

Doctor of Ministry Student Handbook



MTSO

Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Doctor of Ministry Program Methodist Theological School in Ohio

Student Handbook

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THE METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE

MISSION

In an era of cultural and ecclesial change, the Doctor of Ministry degree at Methodist Theological School seeks to provide the church and the world with transformative leaders equipped with advanced skills for critically and theologically engaging issues and their contexts in ways that contribute to vital faith communities and institutions.

RATIONALE

Why a D. Min. degree? The Doctor of Ministry degree is designed to offer ministering professionals an advanced educational experience, which in turn serves the church and the society by providing leaders with advanced professional development. The degree integrates resources from classical and practical disciplines; this integration expands and enhances the ability of ministering professionals to analyze and conceptualize issues emerging from changing contexts within a framework of theological understanding. Action/reflection work will emphasize praxis (knowledge combined with practice), within a given specialization.

The Doctor of Ministry degree is carefully crafted with professional ministry in mind and places the student experience at the center of the program. Collaborative study with peer groups, small class sizes, core courses designed to integrate theory and practice, and projects designed to introduce change in faith communities based on classwork and peer input make the MTSO program unique. Regular faculty members teach courses and guide students throughout their involvement with the program. Communication amongst peers, with faculty and the D. Min. Director continues between academic classes and throughout all phases of the degree program.

OVERVIEW OF THE D. MIN. PROGRAM

The D. Min. Program is structured in a way that invites students into multidisciplinary study and theological reflection on issues crucial to the practice of ministry in our world today. Every student, regardless of professional context and degree specialization, begins the D. Min. by taking three core courses. When these have been completed, students then pursue focused study in their specializations. At the conclusion of coursework, students embark upon original research in their own ministry settings, culminating in a written thesis that makes an original contribution to scholarship about the practice of ministry.

Format

Core Courses and Specialization Courses are offered in a five-day intensive format on campus at MTSO in July and January. Each of these three-credit-hour courses requires 37.5 hours of face-to-face class time, along with approximately 80 hours of related work outside of class time in their own ministry settings. Students are expected to do preparatory assignments in advance of the intensive week, some homework during the week, and one or more final assignments following the intensive week. The Research Methods Course is offered in three one-credit sections spread out over the program. This course meets on Friday evening and all day Saturday of the intensive week, and requires an additional 25-30 hours of work outside the classroom, ordinarily following the intensive week. The Peer Group Courses include one evening meeting during the intensive week and an online component in between intensive weeks. The Project and Thesis Courses are individually arranged with the Thesis Advisor, and may be conducted through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and/or online communication.

Timeline

Students begin their work in July of their matriculating year, meeting for classes during one week in July and one week in January until their coursework is completed. The Program may be completed in four to five years, and must be completed within six years of enrollment. Students are considered to be enrolled half-time during the coursework phase of the Program.

First year:

- July intensive: Core Course, Peer Group, and Research Methods Course
- August-December: Peer Group online
- January intensive: Core Course, Peer Group, and Research Methods Course
- February-June: Peer Group online

Second year:

- July intensive: Core Course, Peer Group, and Research Methods Course
- August-December: Peer Group online
- January intensive: Specialization Course, Peer Group
- February-June: Peer Group online

Third year:

- July intensive: Specialization Course, Peer Group
- August-December: Peer Group online
- January intensive: Specialization Course, Peer Group
- February-June: Peer Group online

Fourth year:

- July intensive: Specialization Course and Peer Group
- By December 1: Portfolio is submitted
- By February 1: Portfolio is reviewed/ approved
- February-July: Project and Thesis Proposal is developed and submitted
- Project and Thesis Group online

Fifth year:

- Project is implemented and thesis is written
- August-March: Project and Thesis Group online
- By February 1: Full draft of thesis is submitted to advisor
- By March 1: Full draft of thesis is submitted to second reader
- March-April: Final revisions
- May: Presentation of research to the wider community and graduation

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Coursework

The D. Min. Program requires 31 credit hours of coursework, the submission of a portfolio of exemplary work, and the completion of a Project and Thesis.

Courses are specifically designed for the D. Min. program, and include three Core Courses, four Specialization Courses, a sequence of Research Methods Courses and Peer Group Courses, and two final Project and Thesis Courses. Most courses are taught by full-time or fully affiliated members of the MTSO faculty.

Core courses provide opportunities to update students on developments in various fields of study, further develop their expertise in theological reflection, and provide a shared theological context and vocabulary for each matriculating class. Each three-credit course addresses a significant tension or dialectic confronting academic disciplines and ministry contexts. Every course emphasizes the integration of research and praxis. All students in the D. Min. program take the three Core Courses.

Specialization Courses require students to research and to explore in depth particular issues that are of compelling interest and significance in the area of Specialization, drawing on a variety of disciplines in the study of ministry. A Specialization consists of four specifically designated courses of three credits each. Rarely and only upon approval, some students may substitute an upper level M.Div. course with additional work for one of the four Specialization Courses.

