry project, etc.) All pastoral practicums and independent studies must be approved by the Academic Dean. Students will complete an independent study form as part of the registration process in order to outline the goals of their practicum. *See the section below on independent studies for more information on the amount of work that needs to be arranged for.*

**B. Elective Courses that Actually Meet in May-June (Summer 2026), after January, and can be registered for as your one "J-Term" option for the 2025-2026 Academic Year**

- NONE SCHEDULED AT THIS TIME

**IV. Known J-Term Opportunities that are offered by/through another ELCA seminary:**

Each year there are courses shared between the ELCA seminaries. Oftentimes such courses are shared through a long-standing cross-registration agreement between these seminaries whereby the student normally pays their home seminary the expected J-Term tuition fee, and then the student only pays the other host seminary any additional expenses needed for their local onsite participation. **January courses offered by the other ELCA seminary are typically 3 credits when transferred back to WTS, unless noted otherwise.**

The following course will be offered in January by Luther Seminary, in conjunction with the ELCA's Deaconess Community:

- **HC4337 DIACONAL MINISTRY: History, Formation, and Spirituality Seminary Intensive** January 4-10, 2026, as held **in person only** at the Carmelite Spiritual Center, Darien, Illinois. Brought to you by the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and offered through Luther Seminary. More details at: <https://deaconesscommunity.org/2025-j-term/>). There is usually a scholarship offered from the ELCA to cover part of your expenses. Registration usually involves your first telling the Registrar of your interest (through the J-Term Preference Form), after which a cross-registration form is created and mailed to Luther Seminary. They in turn have you then apply for admissions as a non-degree student with Luther Seminary for January, at which time after you are admitted that you then get your own LutherSem email address for access to their web portal site for actual registration when their January/Winter Term registration opens up. *See further details, see the website above, and in Part C below.*

The following course will be offered in January by LSTC (Chicago) in partnership with WTS Professor Jan Schnell as a co-instructor:

- **ML/RHS 516 Trauma-Informed Ministry: biblical, pastoral, and liturgical perspectives**

Instructors: Jan Schnell from WTS, plus Karri Aldredge and Brooke Peterson from LSTC.

January 6-16, 2026 (9:30 am-2:30pm CT)

**Taught by Synchronous Zoom only** for all participants (with specific hour-by-hour scheduled to be determined).

Trauma and violence impact our individual and collective lived realities. Faith leaders and communities have an important role in responding to trauma. This course equips the learning community with resources to develop trauma-informed ministry practices. The course employs a cross-disciplinary approach, examining theological, practical, and biblical engagements with trauma. Similarly, it engages diverse approaches to trauma theory such as psychological, feminist, postcolonial, literary, and queer. Learning community members will work to develop trauma-informed practices and interpretational methodologies rooted in their communities of accountability. Through this work, the learning community explores how faith communities justify and perpetuate contemporary experiences of trauma and violence, as well as how faith communities can address, resist, and provide spaces for healing and hope.

The following courses will be offered in January by United Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg campus):

- **11/12/2025 12:30 pm UPDATE -- PRAX 444 IS NOW FULL – NO MORE REGISTRATION POSSIBLE WITH ULS!! PRAX 444 IG When Faith Hurts: Recognizing and Responding to the Spiritual Impact of Abuse in the Christian Environment**– Instructor Nancy Gable.  
January 5-9, 2026 (8:30am-3:30pm ET). **Synchronous-Zoom Registration available for WTS Students** (Gettysburg campus if attending on campus)  
The purpose of this course is to examine the impact of abuse (broadly defined as cruel and violent treatment of a person) in the lives of the children of God: child abuse; elder abuse; abuse of persons with developmental needs; sexual abuse; physical abuse; emotional abuse and spiritual abuse. The impact of such abuse follows a child of God throughout life and needs to be examined through the lenses of faith formation, theology, the Bible, law, and behavioral science (education, psychology, counseling/pastoral care and cognitive science). The public record documents that religious leaders might well be the abuser – or those in religious leadership are the secondary abuser because of a lack of understanding of the legal systems in place to respond to accusations. All too often faith community leaders offer inappropriate and careless responses to those victims and families, as well as to survivors of earlier abuse .
- **BNT 353 Experiencing and Performing the Gospels** – Instructor Vitalis Hoffman.  
January 12-16 (9:00am-4:30pm ET), **Physical presence or zoom option (student choice)** (Gettysburg campus if attending on campus)  
This class provides a survey and advanced study of the Gospels and their proclamation of the “good news of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.” Special attention will be paid to the Gospel of Mark and to translation of the Greek for effective oral presentation. Employing a variety of interpretive approaches and attending to its narrative features, this course will be attuned to how this Gospel is experienced by a variety of readers / hearers in various social locations, in order that students in the

class may both appreciate the power of the gospel stories and themselves become more effective proclaimers of the good news in general. Important outcomes will be the ‘performance’ of the gospel and consideration of how we can use the telling of biblical stories in various ministry contexts.

