**Mission Statement**

It is the purpose of Western Theological Seminary to prepare Christians called by God to lead the church in mission.

**Identity Statement**

Western Theological Seminary is an evangelical and ecumenical community of faith and learning in the Reformed tradition that serves the church of Jesus Christ. In covenant with the Reformed Church in America, Western equips men and women for Christ-centered, biblically based, theologically integrated, culturally competent, and mission-oriented Christian leadership.

**Vision Statement**

By 2020, Western Theological Seminary will be a nationally recognized center that forms leaders to empower, renew, and plant congregations and ministries that participate in God's ongoing redemptive work in the world.

**Curricular Values**

- **Biblical**: We listen to and faithfully render the Scriptures in contemporary contexts.
- **Theological**: We grow to be interpreters of the Word in the World, and grow in knowing the Triune God and discerning what God is doing in the world.
- **Reformed**: We live out of a posture of commitment, humility, readiness (anticipation), desire, wisdom, and gratitude that arrives to us from *coram Deo* and is consonant with the Reformed tradition.
- **Formational**: We attend to our baptismal and pastoral identities, and further discern our call and gifts for ministry.
- **Sacramental**: We see and imagine God's grace-filled presence in the many layers and moments of life and understand anew God, self, church, and world. We discover and remember this through the practice of the Lord's Supper and baptism.
- **Contextual**: We are formed as self-aware, generous, and inclusive persons seeking relationships with the people of the world in their various social and cultural identities.
- **Missional**: We discover the church is called to have a sacramental and eschatological vision to bless the world.
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Welcome to Western Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program. The faculty, administration, and staff are eager to walk with you on your learning path over the next few years. The Doctor of Ministry program is committed to developing scholar-pastors who lead the church and God's manifold ministries in mission. Graduates of the D.Min. program are expected to make a contribution to the church in ways that refine and extend the practice of ministry. Welcome to the work.

The D.Min. program at Western Theological Seminary lives at the intersection of personal formation and leading the church as a blessing for the world. The design of the program assumes that participants share a passion for this intersection.

The D.Min. program is distinguished by its emphasis on self-designed learning alongside faculty consultation. Students have flexibility to shape their program around their particular learning desires, while at the same time working in collaboration with peers, nationally known faculty, and a designated advisor. The self-designed learning encourages growth at five levels simultaneously: who you are as a person (emotional and psychological formation), who you are as a child of God (spiritual and ecclesial formation), what you do (skills and experiences), what you know (intellectual and academic formation), and where you serve and empower others (leadership formation).

WTS has designed the D.Min. program to refine and extend the practice of ministry for the sake of the church in the world. The program is designed as a formational process toward an intellectual project. The aim is to refine and extend the practice of ministry for the church. The program encourages students to:

1. Grow in their understanding of how God has called and formed them.
2. Integrate insights from the various scientific, social scientific, and theological disciplines into their ministry.
3. Discern the religious and cultural traditions of their lives and ministries.
4. Increase their skill in ministry.
5. Grow in their capacity to work with others.
6. Contribute a pastorally sensitive and intellectually disciplined artifact to the church around the practice of ministry.

Western Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program is fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the State of Michigan.
THE GOAL AND CHARACTER OF THE D.MIN. PROGRAM

A. The Doctor of Ministry Program as Continuing Education for Ministers
Western’s Doctor of Ministry program began in the fall of 1977 as a response to the growing need of pastors and church leaders for a sustained experience of depth and breadth in continuing education. It recognized the desire of ministers from various backgrounds and denominations to pursue an “in-ministry” degree rooted primarily in one’s ministry setting, rather than in a school. Built on the foundation of the Master of Divinity degree or equivalent training, the D.Min. student would be able to pursue advanced studies in the theory and practice of ministry from the perspective of a mature involvement in ministry. The personal and professional growth secured would, at the same time, yield significant benefits to the candidate’s ministry setting. Four decades of experience with the program have demonstrated that the goals initially set forth have been achieved with a high level of approval and satisfaction by the seminary and the many students who have completed the program.

B. The D.Min. Program’s Educational Assumptions
The D.Min. is designed around the assumptions of adult learning. Adult learners come to education with a collection of experiences, skills, and knowledge that shape a learner’s questions. Adult learners recognize what they know and seek out other learners (peers or faculty) to assist them in discovering what they do not yet know. Ultimately, adult learners take personal responsibility for learning, enjoy collaborative (democratic) processes for learning, and learn for the sake of deeper engagement in the world. The assumption that D.Min. students are adult learners unfolds several additional assumptions about how learning happens in our D.Min. program:

1. D.Min. education is best done by self-motivated learners, where planned learning takes place within the context of active ministry. Self-motivated students gain skill in locating their own resources, a process that enables the student to discover the most efficient methods of learning.
2. Learning is a process of practice reflection and ongoing action. The in-ministry degree program, rather than the in-sequence one, best enables the action-reflection approach to learning. High motivation grows out of a self-selected framework, in contrast to a prescribed curriculum.
3. Self-directed learning units, rather than formal courses, are central to this process.
4. Learning is a communal process where peers, congregation and constituents, faculty and other professionals contribute to the candidate’s learning.

C. A Self-Designed Learning Approach
The commitment to self-designed learning is challenging and rewarding. Students find that the responsibility of being in charge of one’s own learning, with a faculty advisor functioning in a consultative role, is both exhilarating and frustrating. Classical graduate education with professor-directed educational goals and objectives is less effective in developing life-loving practices of educational engagement. Nevertheless, successful candidates discover the rewards of designing their own program of learning in the light of their experience in ministry and in relation to their strengths and weaknesses in ministerial competency.

Self-designed learning functions at five levels simultaneously, taking into account who candidates are as: 1. Persons (emotional and psychological formation), 2. Christ-followers (spiritual and ecclesial formation), 3. Workers (skills and experiences), 4. Scholars (intellectual and academic formation), and 5. Leaders (serving and empowering a faith community/ministry).
A carefully ordered sequence of supervised, on-campus seminars, and self-designed learning units, assure that candidates grow and develop on all five levels at once.

Executed with care and imagination, the candidate engages with a wide variety of lay and professional persons in the learning process, and gains access to learning resources previously unrecognized. The self-designed approach requires **the setting aside of the equivalent of at least one day a week over the first three years of the program**, with clear lines of accountability and support from one’s peers, advisor, and the congregation or ministry agency of the candidate. Students who succeed best are those who develop skill in establishing a clear focus and overall program of study in consultation with the faculty advising team.
The learning process of the D.Min. program at WTS is a problem-based model, whereby learning occurs through assessing a concrete problem for which one has responsibility to engage. This is an action-based learning model that is rooted in a particular context. WTS expects that students recognize problems as opportunities for personal growth, organizational change, and Christ-shaped transformation.

**Definition of Problem-Based Learning**

Problem-based learning is both a curriculum and a process. The curriculum consists of naming and framing ministry related problems that demand from the learner the acquisition of critical knowledge, problem solving proficiency, intentional learning strategies, and collaboration. The process is a democratically designed space whereby the teacher becomes the facilitator so that the learners are able to work together to resolve problems and meet challenges facing them in the day-to-day work environment. The collaborative process continues as learners separate from one another to invest more deeply in content-based acquisition, only to return to offer further insights and solutions to the initial problem.

Dr. Gwendie Camp proposes that problem-based learning is active, adult-oriented, problem-centered, collaborative, integrated, interdisciplinary, utilizes small groups, and operates through reflection on context. It is a developmental and instructional approach built around a problem which is messy and complex in nature; requires inquiry, information-gathering, and reflection; is changing and tentative; and has no simple, fixed formulaic, “right” solution (Finkle & Torp, 1995). Problem-based learning is adaptive learning requiring wisdom.