Research Methods Courses introduce students to a variety of formal approaches to doing rigorous scholarly research in ministry contexts. These courses are offered in a sequence of three one-credit hour sections at different stages of the student's degree program.

Peer Group Courses are the setting for structured conversation and support for students who have been admitted into the same Cohort. These courses are offered in a sequence of six half-credit-hour sections over the first six terms of the program.

Final Project and Thesis Courses encompass the construction of the Project and Thesis Proposal, a period of extensive research, the implementation of the Project, and the writing of a summative Thesis.

Descriptions of the individual courses may be found at the end of this Handbook.

Portfolio Review

At the conclusion of course work and prior to the Project Proposal, students submit a digital portfolio that is representative of their work throughout the program thus far. The portfolio serves as a cumulative statement that demonstrates the student's readiness to take on a major original research project and write a book-length thesis. Components include three papers: one from a Core Course, one from a Specialization Course, and one from a Research Methods Course, all including the instructor's evaluative comments. The papers selected for inclusion should reflect the ongoing development of the student's work in areas that may in different ways support the forthcoming project and thesis: studies of pertinent theological questions, research on issues that have some connection to the proposed topic, and indications of familiarity with some of the methods likely to be used. The portfolio also includes a summary narrative statement (2000-3000 words) written by the student that integrates what has been learned from the program, describes personal growth, assesses achievement of learning goals, and identifies strengths and weaknesses in anticipation of the Project phase. In the narrative statement, the student also describes briefly the research he or she hopes to do for the Project and Thesis. The process of compiling the portfolio and writing the summary narrative allows the student to step back, look at everything he or she has done thus far as an organic whole, discern the themes and ongoing threads in that work, and establish a foundation for what the student desires to accomplish in the project. In a sense, the portfolio presents the case for the student to be permitted to move on to the final stage of the D. Min. program.

The portfolio is to be submitted electronically within 60 days of the submission of the grade for the student's last course. The D. Min. Director then assigns a Thesis Advisor to the student. The D. Min. Director also provides access to the portfolio to the Thesis

Advisor and one member of the D. Min. Committee. These persons review the portfolio within sixty days of its submission by the student. The D. Min Director and D. Min. Committee member(s) then provide a written summary of their reviews to the D. Min. Director. The summaries are then sent to the student and the Thesis Advisor, after which the student schedules a meeting with the Thesis Advisor to discuss the portfolio and the written summaries.

Project and Thesis

The Doctor of Ministry is granted upon satisfactory completion of a Thesis. The Thesis is a substantive original research study based in a specific context and deeply informed by multidisciplinary theological scholarship. This study centers on a Project, which is designed and carried out by the student and seeks to provoke or induce change in a ministerial setting. The word “Project” is used to refer to the particular research undertaken within the ministry setting, while the word “Thesis” refers to the paper that is submitted for D. Min. credit.

Overview

The Project must:

- Emerge from and respond to a particular issue or concern identified in the student’s current context of professional ministerial context.
- Integrate insights drawn from resources in relevant classical and practical theological disciplines.
- Identify a specific desired change or innovation.
- Offer creative, original, and appropriate approaches to the concern or issue, utilizing qualitative and/ or quantitative methods.
- Incorporate ongoing theological reflection.
- Include an ongoing process of analysis, assessment, and evaluation.

The Thesis must:

- Describe the context, the particular issue or concern that has given rise to the Project, and the change or innovation sought through implementation of the Project.
- Offer a thorough description, analysis, and evaluation of the Project as carried out in the ministerial setting.
- Draw upon deep scholarly research in two or more relevant theological disciplines in describing the context and the intended change or innovation, and in analyzing and evaluating the Project.
- Demonstrate use of appropriate research methods.
- Report and evaluate the results of the Project in a clear and convincing fashion.
- Offer astute and informed theological reflections on the meaning and value of the research for the wider church or society.

- Suggest further areas for study and investigation.

Project and Thesis Proposal

A Project and Thesis Proposal must be approved before the Project is implemented and research conducted in the ministry context.

Preparation for Writing the Proposal:

Upon completion of the Portfolio, the D. Min. Director will assign a Faculty Thesis Advisor to the student. The student must initiate communication with the Thesis Advisor to discuss initial ideas about the Project and the Thesis.

In consultation with the Thesis Advisor, the student must:

- Formulate and refine the research question that will govern the design of the Project. The research question should identify a concern or an issue in the student's ministerial context and propose a process for creating change in response to that concern. The research question must be answered in the Thesis.
- Design the Project on which the study will be based. The Project must use original methods to create change in the contextual setting.
- Identify focused areas for research in at least two theological disciplines relevant to the Project and the Thesis. The theological disciplines must include one Classical Discipline (Biblical Studies, Ethics, History of Christianity, the Study of Religions, or Theology) and one Practical Discipline (Education, Evangelism, Homiletics, Leadership, Liturgical Studies, Missiology, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Sacred Music, or Spirituality). This research should shape the design of the Project and set a foundation for subsequent analysis and evaluation of the project in the Thesis.
- Complete a thorough search of the scholarly literature in disciplines pertinent to the Project and the Thesis.