- **PCH 130 Preaching the Gospels** – Instructor: Wiseman.  
January 5-9 (9:00am-4:30pm ET), **In-Person Only– Physical Presence Required** (Philadelphia campus).  
This course is an introduction to the theology, methods, and practice of the oral tradition of proclamation. This course provides a general introduction to the task of preaching. Students will distinguish and analyze: 1) the place of preaching in the context of the worshipping assembly; 2) the theological work of preaching as part of the practice of Christian ministry; and 3) the techniques and methodologies that various preachers use in the preparation and delivery of sermons.
- **PTH 110 Pastoral Theology: Formation and Praxis** – Instructor: Swain.  
January 12-16 (9:00am-4:30pm ET), **In-Person Only– Physical Presence Required** (Gettysburg campus)  
An introduction to the fundamentals of pastoral theology and practice: pastoral theology, formation, and a model of pastoral care. Students will develop a theological framework for what it is to be a pastoral caregiver (whether lay or ordained), a model to understand their own pastoral formation, and an intercultural model of pastoral care, that builds theological reflexivity and attends to systems of oppression and privilege. Attention will be given to pastoral issues, family systems, grief and suicide, marginalization, abuse, addiction, burnout, and the spiritual importance of self-care and boundaries. Students will work with an online platform and in small learning groups to practice pastoral conversations, developing, extending, and assessing their listening skills.
- **CH 207 Religions, Violence & Peacebuilding** – Instructor: Pahl.  
January 20-24 (9:00am-4:00pm ET), **In-Person Only– Physical Presence Required** (Gettysburg campus)  
This course provides students with tools to understand, prevent, and mitigate the ways religions produce or reinforce patterns of systemic violence, and will offer students resources to strengthen practices that promote peacebuilding in congregations, agencies, and communities. The primary approach in the course will be historical, but practical discussions with religious leaders and visits to agencies committed to religious peacebuilding will be components of the course as well
- **HT 307 Dying for God: Martyrdom in the Early Church and its Legacy** – Instructor: Sebastian. January 20-23 (9:00am-4:00pm ET), **Physical presence or zoom option (student choice)** (Philadelphia campus if attending on campus)  
Why were some Christians in the early church persecuted and killed? Why were some Christians willing to die for God? How did the remembrance of martyrdom and the transmission of the stories of the martyrs shape the Christian imagination? This course will look at narratives regarding anger and rage that Christians had to face as recorded in the new testament and early Christian literature; analyze and discuss various “acts” of Christian martyrs; and explore the legacy of martyrdom and

memory in relation to events that occur in various parts of the world today and in the recent past, where Christians are killed for being witnesses and testifying to their faith

- **PTH 405 IP Inclusion of the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Community in Congregational Life** – Instructors: Smallwood and Schock. January 12-16 (9:00am- 4:30pm ET), **In-Person Only– Physical Presence Required** (Philadelphia Campus)

One of the most overlooked and underserved populations within congregations is the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled (IDD) community. Recognizing the unique needs and gifts of this group is essential for creating truly inclusive faith communities. This class employs a multifaceted approach to understanding and supporting the IDD community. Students will engage with cinematography that brings stories and experiences to life, participate in direct in person interactions with members of the IDD community and their guardians, and hold conversations with subject matter experts. Additionally, field trips and mission moments are incorporated to provide practical exposure, while compelling readings help deepen knowledge and empathy. The primary goal is to discover concrete and enduring strategies for opening congregations to greater inclusion. The curriculum covers the history of the IDD world to provide necessary context, and explores critical areas including ethics, advocacy, worship, grief, behavioral supports, education, and pastoral care. A brief examination of cross-cultural differences in IDD care, particularly with a community in Tanzania, will also be included to broaden perspectives and understanding. Free elective. [Prerequisite: PTH 110].