**Adult-Based Learning**

Malcom Knowles proposed that appropriate conditions for adults to learn effectively include the following:

- A learning environment characterized by physical comfort, mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and accepting of differences.
- A learning environment where learners perceive the goals of the learning experience to be their own goals.
- A learning environment where learners accept a share of responsibility for planning and operating the learning experience and therefore have a commitment to it.
- A learning environment where learners participate actively, and sense progress toward their own goals.

**Role Changes**

In problem-based learning, the traditional teacher and student roles change. The students assume increasing responsibility for their learning. This increases motivation and more feelings of accomplishment and sets a pattern to become successful lifelong learners. The faculty, in turn, become resources, tutors, and evaluators who guide the students in their problem solving efforts.
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The D.Min. Committee exercises policy supervision of the D.Min. program and the faculty delegates responsibility for implementing the program to the D.Min. Committee. The director of the D.Min. program functions as chairperson of the D.Min. Committee.

**D.Min. Committee**

The D.Min. Committee's responsibilities include the following:

- Admissions
- Implementation of policies regarding student status
- Review of all policies and procedures
- Monitoring the quality and standards of the program
- Maintaining relationships with advisors, mentors, and readers

**D.Min. Program Director**

The D.Min. Program Director oversees the supervision and administration of the program and is responsible for the overall ethos of the program, its quality and reputation, calling meetings, and assigning and reviewing the work of mentors and advisors. The D.Min. Program Director is also responsible for implementing the final stages of the project review and public presentation for candidates intending to graduate. Along with the committee, the D.Min. Program Director upholds the integrity of the program at a level above the minimum standard set by the Association of Theological Schools.

**Faculty**

Faculty support the D.Min. program by leading seminars, advising students, mentoring students through their learning units, evaluating final projects, and providing consultation with students throughout the seminars.

The leadership of the seminars is the responsibility of the faculty of the seminary. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the director of the D.Min. program, assigns seminar leadership in light of total faculty responsibility or as an assigned overload. Leading a D.Min. seminar is normally seen as the equivalent of teaching one course in the M.Div. program. The director of the D.Min. program, in consultation with the D.Min. Committee and Academic Dean, may appoint adjunct faculty for leadership in the program as time and circumstances require.

The director of the D.Min. program assigns faculty to advise students in the completion of learning units and to evaluate completed projects. Faculty will be selected based on their expertise in guiding adult students through a problem-based learning process. Assignments are made early in the Orientation and Candidate seminars through consultation with faculty and students.

**Advisor**

Advisors normally assume responsibility for a cohort of 2–4 incoming students per year. Advisors are responsible for guiding students through the program and evaluating their progress in meeting the goals of the D.Min. degree program. Students assume responsibility for consulting with their advisor throughout the entire program.
**Learning Unit Mentor**
Learning Unit Mentors guide and advise students in the development of the learning design, consult along the way as the learning activities unfold, and review the evidences of learning submitted for a learning unit. The Learning Unit Mentor gives final approval to the learning design and evaluates the successful completion of the unit. See “Appendix K: Learning Unit Mentor Expectations.”

**Record Keeping**
Student files are maintained in the office of the Registrar. This file contains the materials submitted with the application to the program and records of student progress in the program. Students assume responsibility for keeping a record of their progress. Students also distribute copies of approved learning units to their mentor, advisor, and the Registrar. All documents also need to be uploaded to the learning management system, Canvas. Each year, a copy of the revised spiritual autobiography is uploaded in the learning management system (Canvas) by the student.

**In-Ministry Accountability Team**
Students assemble a team of three to five individuals in their ministry setting to support their D.Min. work. Students choose individuals with the knowledge, expertise, and influence to both support and hold them accountable in their doctoral program. The team meets periodically with the student to review the focus of their program, progress on learning units, and the significance of learning for the ministry setting.

**On-Site Visits**
Advisors are encouraged to visit their students in their ministry context sometime during the first two years in the program. Students request these visits and assist the advisor in arranging the logistics. These on-site visits help an advisor gain first-hand knowledge of a student’s place of ministry, convey to the student’s constituents the importance of the program, review a student’s progress in learning units and electives, meet with the accountability team, and make suggestions for enhancing a student’s program based on observations made. A brief written report is submitted to the D.Min. Director following the visit.
Statement of Call
Applicants to the D.Min. program submit a 2–3 page statement of call. This statement includes the persons and events that shape the call to ministry and theological understanding of who God has called the applicant to be as a leader in ministry. The statement of call also includes recent discoveries around one’s strengths and weaknesses in ministry. See “Appendix A: Statement of Call Guidelines.”

Statement of Focus
Applicants to the D.Min. program submit a concise statement of focus for their learning in the program. This statement names the problem that will guide the work throughout the program. The focus for the D.Min. program emerges as students reflect on their own call to ministry and the call that has guided them to their particular ministry setting. Students are encouraged to probe the deeper issues in their own Christian formation and the deeper issues in the life of their ministry setting. See “Appendix B: Statement of Focus Guidelines.”

Autobiographies
Autobiographies are a main component of the D.Min. program. Before each of the three on-campus seminars, students are provided instructions for writing an autobiography on a theme appropriate for that particular seminar. These autobiographies deepen a student’s awareness of the work of the Spirit in the world and builds collegiality in the seminar. The autobiographies also help students clarify their project focus. The students present their autobiographies to their peers during each seminar and revise them in light of feedback from their peers and advisor. See Appendices C–E for guidelines on the autobiographies.

Case Study
Case studies give us slices of real life ministerial leadership to discuss and they force us to look at our engagement with a ministry opportunity with an evaluative perspective. The case study invites the writer to discover more about him/herself through peer interaction and personal reflection. The case study also invites peers to discover more about themselves by reflecting on how they would engage a situation that may be foreign to their own experience. See “Appendix F: Case Study Guidelines.”

Seminars
Three seminars are offered annually in May:

- **Orientation Seminar – Year One**
  In preparation for this seminar, students are assigned readings and asked to prepare an autobiography of loss. The time in this seminar is divided between introduction to the D.Min. program, reviewing assigned readings, reviewing and rewriting the autobiography of loss, refining the focus of individual programs, designing learning units, and discussion of current issues and developments in theological education.

- **Candidate Seminar – Year Two**
  In preparation for this seminar, students are assigned readings and asked to prepare an ecclesial autobiography. The time in this seminar is divided between reviewing and rewriting the ecclesial autobiography, sharing a case study, reviewing progress on the first two learning units, designing two new learning units, and considering, in a more targeted way, the topic and framework of the project.
• **Project Seminar – Year Three**

In preparation for this seminar, students prepare a vocational autobiography. The time in this seminar is divided between reviewing the vocational autobiography, understanding research methodology, and preparing the project proposal.

**Learning Units**

Learning units are the building blocks of the D.Min. program. In conjunction with their advisor, students devise two learning units during the first year of the program and two learning units during the second year of the program. Students, together with their program advisor, identify an appropriate mentor for each learning unit among the faculty of WTS. Mentors are also available from outside WTS, either through student or advisor recommendation to the Program Director (the Program Director must approve external mentors). Students negotiate learning units with their advisor and mentor, who approve the design and completion of each unit. A learning unit normally takes three to four months to complete and represents a minimum of 168 hours of work. The design of the learning unit may be changed at any time by mutual consent of the student and learning unit mentor, with major changes reported to the advisor. See “Appendix G: Creating a D.Min. Program Goal” and “Appendix H: Learning Unit Proposal Template.”