Content of the Project and Thesis Proposal:

The Proposal describes in brief the plan for the Project and the anticipated content of the Thesis. The Proposal must include the following sections:

Introduction to the Proposal: This section briefly describes the ministerial context and the identified challenge or problem, offers a clearly stated and answerable research question, and identifies the change sought through implementation of the project.

Theological Foundations: This section succinctly discusses the foundations for the study with reference to specific areas within two or more theological disciplines, including one practical discipline and one classical discipline, deemed relevant to the research question under consideration and to the ministerial context.

Process for the Project: This section describes the Project in detail, with particular attention to the methods to be employed in the study, the means of analysis and evaluation to be used during and after the implementation of the Project, and the timeline for the Project.

Note on Methods: All of the methods used in the Project should ordinarily be created and developed by the student. Either quantitative and qualitative methods, or both, may be employed. Processes or instruments designed by other persons or institutions should be applied sparingly and judiciously, and may not constitute a substantive part of the Project. If such a process or instrument is to be used, the Proposal must include a defense for employing this method and reference to objective, evidence-based scholarly studies of the method. The Proposal should indicate that permission or license to use the process or instrument has been or will be granted by the original designer or copyright holder.

Conclusion: This section should suggest the possible value of the Project for the wider church and/ or society.

Working Bibliography: This section is drawn from the scholarly literature search in the relevant fields. This bibliography should reflect both breadth and depth in areas that are pertinent to the Project and the Thesis.

Annotated Bibliography: Selected from the working bibliography, this section lists and briefly describes and evaluates at least twenty sources that the student has read and that have already proven to be of good use for the Project and Thesis. Each annotation is to be 50-60 words in length.

The student should submit regular drafts of the Project and Thesis Proposal sections for review by the Thesis Advisor.

The Project and Thesis Proposal is to be 3000-3500 words long and is submitted electronically to the Thesis Advisor and the D. Min. Director. The Proposal must be thoroughly proofread before submission. After the Proposal is approved by the Thesis Advisor, the D. Min. Director appoints a Second Reader, and forwards the Proposal to that person for review. Upon receiving approval from the Second Reader, the D. Min. Director presents the Proposal to the D. Min. Committee for final review. Approval by the Thesis Advisor, the Second Reader, and the D. Min. Committee is required before the implementation of the Project may begin.

When research involves human subjects, the proposed methods must be reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. Implementation of the Project may not proceed until such approval has been granted.

Upon approval of the Project and Thesis Proposal by the Thesis Advisor, the Second Reader, and the D. Min. Committee, and upon receipt of approval by the Human Subjects Review Committee for the use of specific methods, the Project will be undertaken.

D. Min. Research Project with Concurrent Project Group

Students who plan to graduate at the same time form a project group, providing learning community during project research and writing. Students may share and critique drafts of proposals/chapters in an online setting.

Thesis

After implementation of the Project, the Thesis will be written. The expected length of the Thesis is approximately 45,000 – 50,000 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices.

The Thesis should consist of the following sections:

Introduction:

The introduction serves as an orientation to the entire Thesis. Here the student states the research question that has governed the Project and articulates the case for its importance. The introduction also puts forth a thesis statement, which differs from the research question in that it argues in a declarative way for the findings that have emerged from the study. Finally, the introduction orients the reader to the Thesis by summarizing the content of each chapter to follow.

Chapter 1: Research Question and Context

This chapter examines in greater depth the research question that has governed the study. The chapter should include the following:

- A description of the origin of the research question
- The significance of the question for the specific ministerial context.
- The importance of this question for the wider church, non-profit work, or society.
- Discussion of other approaches to this problem in theological or secular literature
- Theological reflection on the question

Chapter 2: Scholarly Foundations

This chapter reveals the groundwork laid for the Project and the Thesis through research in two or more theological disciplines deemed relevant to the research question under consideration and the specific ministerial context in which the Project was carried out.

Each theological discipline is treated in a separate section. In every section, the student develops a sharply focused study of a topic pertinent to the research question in that theological discipline. In addition, the section should address these two questions: How does this scholarship inform our thinking about the research question? How did this scholarship shape the Project itself?

The final section of this chapter integrates the findings in the two preceding sections and sets forth a theological rationale for the Project.

Chapter 3: Description of the Context

This chapter focuses on the ministerial setting in which the Project was carried out. This section must include

- A richly detailed description of the context in which the project was implemented.
- A narrative explanation of the specific problem the Project sought to address.
- A historical discussion of the origin of the problem.
- An analysis of the particular culture of the ministerial setting.
- A rationale for the Project as a culturally and contextually appropriate way to address the problem.
- A statement describing the change sought through implementation of the Project.

Chapter 4: Description of the Project

This chapter describes the study as it was conducted in the ministerial setting. The chapter must include a detailed narrative description of the Project and its implementation. This narrative description introduces the reader to the process and the methods employed in the project. The chapter should integrate professional observations about the experience of implementing the Project, including appropriate illustrations and anecdotes. Instruments, tables, charts, etc. are to be exhibited in separate appendices.

