I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will guide students through a collegial and mentored process of preparing and writing a Doctor of Ministry thesis-project proposal. It will provide the basic skills needed for the project’s combination of biblical and theological study, methodology of ministry intervention, and pastoral reflection on academic, and empirical research. The outcome of the course will be an actual thesis-project proposal for submission to the DMin Committee seeking approval in order to proceed with the final research. The course will be hosted entirely online this year due to the pandemic. The course will make use of a variety of pedagogies both as a group and separately therefore direct online contact will be limited to about three hours each day.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION:

A. The aims of this course are:
   • to explore issues of contemporary mission theory, strategy, and practice, both ecumenically as well as from within an Anglican ethos, as the context of participation in God’s mission in the world
   • to introduce students to the field of Practical Theology and its dialogical approach of exegeting both implicit and explicit theologies at play in a concrete ministerial context
   • to strengthen critical capacities in reading, thinking and writing at the doctoral level
   • to identify and clarify a ministry concern/problem and intervention for students to develop and research in the thesis-project as the culmination of the DMin program

B. Outcomes of the course

After participating in this module students will be able:
   • to assess the forces, trends, values, and spiritual ethos of contemporary Western society
   • to articulate a missiological response grounded in the Scriptures, theology and the experience of the Church
   • to demonstrate the capacity to explore implicit and explicit theologies at play in their ministry context
   • to develop strategies for the Church’s mission in context
   • to create the final thesis-project proposal for submission to the DMin committee
C. Evaluation of student learning in this pass/fail course is based on:

- Attendance and participation in all sessions
- Preparation of a quick ethnography of the student’s ministry context as described
- A “sandbox” first draft of the DMin thesis-project proposal (7-10 pages maximum) based upon the Doctor of Ministry thesis-project proposal overview below
- In-class group presentations on ethnography, and theming analysis exercises
- The development of the final thesis-project proposal for submission to the DMin committee detailing the full scope of the intended research

III. READING (1,325 pages in total)

A. Books


B. Other Texts (Articles via Google classroom, post, or handed out in class):


Additional reading on research methods will be made available and posted to Google Classroom

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Attendance - Attendance at all sessions will be required as well as, daily Morning Prayer in the chapel at 8:30AM. Additionally, there will be an online social hour hosted the Dean of the school Monday January 13, 2021 at 6 PM, time zones permitting.
B. Written work - Each student will submit:

1. Pre-seminar (due January 5, 2020) – Prepare a quick ethnography of your ministry context. See the description in Appendix I at the end of the syllabus.
2. Pre-seminar (due January 5, 2020) - A “sandbox” first draft of the Doctor of Ministry thesis-project proposal (10 pages maximum) based upon the Doctor of Ministry thesis-project proposal overview. See below. The intent of this exercise is to prime the pump of thinking in these categories.
3. In-class presentations, Thursday (due January 16, 2020) - In-class presentations in breakout groups will include: lists of the names of individual you envision as participants for Interviews and a Focus Group, as well as the respective questions you will ask in each. One-page bullet pointed memos for each is to be uploaded to google classroom during the course of the residential week.
4. Final thesis-project proposal (due March 15, 2020) – The final thesis-project proposal for submission to the DMin committee detailing the full scope of the intended research. The formal Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project Proposal will be distributed in class and will be available on Google Classroom.

Doctor of Ministry “Sandbox” Thesis-Project Proposal Overview Template

Final doctoral thesis-project research rationale
This template has been developed to help students prepare for crafting a thesis-project proposal. Its intent is to enhance the student’s skills for studying pastoral ministry by engaging in systematic study of a pastoral situation in context. The Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project Proposal draws upon rich biblical and theological reflection in dialogue with a range of human arts, sciences and ministry theories to explore concrete ministerial situations with actual people. It assumes that these various disciplines represent important lenses/perspectives for deepening understanding of pastoral ministerial intervention. The intent of this pre-class assignment is to “prime the pump” for students’ thinking through of the various required elements of a Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project Proposal. It will serve as the basis for peer review and discussion during the residential week. Please think through and write out the following components as succinctly as you can. Post the assignment on google classroom by January 5, 2020. The length of this pre-class alignment is limited to **7-10 pages maximum.**

1. **Title:** Give a one-sentence title that captures your project’s focus as you understand it today.