**Project**

The project is the final stage of the D.Min. program. A project may resemble the form of a doctoral dissertation with multiple chapters, or it may take other literary forms such as poetry, narrative, drama, a handbook, a curriculum, or sermons. Whatever form the project takes, its successful design and completion should demonstrate that a student has met the defined goals of the program. See “Appendix I: D.Min. Project Proposal Guidelines.”

**Proposal:**

In preparation for the Project Seminar, candidates draft an initial proposal of the project. The seminar is primarily dedicated to refining the proposal. The proposal draft is then reviewed by the advisor to assure coherence with the program goals. The completed project proposal is submitted by the advisor to the Program Director for D.Min. Committee approval. Quality proposals include: a clear problem statement; plan of inquiry or methodology including underlying assumptions; literature review; research design including collection of survey and/or interview data; project outline; timeline; and budget (if applicable).

**Project Thesis:**

In order to be cleared to participate in the May commencement, students must have their projects completed and finalized (including the internal/external review, the project review/defense, and final edits) by April 24. **Students should endeavor to submit their work well ahead of program deadlines.** Completed drafts are initially submitted to the advisor for review. The advisor approves the final draft and submits it to the Program Director, who distributes the project to the internal and external readers. Internal and external readers are appointed by the Program Director in consultation with the student and advisor. Internal and external readers have three weeks to read and offer a response to the Program Director who returns the feedback to the advisor and student. The student considers the responses of the readers and integrates the suggestions into the final project and resubmits the project to the advisor and Program Director. D.Min. projects should, with appendices, range between 100–200 pages. Permission should be granted to significantly go beyond this limit.
**Project Review:**
Upon final approval by the Program Director, he/she establishes a date for the project review.

The project review is a closed-door meeting with the advisor, internal and external readers, and Program Director. The Program Director moderates the review. The format includes a 20-minute presentation by the candidate, 45 minutes of inquiry by the advisor and readers, and 15–30 minutes for deliberation and decision. The presentation by the candidate is focused on sharing one’s learning, reflecting on vocational and ecclesial significance, and extending the implications of the project for future research and ministry practice.

Based on the discussion during the project review, the advisor, faculty reader and outside reader make one of three recommendations to the D.Min. Committee:

(1) To approve the project and recommend the granting of the D.Min. degree; (2) to approve the project on condition that specified revisions be made; or (3) not to approve the project and require further work before resubmission.

For an approved project, the designation “with distinction” may be added if the project is deemed to be of superior quality. When the review is completed, the Program Director of the D.Min. reports the status of the degree to faculty.

**Public Presentation:**
The purpose of the public presentation is to share one's learning with others. The public presentation is a gathering for faculty, area pastors and lay people, and a candidate’s friends, family, and congregation/ministry colleagues. The format includes a welcome and introduction by the Program Director, an opening word by the advisor, a 20-minute presentation by the candidate, and 30 minutes for open discussion moderated by the Program Director.

**Submission of Final Project**
Students must submit a PDF of their D.Min. thesis along with the “Thesis/Project Consent and Release Form” (see Appendix N) to the library before they receive their diploma. Please contact Ann Nieuwkoop (ann@westernsem.edu) for more information.

Students are no longer required to submit paper copies of their D.Min. theses to the library for binding. The library will produce a paper copy for its own collection. All other access will be from the institutional digital repository.

The library will bind personal paper copies at the student’s expense, if desired.

**Commencement and Diploma**
Students receive their diploma at commencement in May. Students may elect to receive their diploma in the student’s place of ministry. Students who elect a special commencement service incur the expenses for the advisor and Program Director. A diploma cannot be granted until all program tuition and fees are paid and the library has a PDF of the thesis and the signed “Thesis/Project Consent and Release Form” (see above).
YEAR 1—Orientation Seminar

Pre-Intensive (March–April)
1. Admission and payment of deposit
2. March 15: Receive pre-intensive materials
3. Write autobiography of loss
4. Complete other pre-intensive assignments

May Intensive: Orientation Seminar
1. Meet Cohort and Advisor
2. Draft D.Min. Program Goal
3. Draft Learning Units 1 and 2
4. Propose peer-reviewed Learning Units to potential Learning Unit Mentors
5. Revise Learning Unit proposals according to Mentors’ suggestions
6. Receive signatures from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor. Submit signed copies to Registrar by July 1.
7. Post/Upload proposals for Learning Unit 1 and 2 on Canvas

August (Third Week)
1. Submit progress report to Learning Unit Mentor on Learning Unit 1

November 15: Learning Unit 1 Due
1. Submit completed Learning Unit 1 to Learning Unit Mentor
2. Post/Upload Learning Unit artifacts on Canvas
3. Receive signature of completion from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor and submit to the Registrar

February (Third Week)
1. Submit progress report to Learning Unit Mentor on Learning Unit 2.

April 1
1. Confirm participation in upcoming second-year Candidate Seminar
2. Secure funding for tuition payments

May 1: Learning Unit 2 Due
1. Submit completed Learning Unit 2 to Learning Unit Mentor
2. Post/Upload Learning Unit artifacts on Canvas
3. Receive signature of completion from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor and submit to the Registrar
4. Submit tuition payment to Business Office

Second Week of May: Arrive at WTS to attend the Candidate Seminar intensive with the following completed:
   Pre-intensive assignments (including ecclesial autobiography)
   Case Study related to ministry context and project question
YEAR 2—Candidate Seminar

Pre-Intensive
1. Confirm payment with the Business Office
2. March 15: Receive pre-intensive materials
3. Write ecclesial autobiography
4. Complete other pre-intensive assignments

May Intensive: Candidate Seminar
1. Reconnect with Advisor early in Week 1
2. Review D.Min Learning Goal
3. Draft Learning Units 3 and 4
4. Propose peer-reviewed Learning Units to potential Learning Unit Mentors
5. Revise Learning Unit proposals according to Mentors' suggestions
6. Receive signatures from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor. Submit signed copies to Registrar by July 1.
7. Post/Upload proposals for Learning Unit 3 and 4 on Canvas

August (Third Week)
1. Submit progress report to Learning Unit Mentor on Learning Unit 3.

November 15: Learning Unit 3 Due
1. Submit completed Learning Unit 3 to Learning Unit Mentor
2. Post/Upload Learning Unit artifacts on Canvas
3. Receive signature of completion from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor and submit to the Registrar

February (Third Week)
1. Submit progress report to Learning Unit Mentor on Learning Unit 4

April 1
1. Confirm participation in upcoming third-year Project Seminar
2. Secure funding for tuition payments

May 1: Learning Unit 4 Due
1. Submit completed Learning Unit 2 to Learning Unit Mentor
2. Post/Upload Learning Unit artifacts on Canvas
3. Receive signature of completion from Learning Unit Mentor and Advisor and submit to the Registrar
4. Submit tuition payment to Business Office

Second Week of May: Arrive at WTS to attend the Project Seminar intensive with the following completed:
Pre-intensive assignments (including vocational autobiography)
YEAR 3—Project Seminar

Pre-Intensive
1. Confirm payment with the Business Office
2. March 15: Receive pre-intensive materials
3. Write vocational autobiography
4. Complete other pre-intensive assignments

May Intensive: Project Seminar
1. Reconnect with advisor early in Week 1
2. Begin refining outline for the Project Proposal, attending specifically to theological perspectives and research methodology(ies).
3. Post/upload initial Project Proposal to Canvas.

