



CL7542
PROGRAM REVIEW AND THESIS PROPOSAL
October 2006 – March 2007

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INSTRUCTOR

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INSTRUCTORS

Craig Van Gelder

NW 210A

651.641.3218

cvangeld@luthersem.edu

Gary Simpson

BH 104B

651.641.3253

Gsimpson@luthersem.edu

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

This seminar helps students review their entire program and to formulate a comprehensive understanding of congregational mission and leadership from the perspective of a missional ecclesiology. Each student also develops a specific thesis proposal that will be implemented during the fifth and final year of the program.

APPROACH

Participants will access and use resources that assist them in developing a thesis proposal. This proposal will serve as the framework for the thesis that will be developed during the final year of the program. Faculty members from the Leadership Division and History/Theology Division will co-facilitate the seminar.

OBJECTIVES

Each seminar participant will . . .

1. Identify a research topic and develop a research question related to this topic that will serve as the primary point of study for their future thesis.

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2. Develop a working draft of a comprehensive literature review related to their research topic and question, with this review including a thorough assessment of materials used in previous coursework in this program.
 3. Develop a working draft of the biblical and theological foundations that relate to their research topic and question.
 4. Develop a working draft of a research methodology that will be used to study the research question.
 5. Develop a schedule and time table for the implementation of their research and the completion of their thesis.
 6. Engage in disciplined conversation with fellow participants around the subject matter of the seminar.

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Seminar Structure

The seminar is divided into three phases.

Phase I – Preparation October 16, 2006 – January 29, 2007

Phase II – Seminar January 29 – February 2, 2007

Phase III – Project Completion February 3 – March 31, 2007

Use Of Technology

To facilitate communication, each participant will be expected to have a Luther Seminary email address. This address will allow each person to access the software that is being used for course management, which is known as MyLutherNet. In addition, this course requires participants to use electronic databases and to conduct on-line research. It is expected that participants will be proficient in using Word and communicating electronically.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Module Assignments

Each participant will be expected to complete five modules for the seminar. These modules involve a number of self-directed reading requirements, along with numerous writing responsibilities.

Required Reading

Further Use of Previously Assigned Texts

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- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003. I.S.B.N. is 0761924418 (cloth) 0761924426 (pbk.).
- Field, Andy. *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Fowler, Floyd J. *Survey Research Methods*. 3rd ed, Applied Social Research Methods Series; V. 1. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002. I.S.B.N. is 0761921907 (cloth), 0761921915 (pbk).
- Locke, Lawrence F., Stephen J. Silverman, and Waneen Wyrick Spirduso. *Reading and Understanding Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004. I.S.B.N. is 0761927689 (pbk).
- Rubin, Herbert J., and Irene Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004. I.S.B.N. is 0761920749 (cloth), 0761920757 (pbk.).
- Tashakkori, Abbas, and Charles Teddlie. *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998. I.S.B.N. is 0761900705 (cloth alk. paper), 0761900713 (pbk. alk. paper).

Each seminar participant is to design and implement their own reading schedule for this seminar, one that relates to the development of the necessary background for exploring their research question and developing their literature review.

Structure of the CML DMin Thesis Process and Proposal

Overall Intent of the CM L DMin Thesis

- IN “**MINISTRY**” – A research thesis that is designed to enhance ministry.
- IN “**YOUR**” MINISTRY – An in ministry research thesis that focuses on your ministry
- **ORIGINAL RESEARCH NOT REQUIRED** – your thesis does not necessarily have to make an ‘original’ contribution to a field of study
- **REPLICATION OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH** – it is permissible to replicate previous research approaches in your study for your thesis as long as you apply it to your context

Unit of Analysis – Either/Or

- **Your Congregation** – The research for most DMin theses focuses on the participant’s congregation or organization and its ministry with a view towards enhancing it.
 - **Some Examples**
 - Why are so many persons inactive and how might they best be reached?
 - How does the addition of facilities affect the ministry of a congregation after construction is completed?
 - What is an effective process to use in birthing a new congregation from another congregation?