Chapter 5: Results and Analysis

This chapter analyzes and evaluates the Project.

The first section describes the results of the Project implementation, including demonstration of any measurable change.

The second section offers a substantive evaluation of the Project, including an objective assessment of the impact of the methods used in the Project. The section must focus on a rigorous analysis and interpretation of the findings that have emerged from the study. The chapter must also compare or contrast these findings with other theoretical and practical approaches to the problem found in scholarly literature. The section poses an answer to the research question and presents the argument for the thesis statement.

Chapter 6: Theological Reflection

This chapter offers dedicated theological reflection on the project and its significance for the original context and for the wider church or society.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter proposes further possibilities for application of the study beyond its original setting and points toward potential next steps in research and implementation. The chapter ends with recommendations and a statement about the value of the study.

Bibliography of all resources consulted

Appendices

Thesis Format:

The Thesis is to be double-spaced and presented in an easily readable 12-point font (e.g., Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, Helvetica, Times New Roman, etc.), which must be used consistently throughout the Thesis. The left margin must be at 1.5", and all other margins must be 1". The left margin of the thesis must be justified. Page numbers must be placed on the top right of each page. Footnotes are to be used (not endnotes or in-text notes). The formatting of footnotes and bibliography must conform to most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. In addition to the textual content, the Thesis must also include the following:

- Title page
- Approval page for the signatures of the Thesis Advisor, the Second Reader, and the Academic Dean of the student's institution
- Table of contents

- Chapter headings
- Section headings where appropriate
- Bibliography of all works cited in the Thesis
- Comprehensive bibliography of all works consulted during the research and writing process, even if the works are not directly cited in the text of the Thesis

A dedication page and a section of acknowledgements are optional. The Thesis is to be thoroughly proofread and free of writing errors.

Following approval by the project advisor and secondary reader and the Academic Dean, the student will present an unbound and signed copy of the Thesis, on acid-free paper, to the Director of the MTSO Library, along with payment for binding services. Two other digital copies of the Thesis in PDF format are to be presented or forwarded to the D. Min. Director at the same time.

Presentation to the Wider Community

Following approval by the Thesis Advisor and Second Reader, a presentation of the Thesis is made to faculty representatives, students and interested parties. The D. Min. Director will schedule the presentation. Upon successful completion of the presentation, the D. Min. Director will confirm to the Registrar that all requirements for the degree have been completed.

The Thesis must be completed within 6 years from the beginning of the degree program.

ADMISSION TO THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

Admission Process and Requirements

Applicants for admission should hold an ATS-approved M.Div. degree or its educational equivalent; have spent three years in professional ministry following graduation from theological school; and currently be engaged in some form of ministry. Exceptions to the ATS-approved degree may be granted for schools with regional accreditation. Applicants who do not hold the M.Div. degree must submit evidence of their professional degree/advanced training, and experience in ministry at time of application. Students who took their work in a Pass/Fail system should provide letters of reference from professors testifying that their performance in academic course work was equivalent to A or B level average.

Applicants must give evidence of their ability to undertake advanced professional study by (a) submitting official transcripts of all coursework completed at the college level or higher; (b) obtaining references from the following three sources: a judicatory official

or equivalent supervisor, an academic reference unless the applicant has graduated more than 10 years prior to application (substituting a letter of reference from a ministry colleague or professional leader who can comment specifically on the applicant's fitness for doctoral study), and a ministerial leader or colleague; (c) submitting a 1250-1500 word statement, double spaced, tracing professional growth through continuing education since graduation, and identifying areas of professional strength and weakness; (d) submitting a 1000-1250 word statement of the initial goals for D. Min. study, including the applicant's intended specialization, the goals within the specialization, and the changes hoped-for in the ministerial setting and in the applicant's practice of ministry.

Students applying for admission to the Doctor of Ministry degree program should normally have at least a 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale) in all of their graduate work. Students with less than a 3.0 may apply to the program with the understanding that their application will be evaluated by the entire D. Min. Committee and the Academic Dean of the seminary through which they have applied. Additional materials may be required of applicants in this situation. MTSO will not consider for admission any D. Min. applicants whose graduate GPA is lower than 2.7 cumulative (B- average).

Transfer of courses taken prior to matriculation into the D. Min. degree is not permitted unless the course can be demonstrated as an appropriate replacement of a current MTSO D. Min. course. A maximum of six credit hours will be accepted for transfer credit. Receipt of an official transcript is an absolute requirement before transfer credit will be evaluated by the D. Min. Committee. Any transfer course must be approved prior to enrollment by the D. Min. Committee, the MTSO registrar, and the MTSO Academic Dean.

Matriculating classes

All students in a matriculating class are assigned to a cohort or peer group of students who are pursuing the same specialization. A matriculating class normally consists of a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of twelve (12) students.