August (Third Week)
1. Submit progress report to advisor on Project Proposal

November 15
1. Submit revised draft Project Proposal to advisor

January–March
1. Connect with advisor on progress and timeline for submitting final project proposal to D.Min. Committee
2. Continue to write and refine proposal
3. Submit final project proposal to advisor for submission to D.Min. Committee
4. Receive approval of Proposal

NO MAY SEMINAR: Write, Write, and Write

Year 4 – The Project Writing Year

May–December
• Write draft chapters and submit completed chapters to advisor for ongoing feedback

December 1
• Statement of intent to graduate submitted by candidate to advisor, D.Min Program Director, and Registrar

December 1–February 1
• Bi-weekly updates to advisor on final progress.

NOTE: The following dates are the upper limit deadlines. The student should endeavor, as much as possible, to submit their project ahead of these dates.

February 1
• Submit a completed draft to advisor and D.Min Program Director for advisor feedback (advisor gets two weeks for assessment)
February 15–March 1
- Revisions based on advisor feedback (student gets up to one week for edits; advisor gets up to one week for final review)

March 1 (Deadline for Graduation)
- Completed Thesis submitted to D.Min. Program Director for assignment to internal and external readers (readers get three weeks for assessment)
- Readers return feedback and request for revisions to student (student gets two weeks for edits)
- Revised thesis is submitted to advisor, D.Min Program Director, and internal/external readers; a review (defense) date is scheduled

April 5–April 24
- Project review with student, advisor, D.Min Program Director, and internal/external readers AND public presentation.
- Committee recommends: (1) Approve the project; (2) Approve the project pending specified corrections made and approved by supervisor and director; or (3) Postpone approval of the project and require further work for resubmission.
- Completed thesis submitted to Beardslee Library (in PDF form) along with “Thesis/Project Consent and Release” Form.

May
- Graduation at WTS or student may petition to have special commencement service. Diploma granted upon submission of project and form to library and payment of all tuition and fees.
The D.Min. academic year begins on May 1 of each year and ends on April 30 of the following year. The program is full-time and students are expected to complete the degree in four years but not more than six years (e.g., a student entering the program in May 2017 should graduate no later than the May 2023 commencement). Candidates are expected to complete one seminar and two learning units (12 credits) each of the first two years and a project seminar (4 credits) the third year. The third and fourth year of the program are devoted to completion of the thesis. The thesis is 16 credits. The D.Min. degree is granted when a student has completed the core curriculum of 44 credits. Students not progressing at the above listed rate will not be considered making progress towards a timely completion.

Admission
The D.Min. Committee of Western Theological Seminary grants admission to the program. Minimal requirements are:

- A Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an accredited seminary or graduate school
- A minimum of one year in the present ministerial position

Application
Students submit the following material with their application for admission to the D.Min. Program:

1. A completed application form, including a list of the applicant’s experiences as a church professional, noting places and dates of service together with information about the primary function or responsibilities in the position.
2. Letters of recommendation: One from a lay leader in a local congregation or ministry agency, one from a supervisor (current or former), and one from a peer.
3. Transcripts from all institutions granting undergraduate and graduate degrees
5. A statement of focus for the program. See Appendix B for guidelines.
6. Review of three significant books (no more than 1½ double-spaced pages per book)

Credits
The D.Min. program totals 44 credit hours: three seminars equaling 12 credits total; four learning units equaling 16 credits total; and a final thesis worth 16 credits. WTS does not normally substitute credit for work completed prior to entry into the D.Min. program.

Tuition
The full cost of tuition covers the full four years of the program, including the three seminars and the year of project writing. The amount is payable in three annual installments, invoiced in equal thirds at the beginning of May in each of the first three years. Payment plans can be negotiated to spread the cost across the year. Complete the form in Appendix L if you wish to participate in the payment plan.

In addition to tuition, there is a continuation fee charged for each additional year in the program beyond four years and for each year in which a leave of absence is granted during earlier stages. Students must (1) pay their tuition in full before May of each year in the program, or (2) have a satisfactory arrangement in place (e.g., a monthly payment plan) with the Business Office before May each year.
**Termination Guidelines and Suspension**

First-year students must submit two fully completed learning units by April 15 of the next calendar year in order to attend the second-year Candidate Seminar.

Second-year students must have submitted four fully completed learning units by April 15 of the next calendar year in order to attend the third year Project Seminar.

If students are not completing work in a timely manner, they must petition the D.Min. Committee for an extension of their program. The D.Min. Committee may request that the student withdraw from the program or recommend alternative action, including a leave of absence.

Students may complete their programs in not less than three years and not more than six years after the first year Orientation Seminar. A student who does not complete the D.Min. program within the required six years from entrance may be terminated from the program. If there are extenuating circumstances, the student may petition the D.Min. Committee for an extension. This petition must be submitted sixty days prior to the six-year deadline (please contact the Program Director for more information).

When the quality of the project does not conform to program guidelines or the written portion of the project is unacceptable in any way, the advisor or Program Director may require a rewrite. If this does not produce adequate quality, the project may be referred to the D.Min. Committee with the recommendation that the candidate be terminated.

Students are suspended for failure to pay annual tuition or the annual continuation fee in the fifth year of the program and beyond. A suspended student may not continue work in the program until all fees are paid.

For additional institutional policies, please see the most recent Western Theological Seminary Handbook.

**Standards for Student Workload (WTS Handbook)**

Each credit hour stands for 42 hours work for an average Western student. The workload for each learning unit should be calculated by the following standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>25 pages per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Texts (film, audio/podcasts, etc.)</td>
<td>Time according to engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written research papers</td>
<td>½ page per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-research writing (i.e. journals, reflection papers, etc.)</td>
<td>1 page per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assignments</td>
<td>Based on reasonable expectations of an average D.Min. student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and Events</td>
<td>Hours calculated by time-in-attendance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Writing Guidelines and Writing Studio**  
To ensure consistency in student submissions, the D.Min. and Th.M. programs provide students with a Manual of Style Supplement as the guiding protocol for theses, research papers, and projects. This supplement is based upon the eighth edition of Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. For projects that make extensive use of biblical, classical, and medieval sources, the *SBL Handbook of Style* is also recommended.

The Writing Studio at Western Theological Seminary is available to help you strengthen your writing skills. The studio instructor will assist you in identifying issues such as proper punctuation, sentence structure, and accurate citation methods. Appointments are conducted in the Writing Studio located on the mezzanine-level of Beardsley Library. Online conferencing is also available for students at a distance. In order to schedule an appointment, students should visit the Writing Studio module in the Academic and Community Information Course in Canvas. This is a free service offered through Student Support Services.
The series of seminars are scheduled for two weeks in May for the first three years of the program. Breakfast is available each weekday from 8:00 AM–8:30 AM. Following breakfast, seminars begin and continue until approximately 4:30 PM. The daily schedule includes worship and fellowship and an open hour for lunch.

Special events include a luncheon with the faculty of Western Theological Seminary and a dinner for D.Min. students, mentors, advisors, and their families.

**Sacred Page Bookstore**
Western Theological Seminary’s Sacred Page Bookstore is located in the atrium on campus. Books, gift items, snacks and beverages are available for purchase. Bookstore hours are 8:00AM–12:00PM, Monday through Friday.

**Beardslee Library**
Beardslee Library provides access to over 250,000 print and electronic books for theological study. Included in the collection are reference materials, over 1,300 periodical titles, audiovisual materials, and a unique collection of rare and foreign books. Whether you’re on campus or off, Beardslee Library services are available to you as a Western Theological Seminary student each semester you are registered in WTS courses.

At the beginning of the D.Min. program you will receive a student ID card that doubles as your library card. This card enables you to borrow materials from both Beardslee Library at WTS and VanWylen Library at neighboring Hope College. If lost, the card can be replaced by for $5.00. Please see Appendix M for additional library information.

**Housing**
A list of housing options to consider is listed below. Please note those that would require a car and those that do not, depending on your situation.