2. **Contextual analysis (Chapter 1):** Offer an initial analysis of you ministry context (1 page) In succinct terms, give a description of the ministry context you intend to study with special focus on the structures and dynamics that illuminate your project’s central concern/problem. This should help you to begin constructing an argument about how the context informs or constitutes the concern/problem. A key dimension of contextual analysis is self-reflection. Locate yourself in the context, describing how your assumptions and biases influence the project design, implementation and interpretation. In short, describe why this project is important to you personally. What is at stake for you? What personal issues will you be working out in the project?
3. **Concern/problem statement (Chapter 1):** Define your concern/problem statement (1 page)

In light of having located yourself in context, describe the primary concern/problem that your thesis-project seeks to address. Descriptions of concern are not limited to problems, but might also include hopeful possibilities for pastoral ministry in your context. Guiding questions for this section should address the following:

1) What is your primary concern that has surfaced out of your contextual analysis?
2) How does this concern affect the life and faith of your ecclesial context and its ministry?
3) How did you come to this particular concern/problem?
4) Why does it matter to you?

4. **Biblical Theology (Chapter 2):** Articulate your biblical theology - (1 page)

1) In view of the arc of scriptural narrative (Genesis to Revelation) of God’s redeeming work in Christ, what are the primary Scriptures informing your understanding of the concern/problem?
2) How do they ground your research in the reconciling work of God in Christ?
3) What themes do they offer for understanding your concern/problem.
4) Are there specific biblical theologians whose work have helped you think this through?

5. **Systematic Theological Analysis (Chapter 3):** Express the theological underpinnings of your intended research (1 page)

1) Describe the theological categories and doctrines informing the underlying rationale for your thesis-project.
2) How do these themes support your intended ministerial intervention?
3) Are there specific theologians whose work have helped you think this through?

5. **Practical-theoretical Analysis (Chapter 4):** Discuss how you want to affect transformation of your ministry concern/problem (1 page)

1) Integration: Briefly articulate how your contextual, biblical, and theological analysis inform the ministry intervention you envision.
2) Methodology: Describe the methodology of your ministry intervention/implementation. What ideas inform your thinking? (For example, if your work entails preaching, teaching, church planting, etc.) whose ideas and work have helped you think this through?
3) How do these ideas point toward a response to the concern/problem in your context?
4) What kinds of changes do you envision will happen as these theories are translated into ministry practice?

6. **Alternative Future (Chapter 5):** Describe what you envision will have changed because of your research. (1 page)

If you could affect effect immediate change to the circumstances of your ministerial context as a result of your research, articulate what would be different? (It is worth remembering that visions of future ministry possibilities often change, even during the research.)

V. COURSE SCHEDULE

*Overview of Sessions (with the corresponding reading)*

- Monday January 13 – Introductions, Devotional, the scholar Pastor, review of the Doctor of Ministry degree, types of Doctor of Ministry projects, new approach (12 interviews,
one focus group, and/or participant Observations), PM: using the Library well, learning to listen (discuss Goldman, et al.) listening exercise, Four Corners of a DMin exercise as individuals with group discussion at the end of the day (deep end of the pool)

- Tuesday January 14 – AM: Four Corners of a DMin exercise discussing each individual component (thesis statements, crafting questions) then each student workshops their individual work with the group at the White Board, PM: Ethnography and social science research presentation, book discussions; Ammerman et al., Clark Moschella, dismiss early in groups of 2 for Ethnography exercise.