TUITION, FEES, AND HOUSING

Tuition

The tuition for the D. Min. program is one set amount by the school if the degree is completed in four years. The tuition is billed in entirety, with the option to pay in increments, due twice each year before the start of each course. A technology fee is due each term at the same time. Billing for all fees occurs one month prior to the payment deadline. Payment must be made in full before classes begin.

Fees

If the degree is not completed by May of the fourth year, students are assessed a continuing student fee of \$250 per term (either summer or January) until the completion of the degree requirements. Failure to pay this fee may result in the student being dropped from the program.

Costs such as books, course materials, travel, housing, meals, and the optional library binding fee of the thesis are not covered by tuition. Some courses may be offered off-site, requiring additional expense to the student for housing and lodging.

MTSO does not provide direct financial aid for D. Min. students but may advise students on the pursuit of funding from various sources. Students are advised to consult with the Financial Aid Director.

Technology fees, continuation fees, and other such costs are subject to annual change. The tuition charge is reviewed annually and is also subject to change.

Campus housing

D. Min. students may choose to live on campus during the intensive terms. Campus housing is limited and may or may not be available. Information about housing can be obtained from the Registrar of the school.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures described in the Doctor of Ministry Handbook apply to all students in the D. Min. program. All additional policies and procedures not covered or mentioned in the D. Min. Handbook are found in the official policy documents of the school in which the student is matriculated.

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Advising

The D. Min. Director is the initial academic advisor for all students in the program

Registration for Courses

Registration for courses is online. Information about registration is sent to students upon enrollment and during the scheduled registration periods before each term.

ADA Accommodations

MTSO supports students of special populations in their efforts to reach their potential by encouraging self-advocacy and facilitating student accommodations, empowering students to help themselves and providing the safe environment in which to do so. The D. Min. Program is committed to an inclusive learning environment and will make every effort to support reasonable, documented requests for accommodations and learning adaptations. Students who seek accommodations are asked to follow the procedures of the school in which they have matriculated. Specific descriptions of disability services, procedures, and accommodations are described in the MTSO Student Handbook.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected in all classes. Students may not miss more than one class session for Core and Specialization Courses, and may do so only with prior permission of the instructor. A student will not be allowed credit for a Core or Specialization Course if he or she is absent for more than one class session. Students may not miss any session of the Research Methods course; if an absence is unavoidable, the student must re-take that section of Research Methods. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in a face-to-face class session.

Confidentiality (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that protects a student's educational record. Students should familiarize themselves with the FERPA procedures of the school in which they have matriculated. Descriptions of this policy and relevant procedures are found in the MTSO Student Handbook.

GRADING POLICIES

Grade Scale

Core Courses, Specialization Courses, and Research Methods Courses are graded according to a letter scale. The minimum passing grade for a course is B-. Peer Group Courses and Project Courses are graded on a Pass-Fail basis. Grade Point Averages are calculated each term according to a 4-point scale. A minimum GPA of 3.0 for all course work in the D. Min. program is required for graduation.

The following grade conversion scale is used in D. Min. courses:

A plus: 4.0
A : 4.0
A minus: 3.7
B plus: 3.3

B: 3.0
B minus: 2.7
F: 0.0

Other grades:

CR/NC Credit /No Credit
INC Incomplete
IP In Progress
PASS Pass (grade would have been B minus or higher)
WP Withdrawn Passing
WF Withdrawn Failing

Grades are available online at the end of each academic term, through the system of the school in which the student is matriculated. MTSO students may log in to Populi to see their grades. Grades will not be disclosed by phone or email, but official copies of grade reports are available upon request from the appropriate Registrar. Course instructors are responsible for submitting grades no later than 60 days after the last day of the course.

End of Course Evaluations

In addition to giving a letter grade, students also receive an End of Course Student Evaluation for each course in which they are enrolled. The evaluation form is filled out by the instructor. This evaluation includes an assessment of the skills and abilities that are important for students to acquire in the D. Min. Program. MTSO recognizes that the full scope of professional development for ministry cannot be adequately captured in the final grade for the class, so this evaluation rubric is an attempt to reflect on the broader range of skills and abilities expected of persons educated at a graduate level. End of Course Evaluations are kept in the student's academic file in the Registrar's office. Each student receives a copy of his or her evaluation when the final grades are submitted. Evaluations are also shared with the D. Min. Director and are used for educational guidance.

A student who believes that all or part of an evaluation is inappropriate should speak first with the faculty member who wrote the evaluation. If the problem cannot be resolved through this consultation, the student may submit to the D. Min. Director a written statement, which will be included in the student's file.

Grade Appeals and Changes

Students who believe that they have not been graded fairly should first speak to the instructor who issued the grade. If, after this conversation, the student still believes that the grade is unfair, the student may file a written appeal with the Academic Dean within

30 days of having received the grade, and set forth the reasons for the appeal. The Dean will consult with both the student and the instructor. The Academic Dean shall issue a written decision regarding the grade and provide copies to the student, the faculty member, and the registrar.