**Haworth Inn & Conference Center**
225 College Avenue
Holland, MI 49423
(800) 903-9142
www.haworthinn.com

Beautiful hotel within walking distance of WTS and downtown Holland, with comfortable rooms and a fitness facility. Daily continental breakfast is included. Students staying here would not need a car to get to campus or restaurants/shopping. Request the WTS discount rate.

**Hope College Apartment Rentals**
Contact Kristi Dunn, the Events & Conferences Manager at Hope College, at (616) 395-7038 or at dunnk@hope.edu. Hope College offers weekly rentals of a variety of apartment units, most within walking distance of WTS and downtown Holland. Weekly prices vary based on the unit.
Courtyard by Marriott
121 East 8th Street
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 582-8500
http://courtyard.marriott.com/

Holland’s newest hotel (2016) has five stories, 140 rooms, two restaurants, a pool and hot tub, open common spaces and a fitness room. It is within walking distance of Western’s campus.

Microtel Inn and Suites
643 Hastings Avenue
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 392-3235
www.microtelinn.com

Microtel, located approximately 2 miles from campus, has queen bed suites that include a refrigerator, microwave, and coffee maker. Laundry available on site. Kitchen supplies (dishes) are not provided. Rooms are approximately $70.00/night plus tax.

DoubleTree Hotel
650 East 24th Street
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 394-0111
http://doubletree3.hilton.com

Junior suites features an extra-large room with a bar sink, small fridge, and microwave. Kitchen supplies (dishes) are not provided. Rooms start at $124/night plus tax. Located approximately 3 miles from campus.

Residence Inn
631 Southpoint Ridge
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 393-6900
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/grrho-residence-inn-holland/

Suites feature fully equipped kitchens with full size fridge, stovetop, oven (in 2-bedroom suites only), microwave, dishwasher, coffee maker, pots, pans, and servicing dishes. Rates start at $159.00 per night plus tax. Located approximately 4 miles from campus.

Many other hotels and accommodations are available in the Holland area. Visit www.holland.org for additional options.
Software
The seminary’s course software, Canvas, is a web-based learning management system. D.Min. students utilize Canvas to upload autobiographies, pre-intensive assignments, learning unit proposals, completed learning units, project proposals, and completed projects. Seminar information is also posted in Canvas.

First-year students attend a short Canvas training session during the first week of the Orientation Seminar.

Canvas Learning Managements System FAQ’s

- **What is Canvas?**
  Canvas is a web-based course management software that enables teaching and learning on the internet in a secure environment.

- **What is the Canvas website?**
  You can access Canvas at [https://westernsem.instructure.com/login/canvas](https://westernsem.instructure.com/login/canvas).

- **What web browser or system should I use for Canvas?**
  Currently, Canvas supports Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, and Firefox web browsers, and operates on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, and Android systems.

- **What do I need to know to use Canvas?**
  You need to know basic internet browsing skills, how to download and upload files, and how to add attachments.

- **Is wireless access available during times I am on campus?**
  Yes, you are encouraged to bring your laptop or tablet with you during the on-campus seminars. Wireless access is available throughout the seminary.
STATEMENT OF CALL GUIDELINES

The Doctor of Ministry program assumes clarity around understanding one’s call to ministry. From application to graduation, the D.Min. program expects students to reflect on this past-present-future story of God working to transform a leader’s life within a particular ministry setting. The statement of call is a 2–3 page essay that theologically narrates one’s story in relationship to God calling them as a leader.

The statement of call is autobiographical, not merely as a chronological document but a brief theological memoir. The statement of call addresses the following questions:

- When and how have you experienced the presence of God in your life and ministry? What is your story of encountering God?
- Who is God calling you to become and how have you tested this call in the past?
- What have been the most fulfilling aspects of your ministry?
- What have been the disappointments, frustrations, and difficult passages of your ministry?
- Who are the primary mentors and friends (2–4 persons) who have walked with you as you came to understand your calling? How have they shaped you and your ministry?

Examples of well-written, albeit extensive, theological autobiographies include:

- Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*
- Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Unexpected Destinations*
- Rigoberta Menchu, *I, Rigoberta Menchu*
- Eugene H. Peterson, *The Pastor*
- Lewis B. Smedes, *My God and I*
Applicants are required to submit a 1–2 page statement of focus which guides the work throughout the D.Min. program and is regularly revised as students progress in their learning. Students determine the focus of their program which emerges through reflection on their own call to ministry and the call that brought them to a particular ministry setting. Students are encouraged to probe the deeper issues in their own Christian formation and deeper issues in the life of the ministry setting. The focus for the D.Min. program is the point of intersection between what God is doing in the life of the student and in the life of their congregation or ministry.

The statement of focus should begin with: “In my D.Min. program, I want to explore . . . ”

In this statement, a student should:

- Reflect on the primary themes and questions that have marked your spiritual formation. All of us have been formed in particular contexts (family, church, and cultures).
- Reflect on the primary themes and questions that have marked the ministry to which you have been called. Like an individual, a particular ministry setting has a history and cultural particularities; a ministry has been formed in particular ways.
- Identify the point of intersection between what God is doing in your life and in the life of the congregation or ministry.
- Identify the fields of study that will constitute the core of your D.Min program. The fields might include the traditional fields of theological learning, yet more often in a D.Min. program the fields of inquiry are interdisciplinary.

The statement of focus should provide clarity regarding the project question that the student is interested in that they are bringing to the D.Min. program.
Autobiographies are a main component of the D.Min. program at WTS. Students present their autobiographies to their peers during each seminar and revise them in light of the insights they gain from their peers.

For the Orientation Seminar, you are asked to write an autobiography of loss. Please follow these guidelines:

1. Briefly describe the most significant losses you have experienced. Think of material loss, relational loss, loss of visions or dreams, loss of roles and functions, and the experience of loss that comes when one is no longer part of a larger system.

2. Reflect on what your family of origin, your church family and your culture have communicated to you regarding grieving and mourning.

3. What would you say is the most significant loss you have experienced?
   - Evaluate the work of mourning you did or are doing regarding this loss.
   - Revisit and identify the emotions you experienced during the loss.
   - How did you engage God during the loss? What did you pray about? What was the nature of your communication with God during the loss?
   - Where was God during the loss? Close and personal? Remote and distant? Somewhere in-between?
   - Were you angry with God? Was the loss punishment? Was it God’s will? Did it have nothing to do with God?
   - If you could say something to God about this most significant loss today, what would you say?

4. Reflect on the relationship between this most significant loss and your call to the ministry:
   - In what ways is being a minister helping you to do the work of mourning for this most significant loss?
   - How has this loss revisited you in your ministry?
   - How does this loss help or hinder you in being present to your parishioners or colleagues who are grieving?

5. Describe your personal theodicy (a specific, plausible account as to why God allows evil/suffering/pain) as it relates to the losses you have experienced.

Please submit your Spiritual Autobiography of Loss in the following format, and prepare hard copies for your peers, Advisor, and Seminar Leader.
- Approximately 2500-3000 words
- Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: 12; Line Spacing: 1.5; Margins: 1.5” on the left and 1” on the right, top, and bottom
As I looked out upon this cloud of upturned faces, each representing others already turned to the light, I was embraced by a wholeness I never before experienced. It seemed to me that I was looking at the church as God sees it, not as a series of individual quirks and opinions, but as a single heart of love and sorrow. The only thing that made us different from any other kinship group or society was the mysterious presence of Jesus in the community. We are his body, which is not a metaphor. The ordinary world really is capable of hosting the infinite Being. As I searched the face of my congregation on my last Sunday, I felt the theological point was proved.