- Wednesday January 15 – AM: Ethnography presentations, late AM (Scott): research methods, gathering data, coding/theming/data-bucketing, analysis and evaluation (Auerbach) Weds night homework write up list of participants for interviews and focus groups along with questions to be used


- Friday January 17 – AM (Leslie) Doctoral Research: critical reading, critical thinking, critical argumentation, critical writing, PM: Four Corners of a DMin exercise, and conclusion

NB – Each student to make an appointment to meet with Scott during the week

VI. GRADING – This is the final class in the course of study for the Doctor of Ministry Program. Because of the rigor required for completing the course of study and preparing a final thesis-project proposal, it is a stand-alone class and cannot be taken in conjunction with another class. This course if evaluated on a pass/fail basis with submission of the completed thesis-project proposal constituting a passing grade. Upon approval of the thesis-project proposal by the DMin Committee, a faculty research supervisor will be appointed.

VII. POLICIES

A. TSM Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an act of “literary theft,” in which the work of another is misrepresented as the original work of the student. This may be done intentionally or unintentionally. The policy on plagiarism is strictly enforced. See page 95 of the Academic Catalogue for more details.

B. TSM Policy on Attendance

Failure to attend 90% of the class sessions (missing no more than one 3 hours session) over the course of a Jan or June Term intensive week is grounds for automatic failure. See Academic catalogue for more details. Students are required to attend all class sessions, chapel and social gatherings.

C. TSM Policy for Late Work
All students have the responsibility to complete their academic work in a timely manner and to comply with all course requirements set by the instructor in the course syllabus, including deadlines for assignments and papers. *Students must not in any circumstance assume that late submission of work will be overlooked or treated casually.*

**Late work and extensions.** Instructors may grant an extension of due dates for class assignments. If students make a mutually acceptable prior arrangement with an instructor, they may with the instructor’s permission submit required course work up to the official date for the end of term. When students expect to submit required course work later than the due date assigned by the instructor, but before the last day to submit work for the term then the student must signify this prospect to the instructor *in writing*, stating the extenuating circumstances, to obtain permission for late submission, on or before the assigned due date or stated examination day of a given term. A copy of this request must be submitted to the Registrar to be kept in the student’s file.

**Incomplete.** Extensions beyond the official last day to submit work for the term will involve an incomplete and may be obtained only upon written petition to the Academic Dean and Registrar, indicating the support of the course instructor for such an extension. The petition must demonstrate significant extenuating circumstances justifying the request. The Academic Dean and instructor, in consultation with the Registrar, shall determine the length and end date of the incomplete period. The Registrar will generate a contract to be signed by the instructor, the student and the Academic Dean. The incomplete work shall be due no later than 30 days following the original work due date. An administration fee of $200 which is not eligible for scholarship, shall be added to the student’s bill. Additionally, the student may not register for courses in the next term until the required work is submitted and all fees are paid in full.

Incomplete will be arranged in accordance with the procedure outlined in the paragraph above; an “I” indicating an incomplete will be entered upon the student’s transcript for the course in question. When the work has been completed, the instructor shall submit a final grade to the Registrar, who shall then make an appropriate notation on the transcript indicating removal of the Incomplete and entering the final grade.

If a student fails to meet the applicable deadline, in accordance with the procedures stated above, an “F” shall be automatically registered for the work in question, and a grade for the course shall be calculated on that basis, together with the evaluation of other coursework submitted. Additionally, the student may also be put on academic probation.

**Appendix I:**

**Ministerial Context Ethnographic Exercise**

Students are asked to undertake this brief exercise known as “quick ethnography” to experiment in the discipline of ethnography. The intent is to ask students to look at their ministry context anew with fresh and open eyes. This can help you serve God’s people more faithfully as you enter into research for the sake of affecting ministerial intervention which is the goal of the Doctor of Ministry Degree.