**MORE ELCA CROSS-SEMINARY OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ADDED AS THEY BECOME KNOWN TO THE WTS REGISTRAR'S OFFICE.**

## **V. Other known January opportunities that are not part of the ELCA cross-registration program**

**J-Term HSP Offering.** The following program has been announced on the HSP webpage, <https://hispanicscholarsprogram.org/program/j-term/>

**Title: Citizenship Otherwise: Belonging and the Borders of the Ethical**

**Instructor: Alexandra Rosado-Román, Ph.D.**

What does it mean to belong when the borders of the nation-state no longer define us? This discussion-driven course challenges conventional ideas of citizenship through the intersecting lenses of ethics and theology, grounded in decolonial perspectives from the Americas. We will explore how empire, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism have defined the very concept of “the citizen,” and investigate forms of belonging, resistance, and solidarity that challenge and unsettle those systems. We will draw on creative, activist, and theoretical perspectives to envision more just forms of community and political membership. The course culminates in each student crafting and sharing their vision of “citizenship otherwise” in a final reflective project.

**Program Dates and Location**

- Dates: January 5 – 16, 2026

- Location: This program is held online

**Program Eligibility**

- Masters or Doctoral Student at an Accredited Institution
- Preference given to Students from HSP Sponsoring Schools

**Program Fee**

- \$375 Tuition for Masters-Level students from HSP Sponsoring Schools

**If interested, apply using this web link:**

<https://hispanicscholarsprogram.org/programs/education/application-j-term/>

**IF YOU APPLY FOR THIS COURSE, PLEASE ALSO TELL THE WTS REGISTRAR (Kevin Anderson) THAT YOU SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION.**

**VI. PASTORAL-DIACONAL PRACTICUM or Independent Study**

For those students who do not complete one of the cross-cultural courses or specified organized activity courses listed above, your remaining option is to complete an independent study or a pastoral-diaconal practicum. *J-Term pastoral practicums or independent studies are expected to meet the requirements for a 2-credit course (which equates to a minimum of 90 to 95 hours of work).* All Independent Studies in January must be approved by the Academic Dean before they can be registered for. There is an Independent Study Contract Form to be completed in conjunction with the faculty member who will oversee your independent study or pastoral-diaconal practicum, and the form is also signed by your faculty advisor and the Academic Dean. These contracts need to be finalized by the December registration week.

## PART C

### J-TERM 2026 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**(Not all courses may have further detailed description available at this time;  
See the Registrar or the faculty contact person/instructor for more details)**

#### **MN 398W-L1 GERMANY**

Instructor: Dr. Martin Lohrmann

2 credit hours (credit/no credit only)

15-20 students + 15-20 family members and alums.

Described as follows:

Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann is leading a cross-cultural immersion class to Germany for January 2026. Highlights will include visiting Reformation history sites like Wittenberg, Erfurt, and Wartburg Castle, studying the impact of 20th-century events by visiting places like the Berlin Wall and Buchenwald Concentration Camp, and meeting with members of refugee communities in Germany today. The total cost including airfare will be approximately \$3700-\$4000. Wartburg Seminary students, family members, and alums are all welcome to participate. The dates of the trip are January 2-14, 2026.

*See the five page itinerary at the end of this document.*

#### **MN 398W-L2 EGYPT**

Instructor: Dr. Troy Troftgruben

2 credit hours (credit/no credit only)

10-15 students; family members and alums would be additions.

Described as follows:

Egypt: a journey to a land of ancient wonders and vibrant culture. Egypt is home to the Pyramids of Giza, the majestic Nile River, and many ancient temples, as well as desert landscapes, bustling bazaars, and Red Sea beaches. Our travels include a visit to St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai, the Pyramids of Giza, and landmark churches of Coptic Christianity including the Hanging Church and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Cairo (associated with the Holy Family during their journey through Egypt). We will travel alongside a group from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, giving our group a richer experience of traveling together with Lutheran church students and leaders across our ELCA seminaries. Our mixture of students, seminary faculty, and friends will make for an experience of seminary life on the road in one of the most fascinating countries in the world.

Course link: <https://www.eliastours.com/tours/egypt-sacred-spaces-biblical-places-cultural-treasures-wartburg-seminary>

Answers to a few potential Frequently Asked Questions on the Egypt course:

- **When is this?** ...January 6-16, 2026
- **How much is it?** ...\$3990 (shared room) + est. \$150 for tips. This covers everything (travel, lodging, food, visas) except souvenirs, snacks, and maybe a lunch or two. Students: note that J-term tuition is *in addition* to this cost.