~Richard Lischer, Open Secrets

Autobiographies are a main component of the D.Min. program at WTS. Students present their autobiographies to their peers during each seminar and revise them in light of the insights they gain from their peers.

The first autobiography focuses on one’s story of loss; the second focuses on one’s story in, with, for, and against the church; and the third focuses on one’s vocation.

Assignments:

1. Read one of the following with a view toward writing your own ecclesial autobiography.
   - Samuel Freedman, Upon This Rock
   - Lynne and Bill Hybels, Rediscovering Church
   - Richard Lischer, Open Secrets
   - Gary Dorsey, Congregation: The Journey Back to Church

2. Write an ecclesial spiritual autobiography. You may find it helpful to revisit your first-year spiritual autobiography of loss.

Seminar Focus for Autobiography: Deepening the practice of ministry is a primary focus of the D.Min. program; deepening one’s understanding of who the church and who he/she is in, with, for, and against the church is assumed in this. The second installment of the autobiography invites you to explore who the church is and how you are called to lead.

Please utilize the following guidelines toward writing an integrated essay.

1. Briefly describe the most significant experiences you have had with the church. Think chronologically (when have you been engaged), and functionally (the roles you have played or witnessed others playing).
2. Reflect on what the multiple voices (family, education, church, culture), other than God, have communicated to you regarding the church.
3. Where have you seen the church suffer? Reflect on how suffering manifests within a church context.
   a. How did the church relate to the suffering? How did it grieve?
   b. How did you engage in this time?
   c. What was the relationship of the church to God during this time?
   d. If you could write a letter to the church NOW about the time of suffering, what would you say?
4. Where have you seen the church living into God’s mission?
   a. How did the church celebrate?
   b. How were you engaged with the church during this time?
   c. How did the church engage with God during this time?
5. What are the primary practices, actions, and activities that constitute “church.” How and what do these practices, actions and activities mean?
6. Who are you in relationship to the Church? How do you live as a leader who serves in (king), with (priest), and for and against (prophet) the Church?
7. What is your ecclesiology—your biblical and theological perspective on the Church? What is God up to in calling the Church into being and leading the Church into flourishing? Who is the Church? For whom/what does it exist? How is it manifested or structured?

Please submit your Ecclesial Autobiography with the following formatting. Post to canvas to share with your peers and email a copy to your adviser.
- Approximately 2500-3000 words
- Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: 12; Line Spacing: 1.5; Margins: 1.5” on the left and 1” on the right, top, and bottom
“Neither the hair-shirt nor the soft-berth will do; the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

Frederich Buechner

Autobiographies are a main component of the D.Min. program at WTS. Students present their autobiographies to their peers during each seminar and revise them in light of the insights they gain from their peers.

The first autobiography focuses on one’s story of loss; the second focuses on one’s story in, with, for, and against the church; and the third focuses on one’s vocation.

Assignments:

In preparation for writing your vocational autobiography, read James Neafsey’s A Sacred Voice is Calling and one of the other memoirs/autobiographies listed above. Be prepared to share during class how these texts have influenced the writing of your vocational autobiography. Upload to course site in Canvas by the end of the day on May 1, one week prior to the start of the intensive. Prior to coming to the intensive, read through all of your colleagues’ vocational autobiographies. Sign up in Canvas to present major themes from your autobiography during the intensive. Cohort members will ask reflective questions in response to your presentation.

Seminar Focus for Autobiography: Deepening the practice of ministry is a primary focus of the D.Min. program; deepening vocation is assumed in this, and your last autobiography invites you to describe what your calling (vocation) has been and is, while also turning your attention to how God is inviting you to more deeply engage your calling for the future. So we join Thomas Merton, who wrote, “Education in this sense means more than learning, and for such education, one is awarded no degree. One graduates by rising from the dead.”

Please utilize the following guidelines for writing an integrated essay:

1. Briefly describe your call to ministry (again) and how this call has been fulfilled in the past, is being fulfilled now, and how you see the call to be fulfilled in the future.
2. Reflect on what multiple voices (family, education, church, culture), other than God, have communicated to you regarding vocation and work.
3. What are your practices to cultivate listening (discernment) to where and how God is calling you? As Neafsey writes, “Sometimes careful listening reveals that our true calling is not to more work, or better work, or different work, but to a reordering of our priorities and a more balanced life.”
4. Reflect on the suffering related to your calling. In what ways have times of suffering deepened your sense of calling and in what ways have these times weakened your sense of calling (making you want to run away from your vocation)?
5. Reflect on the rejoicing that your calling has bestowed on you.
6. Reflect on your social consciousness and the common good of your calling. How does your vocation bless the world or give life to others as it gives life to you?
7. Describe your theology of vocation as it relates to your experience of work.

Please submit your Vocational Autobiography with the following formatting:
- Approximately 2500-3000 words
- Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: 12; Line Spacing: 1.5; Margins: 1.5" on the left and 1" on the right, top, and bottom
CASE STUDY GUIDELINES

A case study is a story of a problem or situation from your ministry leadership life that invites you and your colleagues to reflect on what occurred and what could occur next time considering the promise of theological reflection. The writing of a case is primarily focused on what occurred as best as you remember it. You are free to change names and locations to protect the confidentiality of those involved.

Case studies give us slices of real life ministerial leadership to discuss and they force us to look at our engagement with a ministry opportunity with an evaluative perspective. The case study invites the writer to discover more about themselves through peer interaction and personal reflection. The case study also invites peers to discover more about themselves by reflecting on how they would engage a situation that may be foreign to their own experience.

1. What is a case study?
   A “case” is a leadership event in which you were a principal player, written in a particular format, and intended to foster learning and faithful action through peer reflection.

2. What should a case study contain?
   A case study has 5 parts—each a paragraph heading to guide your written reflection:

   Background: Share enough information to set the event in context. What do we need to know to understand the event?

   Description: Report what happened with the community (first). Report on how you engaged, if you did. Describe briefly the event as if it was a newspaper article.

   Social Analysis: What is unstated but important to know to understand the multiple layers of the story? What do you perceive to be going on in you and with the people involved?

   Theological Reflection: Where do you find intersections of this case with Scripture, history, or theological tradition? What do you hear God saying to you and the people involved? Relate biblical and theological themes to this event in order to illuminate what took place.

   Educational Objectives: The educational objectives include a discussion of the learning points raised by the case. As you analyze this case, what action did you take? What do you learn (about yourself and the organization) having distance from the case? What would you do differently next time?

3. Formatting
   - Approximately two single-spaced pages
   - Font: Times New Roman; Font Size: 12; Line Spacing: 1.5; Margins: 1.5” on the left and 1” on the right, top, and bottom
   - It is helpful to format a case study in two columns.
The D.Min. Learning Goal is the guiding statement for a student as he/she works throughout the program. It is a fluid statement that needs to be revisited before and after completing each learning unit and seminar. The statement considers problem, context, content, and process. The statement names: the problematic or case by which one hopes to engage throughout the program (e.g. preaching in postmodern world; women in the pulpit; living into a missional theology; embodying Christian practices, etc.); the location or context of exploration, which is most often one’s current ministry location and position; the content area(s) that are central to one’s ministry related question; and the process by which a student desires to explore the question or theme of ministry.

The Problematic: State succinctly in a single, clear, focused sentence the problem or question you are intending to engage in your D.Min. program. Questions to consider:
- What primary ministry practice(s) or cultural question do you perpetually face as a called leader?
- What is the significant challenge you face that will require learning growth on your part?
- What do you believe you are called to do something about?

The Context: Frame in a succinct sentence the facets of your ministry location that give rise to your D.Min. focus. Questions to consider:
- Who do you serve?
- Where are you located in ministry (this includes demographics, cultural particularities, and ministry position)?
- How do you understand these people in light of the redemptive reign of God?