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- **Larger System/Issue** – it is permissible to focus your research on an issue within a larger system (conference, set of congregations, synod, denomination, other organizations, or movement)
 - **Some Examples**
 - How might the first call process in our synod be improved?
 - How well is the present call process working for women in ministry?
 - Why are so many Lutheran congregations adopting the Alpha program, and how does this impact their ministries and intended theological understanding?

Method of Research To Be Used

- **MIXED METHOD** – this approach is encouraged but not required
- **CHOICE OF METHOD** – should reflect the nature of the research question
- **ALTERNATIVE METHODS** – don't overlook the possibilities of alternative methods such as action research, grounded theory, etc.

Chapters for the Thesis

- Chapter 1 – Introduction to Thesis
- Chapter 2 – Literature Review
- Chapter 3 – Biblical and Theological Foundations
- Chapter 4 – Methodology
- Chapter 5 – Results of Study and Interpretation
- Chapter 6 – Conclusions with Theological Reflection
- Epilogue – What Learned from the CML DMin Program

Anticipated Length of the Thesis

- Each Chapter – eventually will be approximately 25 to 30 pages of double spaced, formatted text. The initial expectation for developing your thesis proposal is 15-18 pages per chapter.
- Final Length – Range of 150 to 180 pages of text for six chapters and epilogue.

Module One Assignment: Research Question – Chapter One of the DMin Proposal and Eventual Chapter One of the Thesis

Part A: Identify a Research Topic and Question

Each participant is to identify a research topic and question and is to post a 1-2 page statement and summary of this in the appropriate forum by the assigned date.

Post by October 25, 2006.

Part B: Develop Draft of First Chapter

Each seminar participant is to develop a draft of chapter one for their DMin proposal that will serve as the foundation for the eventual chapter one of the thesis. The components that are to be addressed in this chapter are the following:

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- Identify the Research Topic and Question – rationale for this research and why it is of interest to you
 - Identify what the importance is of this research is for the church both from a theological perspective and from a theoretical perspective
 - Name the key variables in the study and their relationship to one another – independent, dependent, intervening
 - State the hypothesis and null hypothesis (depending on the type of research being pursued)
 - Provide definitions for all of the key terms being used
 - State the type of research method and design of this method that will be used to pursue this research – clarify why this particular method will be used
 - Note the key theory(ies) that frame and inform this research
 - Name and address the key questions raised by this research
 - Identify and address the ethical issues raised by this research

This draft of the first chapter of your proposal should be at least 15-18 pages in length, although it may be longer, up to the proposed limit for the first chapter of the thesis – 25-30 pages.

Complete and post this assignment by November 13, 2006

Module Two Assignment: Literature Review – Chapter Two of the DMin Proposal and Eventual Chapter Two of the Thesis

Each seminar participant is to develop a draft of chapter two for their DMin proposal that will serve as the foundation for the eventual chapter two of the thesis. The components that are to be addressed in this chapter are the following:

- Develop a working bibliography of all, or at least the primary, existing research and/or studies that are available that are related to your topic. Note that this can include theoretical perspectives that are not necessarily directly grounded in specific social science research, but which summarize theoretical perspectives based on the research of others.
- In what ways does this existing research inform your topic or provide perspective in addressing your research question?
- What can be learned from the methodologies that others have used?
- Develop a summary argument of the points of integration/convergence that can be made from the existing/emerging literature in relation to the way you are framing the question – construct an integrated summary of the key points in terms of how they inform your research.

This draft of the second chapter of your proposal should be at least 15-18 pages in length, although it may be longer up to the proposed limit for the first chapter of the thesis – 25-30 pages.

Complete and post this assignment by December 18, 2006

Module Three Assignment: Biblical and Theological Foundations – Chapter Three of the DMin Proposal and Eventual Chapter Three of the Thesis

Each seminar participant is to develop a draft of chapter three for their DMin proposal that will serve as the foundation for the eventual chapter three of the thesis. The components that are to be addressed in this chapter are the following:

- What are the biblical/theological foundations that inform and/or are inter-related with your research question?
- How have others addressed this research area from a biblical/theological perspective? What can you learn from these? How would you critique them?
- Develop the biblical and theological foundations for your argument in relation to and in support of your research topic and question.