- **Who's leading it?...**Troy Troftgruben (+ Rachel Wrenn with Trinity). Depending on enrollment, another co-leader may be brought on.
  - **When do we register?** ...please register with Elias Tours ([here](#)) by September (technically Oct 3), which involves a \$300 deposit. Full payment is due Nov 1.
  - **Do I need a passport and travel visas?** ...Yes. Make sure you have a US passport valid through July 2026. Elias tours will secure the visas (for Egypt) for you.
  - **Are we traveling with Trinity Lutheran Seminary?..."**Yes, sort of." Rachel Wrenn and I call it "parallel play": we will fly and boat together, follow the same itinerary, stay in the same hotels, visit the same places, and have some shared orientation, debriefing, & worship. But we will register separately, use separate busses and guides, different syllabi, and some separate orientation and debriefing. Our hope for this model is to reap key benefits of greater community while retaining the flexibility of separate (smaller) groups.
- **Are there travel subsidies for the trip?** ...Yes, for students needing to fulfill their cross-cultural requirement at Wartburg.
- **Is this open to spouses, family, and/or alumni?** ...Yes, so long as students have first priority. No travel subsidies are available for non-students.
- **This itinerary flies out of O'Hare (Chicago). Can I fly out of a different airport?** Yes. Once committed, be in touch with Elias tours about making alternative arrangements. FYI: the only US cities with direct flights to Cairo are NYC and Washington DC.
- **What will the weather be like?** expect 67-73 F highs and 44-58 F lows throughout the trip, except our 1-2 days at St Catherine's Monastery (55F Hi, 35F Low).
- **Israel is engaged in war with Gaza and potentially Iran. Will that change our plans?** ...At this point, we don't expect them to. Egypt has no interest in assisting Israel and has only gotten involved with Gaza border matters. Egypt has far greater interest in preserving the safety and present flourishing of its tourism. We will continue monitoring the situation as events develop.

## **MN 398W-L3 INDONESIA**

Instructor: Dr. Man Hei Yip

2 credit hours (credit/no credit only)

8-10 total participants (with students given priority before open to family members and alums).

Described as follows:

### Background Information:

Indonesia has the world's fourth-largest Lutheran community, and it is the largest in Asia. This immersion trip is designed to explore the history of churches in Indonesia, learn about the ELCA's accompaniment with local congregations, and learn to appreciate church engagements, such as dialogue with Islam, diaconal work, and eco-justice education. Participants will also gain insight into Indonesian approaches to contextuality and interpretations of the Lutheran Reformation's theological heritage.

### Trip Itinerary/ Highlights:

- A full-day session focused on understanding local Indonesian cultures.
- Visits to an ecumenical theological institute in Medan, the National Committee office of the Lutheran World Federation in Pematangsiantar, and a Bible women's school.

- Engagement with ELCA mission partners and various local projects, including eco-justice initiatives.
- Worship services at local churches to learn about Christianity in Indonesia.
- Cultural activities at Samosir Island.

Estimated costs for this trip: \$3,500 to \$4,000, covering airfare, in-country travel, and room and board. I am anticipating a group of 10 (max). Alumni, spouses and family members are welcome.

### **MN 398W-L4 ISLANDS IN THE ATLANTIC (Travel in May 2026)**

Instructors: Dr. Samuel Giere and Dr. Samantha Gilmore

2 credit hours (credit/no credit only)

Happens during the latter of May 2026, but is registered for in January as your "J-Term" course for the academic year;

5-7 students (no family members due to space limitations).

Described as follows:

Islands of the North Atlantic is a cross-cultural immersion that will travel 18-30 May 2026, led by Drs. Gilmore and Giere. The focus of the trip will be immersing ourselves in the life, culture, and ecclesial expressions of the peoples on islands connected by culture and history, where their Christian faith is also formed by the simultaneously beautiful and harsh realities of island life in the North Atlantic. The immersion will begin in Iceland and conclude with time at the ancient abbey of St Columba on the Isle of Iona, stopping on the Faroe Islands, Orkney, and the Outer Hebrides along the way. Note that this course requires immersion in the land and seascapes, requiring both hiking and swimming. That said, details of the itinerary are subject to change. Space is limited to current students.

### **MN 398W-L5 CIVIL RIGHTS PILGRIMAGE**

Instructors: Craig L. Nessian and Maria Erling

Cross Cultural (Wartburg), D.Min. (United), or Elective.

Open to all.

2 Credit at Wartburg (credit/no credit)/3 Credit at United (pass/fail)

This immersion course travels to Tuskegee, Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Atlanta to experience the geography of repression and resistance that encompasses the rich and living history of the Civil Rights Movement. Students will visit sites of memory that recall the agency of those who have endured disparagement and dismissal in their struggle for civil and human rights. The Equal Justice Initiative and other Civil Rights sites of conscience and memory in Montgomery provide a focal point for this immersion course that both lays bare the ongoing racism in the system of incarceration and that issues a call to an ongoing ministry of reconciliation and repair in our own places and lives.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To explore the Civil Rights Movement through readings, films, and immersion experiences.
2. To instill commitment to anti-racism as a spiritual practice, both personal and communal.
3. To foster leadership practices that empower communities to see and act differently.
4. To participate together as Beloved Community in the activities of the course.