Faculty members may change grades within 30 days after the final grade deadline for the term in which the course was taken. After the 30-day period, no grades will be changed unless there is a petition because of extenuating circumstances.

Incompletes

The grade of Incomplete (INC) may be used under special circumstances on a temporary basis when a student needs additional time on course assignments. No informal extensions may be granted. To receive a course grade of Incomplete, a student must receive the written approval of the course instructor, the D. Min. Director, and the Dean, using the form available from the Registrar. Petition forms may be completed online and signatures acquired electronically. Requests for an Incomplete must be submitted prior to the due date of the final assignment for the course. The date by which all work must be completed may not be later than four weeks following the deadline for the submission of grades. Failure to comply with these procedures will result in a grade of "F".

COURSE TRANSFER AND SUBSTITUTION

Transfer of Credits

Once a student has enrolled in the D. Min. program, she or he may petition to transfer a maximum of 6 credit hours of doctoral level course work from other accredited institutions. The student must present a petition describing how the alternative courses will clearly and rationally substitute for the D. Min. program's prescribed requirements and/or supplement an area of interest within the D. Min. Specialization area that no course in the D. Min. Program's curriculum will address. The petition is to be sent to the D. Min. Director for consideration by the D. Min. Committee, and must be approved by the D. Min. Committee prior to registration for the course. If a student wishes to take a course at another accredited institution and transfer the credit to the MTSO D. Min. degree, the student bears the cost of tuition at the other institution in addition to the regular program costs at MTSO.

Course Substitution

D. Min. students may substitute one master's level course for a D. Min. Specialization Course, with the following stipulations:

- The course must be offered by MTSO.

- The course must be taken as part of the student's D. Min. program. Courses taken during a student's Master's degree program will not be accepted for substitution.
- The student must receive permission from the instructor to take the course for this purpose, and must negotiate additional advanced assignments with the instructor.
- The student must present a petition describing how the alternative course will clearly and rationally substitute for one identified Specialization Course. The petition is to be sent to the D. Min. Director and the D. Min. Committee Chair for consideration by the D. Min. Committee, and must be approved by the D. Min. Committee prior to registration for the course.

Individual/ Independent Study Courses

In rare instances, a student may substitute one individual/ independent study for one Specialization Course, with the following stipulations:

- The individual/ independent study must be directed by a member of the faculty of MTSO.
- The student must present a petition describing how the alternative course will clearly and rationally substitute for one identified Specialization Course. The petition should include a clear plan for the study and a bibliography of proposed resources supporting the study. The petition is to be sent to the D. Min. Director for consideration by the D. Min. Committee. All independent/ individual studies must be approved by the D. Min. Committee prior to registration for the course.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE, EXTENSION OF DEGREE PROGRAM, AND WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal from Courses and Leave of Absence

Students may drop a course prior to the start of classes by notifying the MTSO Registrar. If a student must drop the course after classes have started, she or he must formally withdraw from the course by completing a Petition for Withdrawal from Courses form. The form is available from the MTSO Registrar.

Students who will miss a class in the sequence of D. Min. classes must notify the D. Min. Director and submit a request for a leave of absence prior to the beginning of the next regularly scheduled class. For reasonable cause and with approval of the D. Min. Committee, a student in good standing may be granted a leave of absence for a specified length of time, not exceeding one year, at the conclusion of which readmission may take place without action of the D. Min. Committee. The leave of absence form is available from the MTSO Registrar. Students on leave of absence will

be billed the continuation fee for the term or terms in which they are absent and will resume payment of their regular program installment when they register again for the regularly scheduled classes.

Extension of Program

Students are expected to complete all requirements for the degree within six years of their enrollment. In extenuating circumstances, a one-year extension may be granted by the D. Min. Committee. A student requesting an extension of the degree program must submit a written petition to the D. Min. Director. The D. Min. Director will communicate the decision of the Committee to the student and to the Registrar of the school.

Withdrawal from the D. Min. Program

Students who wish to withdraw permanently from the program must notify the D. Min. Director prior to the beginning of the next regularly scheduled class. Students must then follow the MTSO Withdrawal Procedure. Please see the MTSO Student Handbook. Once students have been notified that their withdrawal has been recorded, they will not be liable for any additional fees for the program. Students who do not withdraw prior to the next regularly scheduled class are liable to pay the continuation fee of \$250.

A student who has withdrawn in good standing and who has been gone for fewer than three years may apply for reinstatement through the D. Min. Committee. In addition, the student must follow the relevant reinstatement procedure for the school. Former students who wish to re-enroll after more than three years have passed since their last date of attendance must contact the Admissions Office and reapply for admission. Those who separate from the program without following the regular procedure for leave of absence or withdrawal may be required to reapply for admission to the school, even if the absence is less than three years.

Upon re-admission, any changes in D. Min. requirements or academic policies since the time of initial application will apply to the student's program.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic misconduct in any form will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the assignment or the course or other sanctions up to and including dismissal from the D. Min. Program.

