The purpose of the second semester of the two-year Colleague Seminar series is to explore the reflective practice of ministry in an atmosphere of personal and professional sharing, eventually producing a set of analytical and theological papers as background for the Ministry Project. The goal of this first semester seminar is to ground the practice of ministry in an understanding of its contextual and organizational realities and their theological significance. Students will be introduced to various field research tools and learn to reflect theologically on the insights gathered through their use. Required of first-year D.Min. students. 1/26, 2/23, 3/16, 4/13, 5/11

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**Objectives:**

- To establish a research-based foundation to be used throughout the remainder of the D.Min. program;
- To explore a handful of fieldwork methods in order to more accurately understand the contextual and cultural dynamics of one’s ministry setting and surrounding community;
- To interpret the results gathered from fieldwork in a discerning manner that recognizes alternative points of view and strategic implications;
- To practice the discipline of credible, evidence based argument in support of strategic, ministry proposals for change.

**Procedure:**

The course alternates between five class sessions (see “Schedule”) and the intervening periods for individual exploration by students in their own settings. The class sessions rely on group discussions, instructor presentations, and fieldwork exercises to introduce new tools and deepen the insights emerging through previous sessions. The intervening periods rely on assigned readings, fieldwork assignments, and written work to extend the class topics and prepare for ensuing sessions. Additionally, between class times we will continue the classroom conversation online in the discussion board at the course website. A final paper provides an occasion to integrate work from the entire semester into a practical analysis of the dynamics of one’s ministry setting and the strategic implications and theological challenges inherent in leading change within this context.

**Process Expectations:**

- Timely and regular attendance. If an emergency comes up, call or email me or call the main seminary number (860/509-9500) and leave word.
- Prepared and active participation in class presentations and discussions (in a sense, this course is a peer learning group with the instructor as coach)
- Commitment to dialogical engagement of one’s colleagues:
  - Open sharing of one’s own perspectives and respectful probing of other’s perspectives
Appreciative understanding of other’s perspective/argument before offering suggestions for further consideration (a DMin project is a “constructive” effort; therefore constructive suggestions are most helpful)

- Appreciative consideration of other’s suggestions.
- What is said in the group stays in the group!

Office Hours: By Appointment. Email is the best way to contact me, even for scheduling appointments to talk on the phone or meet at the seminary.

Class Grade:

Class participation 35% of grade
Attendance at and active participation in every class session is expected of all students. Exceptions are only allowed if advance permission has been granted by the instructor, and only for unavoidable absences. In all cases, failure to be in attendance at more than one class session automatically precludes successful completion of the course. This portion of the grade includes the five discussion topic periods and fieldwork exercises in class. Additionally, between class times we will continue the conversation online in the discussion board at the course website.

Writing assignments 30% of grade
Completion of all of the five fieldwork exercise assignments is essential to advance the learning in this course. All writing assignments must be posted on the discussion board and/or be sent by e-mail to the instructor by the Friday immediately before the class session for which they are assigned. Each student will be required to survey participants in their ministry setting or in another setting.

Final paper 35% of grade
The final paper integrates the central methods, insights, readings, and research findings from the semester into a practical and analytical paper on one’s ministry placement. This paper will discuss learnings and research from the course and address strategies and challenges in changing something in one’s ministry setting. Details for the final paper, including focus and format, will be provided during a class session. Final papers must be sent by e-mail to the instructor within 4 weeks after the last class session.

Course Extensions
Past experience has shown that timely completion of all assignments and the entire course is essential to successful completion of the overall D.Min. program. As a result, late writing assignments are strongly discouraged and course extensions are not permitted except in dire emergencies.

Required Texts:


*Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* by Tim Sensing (Wipf & Stock, 2011)

*Projects that Matter: Successful Planning & Evaluation for Religious Organizations* by Kathleen Cahalan (Alban Institute, 2003)
Additional readings are required but will be posted to the blackboard coursesite.

Class Schedule & Assignments – Specific assignments will be handed out in class.

Written assignments are to be brought to class on the indicated date and posted on coursesite Friday before class.

Session 1 – Exploring the Social Dimensions of the Ministry Setting

Reading:

Chapter 2 & 3 in *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing

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Since you don’t have other assignments yet, it would help to begin reading two critical sections:
and Chapter 4 in *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing.

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Web Documents:
Chapter 1 from Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, William McKinney (editors), *Handbook of Congregational Studies* (Abingdon: 1986 – online version available in the out of print book section of the books & articles section of the Hartford Institute website [www.hartfordinstitute.org](http://www.hartfordinstitute.org)

hirr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/Congstudieshandbook/congstdhdbk-ch1.pdf

Skills: Demographic Context Analysis - Demographic Context Assignment, Survey Assignment

Session 2: Describing the Local Ecology of One’s Ministry Setting 2/24/2014

Reading:


One of These:

- Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church*, chs. 1 & 2
- Eiesland, “Contending with a Giant“ in *Contemporary American Religion*
- Pae, “Negotiated or negotiating spaces: Korean churches in Flushing, Queens of NYC” *Crosscurrents* 58 no 3 Fall 2008, p 456-474.
- Walbridge, *Without Forgetting the Imam* Intro. & chapter 1

Skills: Participant Observation - Participant Observation Assignment

Written Assignment: Demographic Context Assignment due

Session 3: Interpreting Culture and Identity in a Ministry Setting 3/17/2014

Reading:

- Chapter 3 “Culture and Identity in the Congregation” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. 
  One of These:
  • Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church*, chs. 7 & 5
  • Bolz-Weber, *Pastrix*
  • Heilman, *Synagogue Life* chapter on Joking and Thumma and Gray, “Gospel Hour” in Eiesland and Becker

Skills: Individual and Group Interviewing - *Individual and Group Interviewing Assignment*

Written Assignment: Participant Observation Assignment due

**Session 4: Process, Resources 4/7/2014**

Reading:

• Chapter 4 & 5 “Process & Resources” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook.*

One of These:
  • Gilliat-Ray, et al. *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* chapter 5 & 6
  • Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers* chapter 2 & 4
  • Thumma, *The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory* http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/dissertation.html chapter 10 “The Spoiling of the Kingdom” http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/CHAPTEN.doc

Skills: Artifact, Place, Resource and Document Analysis  *Artifact, Place and Document Assignment*

Written Assignment: Interview Assignment due

**Session 5: Understanding what you have found – The Strategic Leadership Task 4/28/2014**

Reading:

• Chapter 6 “Leadership and the Study of the Congregation,” in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*

One of These:
  • Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers* chapter 5 “Innovation and the Cultivation of Catalytic Leaders”
  • Piazza & Trimble, *Liberating Hope* chapter 8 “Transformational Leadership Skills”

Written Assignment: Artifact, Place and Document Assignment & Analysis of Survey Results due

**Final Paper Assignment – Paper due one month from the last day of class.**