**PROCEDURE:** The course centers on an immersion at Civil Rights sites in Georgia and Alabama. Thus, the participants will travel to Atlanta, GA, Tuskegee, Selma, Montgomery, AL, and other sites to encounter and reflect upon Civil Rights history and its ongoing significance for understanding systemic racism and advocating for civil rights today. The course will include pre- and post-sessions on Zoom to prepare and process the immersion.

**EVALUATION:** 1) Completion of assigned readings. 2) Active engagement in discussion at pre- and post-sessions. 3) Collegial and respectful involvement in immersion activities on site. 4) Completion and presentation of a summative project/paper based on the immersion course materials.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **Required:**

Thomas C. Holt. *The Civil Rights Movement: A Very Short Introduction*. 2023.

Martin Luther King, Jr. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Edited by James M. Washington. 1986/2003.

Jon Meacham and John Lewis. *His Truth Is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope*. 2020.

Bryan Stevenson. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. 2015.

#### **Recommended:**

Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. 2020.

James Baldwin. *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985*. 2021.

Julian Bond. *Time to Teach: A History of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*. 2021.

John J. Hanrahan. *Traveling Freedom's Road: A Guide to Exploring Our Civil Rights History*. 2022.

**Dates: January 18-24, 2026. Arrive in Atlanta by own transportation on Sunday, January 18 and depart on Saturday, January 24 from Atlanta. Ground transportation will be by vans.**

## **MN 396W-L1 CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP IN LUTHERAN CONTEXT**

Clayton Faulkner, Dean of the Chapel

Credit/No-credit grading

Two semester hours

January 6-23, 2026; see the specific schedule below.

Taught with both classroom/synchronous Zoom and asynchronous pathway learning options.

**Course Description:** This course explores contemporary worship practices within Lutheran contexts, examining their theological foundations, historical developments, and practical applications. Students will engage with current trends in worship, including music, liturgy, digital media, and the role of culture in shaping communal expressions of faith. Emphasis will be placed on how contemporary worship practices align with Lutheran theology, sacramental life, and the centrality of the Gospel. Through readings, discussions, and hands-on experiences, students will critically assess various worship models and develop strategies for designing and leading worship that are both contextually relevant and theologically rich.

**Synchronous Teaching schedule:**

Week 1 - January 6-9 (Tuesday through Friday), 9:00-11:15 AM Central Time

Week 2 - January 12-15 (Monday through Thursday), 9:00-11:15 AM Central Time

Week 3 - January 20-23 (Tuesday through Friday), 9:00-11:15 AM Central Time

~~**MN 396W L2 FUND RAISING IN THE CHURCH**~~ **THIS COURSE HAS BEEN CANCELLED – SORRY! We expect a course on the same topic to be taught possibly in the upcoming Spring or Fall Semester (as a 1-credit elective), or offered again in January 2027.**

~~Rahel Mitula-Williams~~

~~Two Credits~~

~~Credit/No-credit grading~~

~~ASYNCHRONOUS; Specific dates to be determined~~

### *COURSES THROUGH OTHER ELCA SEMINARIES*

*The following is cross-registered through Luther Seminary:*

#### **DIACONAL MINISTRY: HISTORY, FORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY HC4337 – Luther Seminary <https://inside.luthersem.edu/registrar/registration/>**

The Diaconess Community of the ELCA, also serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, created this January seminary elective course to share the history, spirituality, and impact of diaconal ministry with the whole church.

This Course is for the whole church as it introduces participants to the historical, theological, and social contexts in which the work of diaconal ministry has been expressed through the church's history;

- provides a particular focus on ways in which that history continues to impact the present;
- provides opportunity for the development of spiritual disciplines and vocational discernment;
- meets the formation requirements for those entering the Word and Service Roster;
- includes pre-work.

Course Goals:

- To present a theological grounding for discernment.
- To learn about the ministry of Word and Service throughout the church's history.
- To experience and talk about intentional community.

This course, containing both an on-line and on-site component, is offered through Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is available for cross-registration for all ELCA Seminary students. It is also open to non-degree participants.

Dr. Susan McArver, H. George Anderson Professor of Church History at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina and Sister Davia Evans, STM, Spiritual Theology and Spiritual Director are the instructors for this class.