The Content: State succinctly in one or two, clear, focused sentences the learning topics that will orient and focus your D.Min. path of learning. Questions to consider:
- What areas do you need to explore in relation to your problem and context?
- What theological disciplines and sub-disciplines are at the heart of your question?
- What social scientific or other disciplines (be specific) do you need to explore to understand the human dynamics of ministry?

The Process: State succinctly in one or two sentences how you will orient and focus your D.Min learning. How will you know that you achieve the integration of your context, content, and problematic in the D.Min program? What do you hope to accomplish? Questions to consider:
- Will you be able to achieve this goal within the limits of the program?
- Is your goal about your own learning or is it dependent upon someone else (other pastors, the congregation, etc.) changing for its fulfillment?
- How does your goal contribute to the refining and extending of the practices in ministry?
- Does your goal integrate your own calling with your context?
LEARNING UNIT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Student Name
Learning Unit #
Learning Unit Title
Drafted: [insert Date]

Design Approval by [insert Faculty Advisor name]:

Signature: Date:

Design Approval by [insert Learning Unit Mentor name]:

Signature: Date:

Successful Completion Approved by [insert Faculty Advisor name]:

Signature: Date:

Successful Completion Approved by [insert Learning Unit Mentor name]:

Signature: Date:

D.Min. Program Goal: [insert most recent, advisor-approved statement]

Learning Unit Goal: [What is the goal of this learning unit?]

Learning Unit Design: In your learning unit proposal document, articulate the following as thoroughly as possible.

1. What is the problematic or question to which this learning unit is responding?
2. What is the particular aspect of ministry context from which this problem or question arises?
3. What are the learning outcomes intended (e.g., "Following this learning unit, I will be able to . . . “)?
4. What research methods will be used? What body of thought, theory, or literature will be engaged? What specific steps will be taken in my learning unit? This should include an indication of
the resources, places, people, materials, etc. that will be engaged, as well as the processes and research activities by which they will be engaged.

5. What evidence of learning (e.g., papers, case studies, interviews) will be submitted for review when the unit is completed?

6. What is the workload projection of the number of hours required for the learning activities? Each learning unit should constitute the equivalent of a four-credit course (168 hours). See the "Standards for Student Workload" chart on page 15.

7. What is the proposed timeline for the various elements of the learning unit?

8. Attach a bibliography of all resources that will be engaged.
PROPOSAL FOR DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT
by [insert Candidate’s Name]

Date Proposal approved _____________________

Signature of Advisor _____________________________

Signature of Program Director ______________________________

Signature of Candidate _________________________________

Proposal draft # ______

The project proposal is the initial step towards the D.Min. project. The proposal is a substantial document that describes your planned research, analysis, and innovation related to an aspect of ministry. The proposal is the primary way you demonstrate to yourself, your project seminar leader, your advisor, and the D.Min. committee that you have clarity for your research and an expected trajectory of what you plan to accomplish and how you plan to do so. Proposals range from 12 to 30 pages.

D.Min. projects and, therefore, proposals are grounded in practical theology. Practical theology has a set of core values that cut across the diversity within the field. These include: the interpretation of human experience in light of theology and the social sciences; the ongoing formation and transformation of Christian practice in particular communal contexts; and, self-reflexivity. These values are enacted in four interrelated tasks of practical theology:

- **Descriptive-empirical task**, which asks the question, What is going on in this situation or context? Practical theologians answer this question by learning from or carrying out their own empirical research, usually qualitative research.

- **Interpretive task**, which asks the questions, Why is this happening? Practical theologians answer this question by interpreting their research using fitting theories from the arts and sciences.

- **Normative task**, which asks the question, What ought to be going in this situation? Here practical theologians turn explicitly to biblical and theological resources to help them interpret their situation or context, to help them develop new guidelines for ministry in their situation or context, or to learn from best practices.

- **Pragmatic task**, which asks the question, How ought we act in this situation or context? Practical theologians, in this task, propose strategies for action in their given situation or context.

These core values and tasks of practical theology should be evident in all D.Min. proposals and projects. More specifically, each proposal should include the following components (all of which are related to the values and tasks of practical theology):

1. **Clear, concise identification of the problem or question in ministry that the project will address.** Include a description of the ministry practice that you are exploring and the context in which you are exploring it.
The purpose and/or significance of the project for you, for your community of faith, and, if applicable, the surrounding community and any other ministry settings that might benefit from your project. Draw (directly or indirectly) from key learnings and integration arising out of the autobiographies you’ve written throughout the D.Min. program. Include how this project will reflect your growing self-awareness and how it will demonstrate the personal growth and transformation you’ve experienced in the D.Min. program.

Description of the context(s) related to the problem or question that your project will address. This is related to the above categories and includes identification of the particular social, demographic, or political variables important for understanding the context.

Clear and thorough empirical research design. For most of you, this will be qualitative research. Necessary components of research design include the following:

1. Core research question (which may or may not be slightly different from, though related to, the overall question or problem that that project addresses)
2. Strategy of inquiry (for example, individual interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation and so forth)
3. Sampling strategy (who are the participants in your research and what is your rationale for choosing these particular people)
4. Data gathering and analysis (for example, using audio recorders, taking notes, transcription, identifying themes in transcriptions, and so forth)
5. Storing data (how long you will store data; who will have access to the data; when you will destroy the data)
6. Ethical issues in carrying out the research (for example, your relationship to the participants and how that might impact results; any ways in which participants would be vulnerable in the process; how you will receive informed consent from participants; freedom of participants to participate, to not participate, or to terminate participation partway through without any negative repercussions)
7. Interview guidelines (if applicable)

Literature review. An overview of the primary social scientific (or philosophical or other scientific) sources and biblical and theological sources that will inform the project. This should include how these sources will be related to the empirical research and to one another. As you write your literature review, consider these kinds of questions (do not answer them all or answer them in a rote, linear fashion):

1. What are the primary and secondary social scientific (or similar) fields of inquiry for your project? What primary models, authors, or schools of thought inform your project? How do you plan to engage, use, critique, and integrate these fields of inquiry?
2. What biblical-theological questions are central to the project? How is your question understood theologically? How will you engage the theological questions in constructive ways throughout the project? On what theological ground does your project stand? How does it bring your theological tradition into fresh engagement with contemporary challenges and insights? What theological vision will your project imagine?
3. How do the biblical/theological sources and the social-scientific sources relate to one another? (This is a question about interdisciplinarity.) Are they in mutual conversation? How will you maintain conceptual distinctions while drawing connections among these fields of inquiry? Are they creatively brought together to construct new norms for ministry?

*Project outline.* This includes an outline of the chapters in the project, including, if applicable, the creation of any particular resources or products as a result of the project. The latter might include a manual, sermon series, curriculum, website, and so forth, as part of the pragmatic task of practical theology. Chapter outlines should be detailed and clearly identify how portions of the project are interwoven. Frequently, the project outline is included in an appendix.

*Other appendices.* Timeline for completion of the project. Budget for the project, if applicable. Letter inviting people to participate in your research. Informed consent form to be signed by research subjects.

Overall, all projects and proposals should adhere to doctoral level academic standards. This includes, among other things, following the writing guidelines listed in the D.Min. handbook and reiterated in the project seminar syllabus. Along with this, you are required to follow the Manual of Style Supplement when submitting the proposal. You are also encouraged to seek feedback and support from the WTS Writing Center.