This policy applies not only to the production of written assignments, but also to oral, electronic, and digital work presented in any format. Students are always expected to attribute clearly and explicitly work that is, properly speaking, the intellectual and creative property of others.

Examples of Academic Misconduct

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to the following:

- Cheating on examinations of any kind by whatever means, including preparation for an examination by means of obtaining copies of examination, past or present, and copying from other students.
- Utilization of the oral and/or written private research of a paid or voluntary person and representing this work as one's own, whether within the classroom or in any context of the seminary's academic program.
- Borrowing without attribution (plagiarism or misuse of sources) from published and unpublished works, including writings and media in any format taken from websites, apps, and other online sources. Plagiarism is defined for these purposes in a broad rather than a narrow sense and therefore is not limited to definitions found in Civil Law which apply to Copyright Laws, the commercial reproduction of books, articles, images, and audio and video recordings.

Please see the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) website for a helpful discussion of how to avoid plagiarism:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

Expectations for Documenting Work

All assignments submitted for D. Min. courses must include proper attribution of sources. Student work must conform to a standard format for footnotes and bibliographical citations. The intent of a standardized format is to provide full and immediate information concerning works cited and consulted by the writer or presenter. Students are to use *The Chicago Manual of Style* format. Work that does not conform to this format may be returned to the writer ungraded or with a grade deduction. If you have questions, please consult with the D. Min. Director.

Sanctions

When academic misconduct has been established to a faculty member's satisfaction, the faculty member will notify the D. Min. Director and initiate the disciplinary procedure of the school. Please see the MTSO Student Handbook for a description of this process.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Academic Probation

D. Min. students are placed on academic probation when they fail to earn a B minus or above in a Core Course, a Specialization Course, or a Research Methods Course, or if they receive an F in a Peer Group Course or a Project and Thesis Course. Students are removed from academic probation by earning a B minus or above in the next class they take. When a student receives less than a B minus in two consecutive courses, the D. Min. Director will initiate the academic dismissal procedure. Please see the MTSO

Student Handbook for further information about procedures for academic dismissal.

Personal and Professional Misconduct

The definitions, policies, and procedures regarding personal and professional misconduct are specific to the school. Please see the MTSO Student Handbook for this information.

Dismissal from the D. Min. Program

Dismissal policies and procedures are specific to the school. Please see the MTSO Student Handbook for this information.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Library Privileges

D. Min. students have library privileges at MTSO and off-campus database access through the library of the school. Please see the relevant information and policies about library use and privileges in the MTSO Student Handbook.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

E-Mail Accounts

The D. Min. Program uses email for a variety of official purposes, including notification of deadlines and other information of a time-sensitive nature. Students are automatically assigned a free school email account upon enrollment in MTSO. Specific information about activating the account, setting a password, and access to IT support is sent to each new student from the IT Department. Students are expected to check the school email account frequently for information about registration, class cancellations, updates about the degree program, and the like. Students are accountable for all information transmitted through school email.

Course Management Systems

Each course in the D. Min. Program is assigned an online course site through the MTSO course management system. On the course site, the instructor will post the syllabus, announcements, electronic resources, and advance assignments. Instructors may also use other tools on their course sites. Students are required to submit all assignments in digital format by uploading them to the course site. Students will receive information about access to course sites upon registration.

On-Campus Internet Connection and Computer Access

To connect a computer to the campus networks, students will need either an Ethernet cord (or a Category 5 data cable), or wireless (Wi-Fi) capability. Passwords for wireless access are provided to students on the first day of class.

Students may use the public computers, photocopiers, and classroom technology. Please see the MTSO Student Handbook for information and policies.

Additional technology capabilities

Students are expected to have basic competence in using technology in order to meet the requirements of the D. Min. Program. In addition, students should have a laptop computer with the following hardware and software capabilities before registering for courses:

PC: Windows 10 (version 1903 or later), Office 2016 (or later), Google Chrome web browser, Adobe Acrobat Reader (or comparable), Intel i3 or processor (or better), 8GB RAM (minimum), speakers and/or headset, microphone. Webcam recommended.

Mac: Mac OSX High Sierra (version 10.13 or later), Office 2016 (or later), Google Chrome web browser, Adobe Acrobat Reader (or comparable), speakers and/or headset, microphone. Webcam recommended.

Note: At this time, a tablet is not a suitable substitute for a computer in an academic setting.

Emergency Alert Notification

Classes may be cancelled due to extreme weather or other emergency conditions. Students are notified of campus closures through the emergency alert system.

Emergency alerts are messaging systems that allow campus administrators to communicate quickly with students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency or a campus closing due to inclement weather or other unforeseen events. Through the school alert system, important campus information is sent to students, faculty and staff via text message, e-mail, or telephone voice message. Students are encouraged to sign up for the system:

For courses offered on the MTSO campus: Sign up for the MTSO alert system at <http://www.mtso.edu/alert/>

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Courses

DM901: Continuity and Change. This course examines the constructive tension between the church's desire to maintain authentic traditions and the need to adapt and respond to current socio-cultural forces. Issues will be studied with particular attention to biblical, historical and theological matters.