*(Although the rest of the course description indicates that one should contact Luther Seminary next, you are instructed actually to first contact the WTS Registrar by submitted the J-Term Preference Form, after which I will submit a cross-registration form to Luther Seminary. It is after that happens that your focus will shift to working directly with Luther Seminary Admissions and Registrar office folks.)*

*The following is cross-registered through United Lutheran Seminary. We anticipate a Zoom option, that is not directly stated as being available for sure:*

**11/12/2025 UPDATE -- PRAX 444 IS NOW FULL – NO MORE REGISTRATION POSSIBLE WITH ULS!!**

**PRAX 444 IG When Faith Hurts: Recognizing and Responding to the Spiritual Impact of Abuse in the Christian Environment**

The purpose of this course is to examine the impact of abuse (broadly defined as cruel and violent treatment of a person) in the lives of the children of God: child abuse; elder abuse; abuse of persons with developmental needs; sexual abuse; physical abuse; emotional abuse and spiritual abuse. The impact of such abuse follows a child of God throughout life and needs to be examined through the lenses of faith formation, theology, the Bible, law, and behavioral science (education, psychology, counseling/pastoral care and cognitive science). The public record documents that religious leaders might well be the abuser – or those in religious leadership are the secondary abuser because of a lack of understanding of the legal systems in place to respond to accusations. All too often faith community leaders offer inappropriate and careless responses to those victims and families, as well as to survivors of earlier abuse. My co-teacher for the course is Victor Vieth, Esq, who is the Chief Program Officer, Education & Research, of the Zero Abuse Project ([www.zeroabuseproject.org](http://www.zeroabuseproject.org)) AND adjunct faculty at Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) where he teaches “When Faith Hurts: Recognizing and Responding to the Spiritual Impact of Child Abuse”. Victor holds an MA from WTS and his thesis is the foundation of his text, *On This Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Physical Abuse in the Life and Works of Jesus*. The faith formation lenses through which I offer this will be both transformative learning theory AND intersectionality. *Fulfills MA Public Theology option; or noncredit Spiritual Formation requirement and/or Free elective.* [Prerequisites: BIB 120; ST 100; CFE 14x which translates to Prerequisites of a prior WTS Bible course (for an understanding of hermeneutics), Wartburg Seminary’s HT 140W Systematic Theology course (for understanding creation and sin), or background in faith formation, education, pastoral care, etc.]

Nancy Gable/Victor Vieth

January 5-9, 2026

*The following is cross-registered through the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC):*

**ML/RHS 516 Trauma-Informed Ministry: biblical, pastoral, and liturgical perspectives**

Instructors: Jan Schnell from WTS, plus Karri Aldredge and Brooke Peterson from LSTC.

January 6-16, 2026; Taught by Synchronous Zoom only for all participants (with specific hour-by-hour scheduled to be determined).

Trauma and violence impact our individual and collective lived realities. Faith leaders and communities have an important role in responding to trauma. This course equips the learning community with resources to develop trauma-informed ministry practices. The course employs a cross-disciplinary approach, examining theological, practical, and biblical engagements with trauma. Similarly, it engages diverse approaches to trauma theory such as psychological, feminist, postcolonial, literary, and queer. Learning community members will work to develop trauma-informed practices and interpretational methodologies rooted in their communities of accountability. Through this work, the learning community explores how faith communities justify and perpetuate contemporary experiences of trauma and violence, as well as how faith communities can address, resist, and provide spaces for healing and hope.



Professor Martin Lohrmann  
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USA

Lutherstadt Wittenberg, March 22, 2025

### **Proposal**

Wartburg Seminary  
January Program 2026  
January 2 – 14, 2026

Dear Martin,

I wish to thank you very much for choosing us again to provide you with a proposal for your travel needs in January 2026. Please find listed below a proposal based on our correspondence, along with the rates, terms and conditions, as well as the list of confirmed accommodation. I tried to keep the costs as low as possible, and I was able to keep the program costs the same as in 2024.

### **Day 1, Friday, January 2, 2026: Your Journey Begins**

Depart the US, transatlantic overnight flight to Berlin.