Finally, the project seminar will provide opportunity for you to develop and revise your project proposal in conversation with your D.Min. cohort, the seminar leader, and your advisor.
Advisors serve alongside a D.Min. student for the duration of the program. The role of an advisor is to track progress and coherence between a student’s final project question and the multiple learning units designed year-by-year. The expectation of the Doctor of Ministry program is that each learning unit builds on another and contributes to the final project. In other words, learning units, at their best, are draft chapters answering pertinent learning towards a final project. The coherence of this work is a shared responsibility between the advisor and the student.

Expectations for D.Min. advisors include:

1. Guide student through the program.
2. Meet multiple times for in-person conversations with the student(s) during the May D.Min. seminars.
3. If possible, visit the student’s ministry site during the first two years of the program (in consultation with the D.Min. Program Director).
4. Attention to completion of learning units, namely
   a. Check-in quarterly on progress toward completion
   b. Read student’s evidence of learning papers for each learning unit
   c. Sign off with Learning Unit Mentor upon completion of the learning unit
   d. Provide general accountability in drafting the learning units toward coherence with project question
5. Participate in annual advisor training sessions led by the D.Min. Program Director
6. Provide annual updates on the student’s progress to the D.Min Program Director (preferably by April 15)
7. Work with the student in preparing a project proposal, offering particular attention to theological perspective and project methodology
8. Walk with student in project phase, namely reading drafts, submitting a final draft to an assigned committee (Director, Internal Reader, and External Reader), and follow-through on revisions until completion
9. Participate in the Project Review and Public Presentation of Project (see page 8 for details on the review and presentation).

Training Advisors
Each year in the spring, the D.Min. Program Director will invite advisors to an annual training seminar to clarify program changes and best practices for advising D.Min. students. Participation is expected in fulfilling the requirements of a D.Min. advisor.
LEARNING UNIT MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Description of the Program
In the D.Min. program at WTS, students attend, in successive years, three on-campus seminars in which they determine the focus of their program, design four Learning Units, and prepare a design for their final project. Our program is distinguished by its emphasis on spiritual formation, self-designed learning, ecclesial reflection, and mentoring. Students have the flexibility to shape their program around their particular needs, while working in collaboration with their student-peers, mentors, and advisors. An advisor from the faculty at WTS guides each student through the whole program. A mentor oversees a specific Learning Unit.

Responsibilities of a Learning Unit Mentor
In the first two years of the program, students design and complete a total of four Learning Units, usually completing two per year. Annual seminars support the process of designing effective learning units that will contribute to a student’s overall D.Min. goal. Once the focus of a given unit has been determined and the most appropriate person has been identified, that person is appointed to be the mentor for the unit. Mentors may be members of the seminary faculty or they may be others who are chosen because they have particular expertise in the area of learning the unit pursues. A mentor has responsibility to guide and advise the student in the development of the learning design, consult along the way as the learning activities unfold, and review the work submitted as evidence of learning. The mentor gives final approval to the learning design and evaluates the successful completion of the unit.

Elements in a Learning Unit Design
A learning unit is a course of study. The following elements should be covered in the Learning Unit Proposal:

1. What is the problematic or question to which this learning unit is responding?
2. What is the particular aspect of ministry context from which this problem or question arises?
3. What are the learning outcomes intended (e.g., “Following this learning unit, I will be able to . . . ”)?
4. What research methods will be used? What body of thought, theory, or literature will be engaged? What specific steps will be taken in my learning unit? This should include an indication of the resources, places, people, materials, etc. that will be engaged, as well as the processes and research activities by which they will be engaged.
5. What evidence of learning (e.g., papers, case studies, interviews) will be submitted for review when the unit is completed?
6. What is the workload projection of the number of hours required for the learning activities? Each learning unit should constitute the equivalent of a four-credit course (168 hours). See the “Standards for Student Workload” chart on page 15.
7. What is the proposed timeline for the various elements of the learning unit?
8. Attach a bibliography of all resources that will be engaged.

The design of a learning unit may be changed along the way by mutual consent of the student and mentor. Any major changes need to be made in consultation with the learning unit mentor, student, and advisor.
ENROLLMENT FORM FOR DEFERRED PAYMENT PLAN (DPP)

Complete the following form if you wish to pay your D.Min. tuition in monthly installments on our Deferred Payment Plan. The form can be submitted to Kerry Eshenaur in the Business Office. If you have questions regarding payment, fees, or tuition, please contact Kerry Eshenaur at:

Email: kerry@westernsem.edu
Phone: (616) 392-8555 ext. 106
Fax: (616) 392-7717

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ENROLLMENT FORM FOR
DEFERRED PAYMENT PLAN (DPP)

Name of student ______________________________________________________________________

Academic period covered by plan (please check one):
   ___ First year of the D.Min. Program
   ___ Second year of the D.Min. Program
   ___ Third year of the D.Min. Program

Please acknowledge each of the follow components of the plan with your initials

   ___ A $25 charge will be charged to my account each year in which I use the DPP.

   ___ I will pay my bill in monthly installments with the first payment due during the first week of the first year seminar.

   ___ Each month a 1% interest charge based on the outstanding balance will be added to my account.

   ___ All balances must be paid in full before I will be allowed to start the next year.

   ___ Payments can be made with cash, check, credit card or EFT.

Signature of Student ___________________________ Date________________________
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Access to Online Resources

Access the catalog, databases, e-journals, and e-books by going into any Canvas course and clicking the “Library Resources” link in the menu on the left. This will open a new browser window in which you are authenticated as a student user and can access e-resources without logging in again. Login information for the computers in the library is the same as your student Gmail login.

Requesting & Borrowing Materials

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Journal articles: To request a scan of a journal article or essay, go to the Beardslee Library home page and under Request Materials, select Journal Articles under Off-Campus Student Requests. Fill out and submit the request, and the article will be scanned into a PDF file and emailed to you. (To request articles not owned by WTS, see Interlibrary Loan below).

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Overdue fines: A late fee of $1.00 is charged for each overdue item. For books more than 28 days overdue, you are billed $67.50 for replacement of each book. If the book is returned within 60 days of the billing date, $60.00 is waived and a non-refundable $7.50 billing fee remains on your library account.

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Tutorials: Tutorials for using library resources are available on the library home page under Services.

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Interlibrary loan is available at no cost to you for books and articles not owned by Beardslee Library. To find materials at other libraries, search WorldCat (link on the library homepage under Find). To put in a request, fill out and submit the Interlibrary Loan Request form, which can be found on the library home page under Request Materials. It may take up to two weeks to acquire books through ILL, since the book must be mailed from the lending library to WTS and then mailed to you. Articles may arrive faster since they are scanned and emailed. A/V materials and books published within the current year are typically not available through ILL. The circulation period and number of renewals is determined by the lending library and will vary.

ATLA Reciprocal Borrowing Program

Some libraries belonging to the American Theological Library Association have agreed to grant free borrowing privileges to each other’s distance learning students. This means that as a WTS DMin student, you can go to any participating ATLA library, show proof of current enrollment at WTS, and check out materials according to that library’s policies. For more information and a list of participating libraries, go to our library home page, and under Services, select WTS Students, WTS DMin Students, and then May I use other Theological Libraries.

Copying, Scanning, & Printing

You will receive a copy card during your first DMin seminar, and it will be kept for your convenience at the library front desk. Printing and copying costs 10¢ per page with a copy card and 15¢ without, and there is no charge for scanning. If lost, your copy card can be replaced for $1.00.
Assistance

For assistance with research questions, Interlibrary Loan, and circulation, contact Allison Van Liere, Circulation Supervisor.
Email: allison@westernsem.edu
Phone: 800-392-8555 x139

For assistance with library technology, please contact Steve Michaels, Emerging Technologies Librarian
Email: steve@westernsem.edu
Phone: 800-392-8555 x187

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