This draft of the third chapter of your proposal should be at least 15-18 pages in length, although it may be longer up to the proposed limit for the third chapter of the thesis – 25-30 pages.

Complete and post this assignment by January 15, 2007

Module Four Assignment: Research Methodology – Chapter Four of the DMin Proposal and Eventual Chapter Four of the Thesis

Each seminar participant is to develop a draft of chapter four for their DMin proposal that will serve as the foundation for the eventual chapter four of the thesis. This draft will be developed in three phases, as follows:

Phase One – Initial Proposed Research Design

Each seminar participant will develop an initial framework for their research design – a 3-5 page summary paper. The issues to be addressed include the following:

- What type of research method are you using and why?
- What is the specific design you are bringing to conducting your research?
- How will you operationalize your variables?
- What instrumentation will you utilize?
- What population/sample will you study – how many, who, why?

Complete and post this assignment by January 27, 2006

Phase Two – Development a Framework for a Research Design

During the week of seminar from January 29 – February 2, each seminar participant will develop a full framework of a research design for their study.

Phase Three – Completion of Research Design Proposal

Following the seminar, each participant will complete a draft of a chapter four for their research design as a part of module five.

Module Five Assignment: Final Draft of Research Proposal – Chapters One Through Four of the DMin Proposal and Eventual Chapters One Through Four of the Thesis

Following the seminar, each participant will go back through their work in chapters one through three and revise and update these in light of the feedback they have received and the further reading and reflection that has been engaged. In addition, each participant will develop a chapter four for their research proposal that more fully develops the research design that will be used.

A final draft of the completed research proposal, chapters one through four, is to be completed by the end of the seminar. Participants are encouraged to expand on their earlier work with a view towards developing fuller drafts of these chapters that will eventually serve as completed chapters in their thesis.

This final draft is to also include a final section that addresses the following:

- A proposed schedule for the implementation of the research design
- A working time table for completion of all aspects of the thesis
- A working budget of anticipated costs for completing the research and thesis

Complete and post this assignment by March 31, 2007

Notes Regarding Chapters Five, Six and Epilogue of the Thesis

Chapter Five: Results of the Study and Interpretation

- Reporting the results of your study
 - Tables with summary data
 - Statistical tests
- Interpreting the results of your study
 - What does this data mean?
 - How does this data relate to your hypothesis?

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Theological Reflection

- A fairly detailed summary of what you learned from your study that re-engages the theory that informed your research design
 - Affirming and/or denying the null hypothesis, if this type of study; or a summary of key findings and your conclusions for any other type of study
 - A discussion of the limits of being able to generalize from your findings.
- A thorough discussion of these findings in relation to the theory that guided your research:
 - How well did this theory function in relation to guiding your research?
 - What additions or changes in theoretical design might be helpful to consider relative to your research question and the possibility of future research in this area?
- Re-engaging the biblical and theological foundations for your study with a discussion of how these foundations provide further insight into or development of your findings
 - Engage in biblical and theological reflections on your findings – how do these foundations inform what you found out?
 - What additional biblical and theological perspectives would you now want to add or include in reflecting on your study and its findings?
- What are the key questions for future research that grow out of your study and how does your study help to inform the possible pursuit or design of such research questions?

Epilogue – Develop an epilogue that is between 7-10 pages in length that covers the following topics:

1. What are the primary things you have learned from your five years of participation in the CML DMin program
 - a. Personally
 - b. Professionally
 - c. In relation to your ministry
2. What are the primary things that your congregation or ministry setting learned during the time that you participated in this program (for those who had a change of call during the five years, you may break this down into different periods of time in relation to each call served)
 - a. In relation to their identity and purpose
 - b. In relation to their ministry
3. What are the primary things you have learned from engaging in the researching and writing of your thesis?