### **Day 2, Saturday, January 3, 2026: Herzlich Willkommen!**

On arrival in Berlin, catch a train to Lutherstadt Wittenberg. We check-in at Colleg Wittenberg for the next five nights. Introduction meeting and welcome dinner. D

### **Day 3, Sunday, January 4, 2026: Wittenberg**

We start our program with joining the local congregation for Sunday worship. In the afternoon, we have a guided city tour of the town where Martin Luther lived and taught for 36 years. The tour includes the Melanchthon House, where Philip Melanchthon lived with his family and the Lutherhaus, where Martin und Katharina lived with their children. BD

### **Day 4, Monday, January 5, 2026: Leipzig**

Leave Wittenberg for a day trip to Leipzig. A local guide is waiting to show you the city. In May 1989, the people of Leipzig first organized the demonstrations

that brought hundreds of thousands into the streets for the "Peaceful Revolution." We will visit their rendezvous point at the Gothic St. Nicholas Church, built in 1165. Afterwards, time and lunch on your own, we meet for a presentation by a former pastor from Leipzig who was a participant in the Peaceful Revolution. Next on our list is a visit to the Stasi Museum. Dinner on own tonight in Leipzig, before we head back to Wittenberg. B

**Day 5, Tuesday, January 06, 2026: Epiphany, Torgau**

This morning join the Wittenberg congregation for Epiphany service. Afterwards, we will depart for a daytrip to Torgau. Take a tour of the city where, in 1544, the first palace and church were specifically built and consecrated under the auspices of a Protestant Prince. We will see this perfectly preserved Renaissance castle, its chapel and a special feat of engineering - the cantilevered spiral staircase. We continue to nearby St. Mary's Church, where Katharina von Bora, Luther's lively wife "Katie," is buried as well as Katie's death house museum. Back to Wittenberg for some time to rest, dinner and overnight. BD

**Day 6, Wednesday, January 07, 2026: Wittenberg**

In the morning, we continue our city tour of Wittenberg by visiting the Castle church, where Luther nailed his 95 Theses in 1517, and the Town Church where he preached. After lunch on own, we have planned meetings with Syrian and Ukrainian refugees about their former life in their home countries, their escape and their life in Germany. We will also have an opportunity to discuss populism and political extremism. BD

**Day 7, Thursday, January 8, 2026: Eisleben and Erfurt**

We say goodbye to Wittenberg and continue to Eisleben. Luther's birth and death occurred here, in his "Bethlehem" and "Jerusalem." The home where he was born is typical of the Middle Ages and an exhibition inside interprets the spiritual environment of Luther's childhood. Our guided tour will also include the St. Peter and Paul Church where Martin Luther was baptized, the St. Andrew's Church where Luther gave his last four sermons, as well as the late medieval residence where Luther died. We head to Erfurt. Our guided city tour will follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther, visiting the university district where he studied and St. Mary's Cathedral where he was ordained. Our tour includes a private guided tour of the Augustinian Monastery. Hotel check in for the next three nights. BD

**Day 8, Friday, January 9, 2026: Buchenwald and Weimar**

In the morning, we travel to Buchenwald, the former concentration camp. A quarter of a million people were imprisoned here between 1937 and 1945. All of them suffered and 50,000 of them died. Among the prisoners were Lutheran pastors Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Schneider, outspoken opponents of National Socialism. A private guided tour will allow us time for reflection and a service of reconciliation. On our way back to Erfurt, we stop in Weimar, for a visit to the Herder Church, which is famous for its three-part altarpiece. In 1552/53 Lucas Cranach the Elder started the painting and after his death, his son Lucas Cranach the Younger completed it in 1555. Free evening in Erfurt, no group dinner. B

**Day 9, Saturday, January 10, 2026: Wartburg Castle and Eisenach**

We visit Eisenach and the Wartburg Castle today, where Luther disguised himself as a squire named "Junker Jorg" and hid away after he was declared an outlaw at the Diet of Worms in 1521. Here, at the Wartburg Castle, he created one of his most important works: the translation of the New Testament into German. On our guided tour of the castle, we will get to see the room where Luther lived and worked on his translation. After some time for lunch on your own in Eisenach, a guided walking tour of the city will bring us to St. George's School, which Luther attended from 1498 to 1501, the marketsquare, and St. George's Church, where Martin Luther sang in the boys' choir and later where Johann Sebastian Bach was baptized. Then we visit the Bach House to experience what a typical home looked like in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see an interesting collection of antique instruments, and enjoy a musical presentation using a variety of these period pieces. Return to Erfurt for dinner at a local restaurant and overnight. BD

**Day 10, Sunday, January 11, 2026: Erfurt and Halle**

We join the congregation at the Augustinian Monastery for Sunday worship. Afterwards, we travel to Halle and visit the Market Church. Martin Luther's body rested here overnight en route to Wittenberg, so there is even a chamber devoted to his death mask. Afterwards, we visit the Francke Foundations, a center of Pietistic practice, from where Henry Melchior Muhlenberg began his 1742 journey to organize the Lutheran Church in North America. Continue to Berlin, our base for the next three nights. BD