First, take half an hour to walk or drive through the local area (neighborhood or town). With researcher’s eyes, observe the buildings, billboards, and the people in the area. Pay attention to the various artefacts you see, any interesting use of language heard, as well as the customs,
and patterns of behavior taking place. Over the course of that half hour, jot down observation notes in a notebook.

Second, having a sense of the community context, turn to focus on your ministry context. Write down a few notes describing your ministry context. Remember that there is often a load of demographic information available for free online. In the USA this can be found through such sites as, the US Census Bureau, ISSUELAB, and the Urban Institute. What takes place here? How does it fit into the context of the broader local community (neighborhood or town)?

Using the frames listed below from *Studying Congregations*, Ammerman et al. (1998) and particularly Chapter 3 – *Culture and Identity in the Congregation*, consider the following to get a deeper sense of the role that your ministry context or site plays in the area, as well as your own role therein. Document your observations.

1) Ecological Frame – What role does this place play in the ecology and life of area? How does the world around it influence what is happening here? What effect does this place have on the area?
2) Cultural Frame - What are the common patterns of behavior that take place here? What does this place represent or mean to life in the area?
3) Personality Frame – What is the personality or vibe of the place?
4) Resources Frame – What “capital” does it offer to the life of those who live and work here? What raw materials does this place have to offer?
5) Process Frame – How is it used? How does it affect daily life and work?

Third, add to these observations by interviewing at least three people in an effort to deepen your understanding of the ministry context and the area. Briefly (no longer than 10 minutes each) interview two insiders and one person not immediately associated. This can be done as simply as by phone or if feasible in person. As Jesus recommended to the 72 disciples being sent out, “Look for a person of peace.” (Luke 10:6). In an effort to start the conversation, you may want to say, “I am student working on an assignment for school to learn more about ministry. Could you tell me...” Ask what will help you understand the context.

Take a few notes documenting the content of the interviews. Also, pay particular attention to details such as body language, behavior, and tone of voice of interviewees.

The following questions may help for use in starting a conversation:

- What do you know/think about this place/community/ministry or these folks?
- What goes on here? (events, phenomena, etc.)
- Is it usually very busy?
- Are you here often?
- What do you like about it?
- What are the relationships like amongst the people?
- If it disappeared, what would be missed?

In this experiment, you will have at least three sets of data to help you think about and deepen your understanding of your ministry context: observation notes, artefacts, and interviews. Review your notes looking for recurring themes within and between the various data sets. Also, make note of any divergent data contrary to the themes.
Considering things, ideas and processes that you have observed in your ministry context, offer a brief write up (maximum five pages in bullet point fashion), of your observations describing your ministry context. Post your write up to google classroom prior to our week together. You will be given the opportunity to present your observations for approximately 10-minutes to your online break out group. Prepare this brief presentation describing and analyzing your ministry context. Report on your discoveries drawing the following categories:

- Describe your visit to the area – time of day, physical setting, people, behaviors, things observed, and heard
- Describe the context – people, site, significant features, and what happens there.
- Describe what stood out to you? Did your understanding (about the area or the context) deepen because of this exercise? If so how?
- Were there any findings that surprised you or that you hadn’t noticed prior to undertaking this exercise?
- Based on your findings, what would you tell a stranger if asked about your ministry context?
- Describe your sense of pastoral identity in this context. Who are you in this community and what do you bring to the ministry here? What do you perceive will challenge you in the research? How do you think you can best serve the Lord and His people in this place?

This process is sometimes called Quick Ethnography (Handwerker, 2001) which seeks to offer quality ethnographic data in a short period of time. Limit your entire research time to under five hours. You may choose to distribute your time as suggested below:

- Thirty minutes of observation of the local communal context
- Thirty minutes of observation of the ministerial context or site
- Thirty minutes in interviews
- Thirty minutes of observations recurring and/or divergent themes
- Two-three hours to think through and prepare notes for your 10-minute presentation.