DM902: Particularity and Diversity. Particularity in ministry challenges us to understand that relevance which locates people in a specific time and space. On the other hand, diversity summons us to the broad living space that human communities find essential for life. This course focuses on the dynamics of race, ethnicity, gender, class, physical/mental challenges and the impact they have on the practice of ministry.

DM903: Communities and Society. Communities, including Christian congregations, nurture and establish human identity. Societies represent larger forces (e.g., economic, political, patriarchal) which can threaten communities. This course will consider lessons of church history, insights of religious sociology and demography, and the witness of scripture as leaders wrestle with responsible and responsive ecclesiology. The church then can see itself in a position to embrace/challenge society with an incarnational focus.

Research Methods

DM981, DM982, DM983: This three-part course addresses both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies for research. The course equips students with the ability to identify project topics and methodologies appropriate for their project. In addition, the course addresses the interface of theological and social science disciplines. Quantitative content of the class includes Basics of Sampling, Question Construction, Answer Scales, Rudimentary Statistical Analysis, Analyzing Data, Participant/Observer Methods and Ethical Issues. Qualitative content will include observation/conversation reporting. This course is taken in conjunction with the second and third courses of the program, then along with the final course of the program.

Peer Groups

DM 905, DM 906, DM 907: Peer Group: These learning communities are designed to provide focused attention to overall learning objectives, issues of praxis and integration and spiritual maturity. In addition, support and critique of the project phase will occur here. Normally, the peer group will form at the beginning of the program and remain together throughout. Peer group sessions will involve 5 classroom contact hours with an additional 5 hours of internet facilitated contact per unit of credit. The instructor will be the Director of the D. Min. Program.

DM908: Project Group. Members of the peer group who plan to complete the degree at the same time are enrolled in this course. The D. Min. Director convenes and coordinates these groups. The course provides a learning community during the project. Students share and critique drafts of proposals and chapters via electronic means.

DM909: Project and Thesis. Students are enrolled in this course upon approval of the Project and Thesis Proposal. The Thesis is a substantive research study based in a specific context and deeply informed by multidisciplinary theological scholarship. This study centers on a Project, which is designed and carried out by the student and seeks to provoke or induce change in a ministerial setting. The word "Project" is used to refer to the particular research undertaken within the ministry setting, while the word "Thesis" refers to the paper that is submitted for D. Min. credit.

Specialization Courses

SPECIALIZATION IN LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

DM914: Spirituality and Change. Any leader who undertakes ministry must have a spiritual focus that incorporates not only ministry, but personal relationship-building, self-discipline and inward/outward journey of the spirit. This course will focus on how leadership stays spiritually centered in the midst of missional faith and work.

DM915: Transforming Mission. Hospitality is integral to the Gospel, and thus to be a primary context for mission and evangelism. The practice of mission and evangelism in hospitality reflects and follows God's welcoming of all in Christ, whose Incarnation was the Word become flesh and not simply speech. In relation to biblical hospitality, this course seeks to study multiculturalism, missional ecclesiology and missional spirituality.

DM916: Individual and Systems Change: Trends, Tasks, Tensions. This class explores the topic of leadership from several perspectives, including personal, empirical, organizational, sociological, and theological. Over the years, leadership has moved beyond the analysis of traits or the acquiring of skills to the naming of a set of tasks that require the involvement of many within the congregation/organization in order for it to thrive. Students will learn to name those tasks and discover where they are naturally gifted to lead and where they must involve others. Along the way, students will be able to try out several assessment and leadership tools for assessing their own contexts and placing that context in broader cultural and congregational movements.

DM917: Preaching for Change. Effective preaching is a means of transformation and change in a community. This course will explore how, through its interpretation of God's Word into the human condition, preaching effects change in the minds and hearts of individuals. Further, students will consider how preaching, as a rhetorical act for the community, has the capacity to shape a community's story; clarify contexts and

issues; provide language and imagery for community self-expression; and reframe the future for mission and ministry.

SPECIALIZATION IN ECOLOGY AND JUSTICE MINISTRY

DM 940: Christian and New Creation in Christian Tradition. Drawing on biblical and historical study, this course examines justice and the creative action of God in the world. Students will explore connections between Christian traditions and systemic problems facing the church and the world.

DM 941: Environmental Theology and Ethics. This course explores contemporary theological and ethical thought in relation to climate change, food security, and our ecological reality. Student may delve into the interplay of science and theology, eschatology, theodicy, ethical critiques of economic theories, and the suffering of God through a variety of perspectives and social locations.

DM 942: Justice and the Practices of Ministry. Contemporary ecological challenges require faith communities to develop creative responses through religious education, leadership development, spiritual formation, liturgy and ritual. Students will discover, critique and create practical resources for forming just congregations and local communities.

DM 943: Ecology, Place, and Justice. Students will identify and engage with local community-based organizations and movements that seek to respond to contemporary ecological challenges. Through on-site research, students will explore the mission, resources, contexts, and structures that allow these groups to thrive.