**Day 11, Monday, January 12, 2026: Berlin**

Today we have a guided city tour of Berlin. The tour includes stops at the Berlin Cathedral, the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, and the Topography of Terror. Our tour ends at Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church which was bombed during World War II leaving only the west tower standing. Free evening with dinner on your own. B

**Day 12, Tuesday, January 13, 2026: Berlin**

We continue our tour of Berlin for a visit of the German resistance museum and St. Matthews church, where Dietrich Bonhoeffer was vicar. Our final stop is at Bernauer Strasse and the Wall documentation center. Free time in the afternoon to explore Berlin on your own. In the evening we meet for closing dinner at a local restaurant. BD

**Day 13, Wednesday, January 14, 2026: Auf Wiedersehen!**

It is time to say goodbye. A morning transfer will bring you to Berlin's airport for your homebound flight. B

**Accommodation confirmed:**

Wittenberg	5 nights	Colleg Wittenberg
Erfurt	3 nights	Radisson BLU
Berlin	3 night	Maritim proArte Hotel

**Rates: The net rates per paid participant for the land arrangement are based on double occupancy:**

with 15 – 19 paying participants	US\$ 2,980.00	per person
with 20 – 24 paying participants	US\$ 2,650.00	per person
with 25 – 35 paying participants	US\$ 2,450.00	per person
Single room supplement	US\$ 600.00	per person

**Included:**

- Thoroughly experienced multilingual tour director where necessary.
- Transportation by private bus, scheduled trains (2<sup>nd</sup> class), taxi, or public transportation.
- Accommodation in German twin bedded rooms.
- All taxes, tourist fees, parking, and road fees.
- Guided tours in Wittenberg, Leipzig, Torgau, Eisleben, Erfurt, Buchenwald, Eisenach and Berlin .
- Admission and private guided tours of both churches, Luther House and Melancthon House in Wittenberg, Castle Church and St. Mary's Church in Torgau, Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt, Wartburg Castle and Bach House in Eisenach, Luther's Birth and Death House Museums, St. Peter and Paul Church, as well as St. Andrew's Church in Eisleben, and Market Church and Francke Foundations in Halle.
- Meeting with Syrian and Ukrainian Refugees.
- FAQ meeting about populism and political extremism.
- Presentation on Peaceful Revolution in Leipzig.
- 19 meals, 11 breakfasts and 8 dinners (beverages and drinks are not included with dinners).
- All necessary tips such as bellman, maid, doormen, and dining room tips for meals specified in the itinerary and the customary gratuity to drivers, tour director and step-on guides are included.
- Information folder for all participants including town and country brochures, information on Germany, and a detailed timed itinerary upon arrival in Berlin.

**Free place:**

One group leader travels free including flights. All accommodations, meals, and attractions offered to the group as part of the land package will be complimented.

**Not included:**

Airfare, expenses for passports, visas, bar bills, additional beverages, telephone calls, laundry or items of a personal nature, baggage or other insurance and meals other than those included in the itinerary.

**Payment, cancellation, terms and conditions:**

- Full payment is due ten weeks prior to the program. No deposit requested. Payment can be made either in cash, with check, or wire transfer.
- The entire tour, a portion of it, or individual tour members may be cancelled without a fee up to ten weeks prior to departure. A 70% fee is required for cancellation made ten to four weeks prior to departure. No refund for cancellation made less than four week prior to departure or no-show. Group rates are subject to change if size of group varies due to cancellation.
- Airfares are not included.
- Booking party is responsible for all visa, health, and passport regulations.
- Participants are encouraged to purchase trip insurance to cover health, trip cancellation or delay, and loss of baggage.
- Participants should be able to climb stairs (sometimes many) without assistance and to walk at a modest pace for a mile at a time.
- Notification of double/single occupancy and the names of the participants should be received ten weeks in advance.
- The travel group is responsible for the payment of any single room supplements required due to an odd number of participants of either gender requesting double occupancy.
- All rates are net without commission and in US Dollars.
- Rates are applicable for 2026. Due to currency fluctuations, we reserve the right to adjust prices after renegotiation with the booking party.
- In the event that any dispute arises on which any party has a right to assert a civil claim related to this tour agreement, the exclusive jurisdiction for that claim shall be in a court of competent jurisdiction, located in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany.

I look forward to welcoming you and your group here in Germany again. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you have further questions.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Christian Eggert  
Christian Tours Europe