

DM 6464 Seminar IV: Research Methods and Prospectus Writing
Schlegel Hall, June 4-15, 2018

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Course Description

This six-credit seminar is intended to provide an opportunity to further refine a student's understanding of practical theology and the role of ministers as practical theologians. Students will learn qualitative research methods appropriate to their field of concentration. To this end, students will complete a set of common readings, provide brief reflections on them, and provide leadership for discussion of them in the seminar. The primary work of the seminar is integrating what has been learned and experienced in the previous three seminars by working collaboratively on each student's project prospectus. Time will be divided between in-class reflection on assigned readings, independent research and writing in the library, and collaborative discussion and refinement of each student's prospectus. By the end of the two weeks in residence, it is expected that a student will have a well-developed, near final draft of her or his prospectus such that the following Student Learning Objective (SLO) is met:

SLO1: Students will demonstrate an advanced (comprehensive, appreciative, and critical) understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines, including practical theology (Goals 1 and 2)

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able:

- To carry forward and enhance the collegial relationships with the learning group for support and accountability for the doctoral program.
- To prepare and finalize the prospectus for the project.
- To demonstrate increased ability to integrate the practical, biblical, and theological reflections of the DMin Seminars through seminar discussions and the quality of the prospectus.
- To be able to appropriately utilize current methods of qualitative or quantitative research in the design of the DMin project research as indicated by the quality of the prospectus.
- To plan the remainder of the DMin program.

Preparation

Reading Assignments

Be prepared to lead a class discussion on the following three readings.

Teams of students will be determined to lead the discussions on the first day of the seminar.

Farley, Edward. "Preface" and "Chapter 1: Theology in the Life of the Congregation" in *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*. Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Osmer, Richard. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008.

Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011. **This is the key text!**

LPTS Documents: *Prospectus Writing Guide*, *DMin Project Report Writing Guide*, and *Guide to Formatting the DMin Project*.

Recommended for review for those interested in ethnographic research.

Scharen, Christian B. (Editor). *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2012.

Ward, Pete, (Editor). *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2012.

All required and recommended books will be on library reserve or are available on the website.

Read one another's Prospectus Outline (below) in your assigned section.

Note: There are nineteen students in Seminar IV and the instructors will be working in two sections, with 9/10 students in each section. Section assignments will be sent to you by May 1.

Writing Assignments

Prospectus Outline

In fewer than 15 pages (total), answer the questions below in preparation for the seminar (roughly a page for each question). We want these to be tight. They are due to the instructors by **May 25th** and will be distributed to all members in your section (you will have nine or ten documents to read).

- 1) Describe your ministry context and your role or expertise within it?
- 2) What issue within this context have you identified as a focus of concern or development?
- 3) Why does the issue matter to faith and ministry? In your context? For the greater church? Beyond the church?
- 4) What theological and biblical perspectives shed light on the issue?
- 5) What insights from other disciplines in the arts or human sciences could deepen your understanding of the issue? (e.g., linguistics, education, business, medicine, aesthetics, sociology, music theory, psychology, cognitive science)
- 6) What do you intend to do as a project within your context? A project is a specific plan, typically a series of events (e.g., educational series) with specific people (e.g. parents with pre-school children in my congregation) in a particular time (e.g. over 8 weeks in the summer; 1.5 hours per week) focused upon something (e.g., faith and parenting) using particular resources (e.g. two books for adults: Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* and Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*; 8 picture books for parents to read to their children, Archbishop Tutu's *Storybook Bible*, and a curriculum/set of lesson plans that I will write).

- 7) What difference do you hope the project makes in the lives of the people who participate and/or are in your ministry context?
- 8) How will you know whether it did? (Key: how will you evaluate the project, e.g., through surveys, interviews, designating observers, journals, combination of several tools?) This is typically the hardest aspect of the project design—but thinking about it now will go a long way.
- 9) What do you hope to learn or what expertise do you hope to deepen through the project?
- 10) How will this project outlast you? That is, how does the project empower others to empower others to empower others, etc., in a way that your hopes for the work are realized beyond the project itself.
- 11) Review the Project Report document online and prepare a preliminary outline of your chapters and a tentative bibliography.

Program Planning (Complete as much as possible and bring with you June 4. This will help you, your instructors, and your advisor/readers tremendously.)

Prepare a time-line for completing your D. Min. Program including:

- Ideas for 1st and 2nd Readers
- Identify the Advanced Professional Courses that you have completed as well as those that will fill out your education toward the project and program.
- If you are choosing to use an “at home learning group,” then what is your plan for involving them in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of your project.
- Date of approval of your prospectus
- Dates when you expect to carry out the project
- Dates when you expect to write the project report
- Date for submitting draft of report to readers
- Submission of at least one chapter to Angela Morris for formatting
- Time for readers to review and return with recommendations
- Re-write times (at least one maybe two more)
- Goal date of acceptance of final draft of project
- Goal date of Summative Conversation (Oral Defense) of project
- Date of submission of report to library
- Graduation date