**Bexley Seabury Seminary**

**Course title**: ML691 **Research Methods**

**Term offered: January 2018**

**Meeting Dates/Times/Place: January 12, 2018, 7 p.m.- January 14, 3 p.m. on the Chicago campus.**

**Instructor(s): Suzann Holding and Ellen K. Wondra**

**Contact information:** [sholding@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:sholding@bexleyseabury.edu), [ewondra@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:ewondra@bexleyseabury.edu)

**Office hours:** We are available by email. Please email with request and possible times for phone conversations. If you wish to meet during the classroom session, please arrange an appointment *in advance*.

**Course description:**

Effective practice of ministry engages developing and maintaining significant relationships of many sorts. Such relationships require clear communication based in deep understanding of persons, contexts, and possibilities. This course helps students develop two key skills for effective ministry: effective writing about complex topics; and qualitative research into practices and theories of various aspects of ministry.

There are three aspects of the course:

* Introduction to and discussion of the Congregational Study. This will prepare students to undertake and complete the Congregational Study by the end of the ensuing Fall term.
* Developing the writing skills needed for DMin-level work, including the thesis. Here we will focus on basics of effective writing that brings together experience, practice, resources, analysis, and interpretation.
* Introduction to and discussion of qualitative research methods. Students will explore formulating a research question or succinct thesis topic, discerning appropriate research participants, and devising appropriate methods for collecting the data needed for DMin projects. This part will also develop students’ ability to engage in theological reflection as part of information and data analysis—a crucial part of the thesis project.

The course is focused on developing knowledge and skills needed to complete the DMin. This will entail the following:

* Statement and discussion of students’ own ministry contexts, understanding of ministry, and possible research interests. This includes consideration larger social contexts and the significance of gender, race/ ethnicity, sexual identity, connection with other, global contexts, and so on.
* Introduction of relevant materials and resources, including strategies for research.
* Development of preliminary approaches to students’ research interests and methods for pursuing it.

**Course goals and outcomes:**

Participants will:

1. Explore academic, qualitative and quantitative research methods. This will allow students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary perspectives in ecclesiology, missiology, and the meaning of missional leadership and ministry in context (1.2).[[1]](#footnote-1)

The required preliminary bibliography will be used to assess student progress toward this goal.

2. Develop an initial articulation and exploration of the “Burning Question” that prompts their research interests. This will allow students to develop and demonstrate the ability to identify a relevant topic significant to faith community leadership and development, and to develop an effective research model, using appropriate resources; to analyze and evaluate the results and successfully to articulate one’s conclusions; and to contribute original theological and practical knowledge to the field (4.1). This will also allow students to begin to develop the skills needed for the Congregational Study and the Thesis Project (2.2)

The required reflection paper will be used to assess student progress toward this goal. The rubric for Essay: Original Thought will be used. The paper and the assessment will be included in the student’s portfolio.

3. Engage in theological reflection as part of information and data analysis. This will allow students to demonstrate ability to facilitate discernment of congregational identity by employing methods of organizational, social, cultural, and contextual analysis (2.1)

Both the required preliminary bibliography and the required reflection paper will be used to assess student progress toward this goal.

**Course Requirements:**

* Completion of reading and assignments due prior to the classroom sessions. Students will be able to complete assignments on Moodle beginning **December 1, 2017.** (25%)
* Full attendance at all class sessions. (25%)
* Participation in class discussions and interactive learning experiences. (25%)
  + Class comments and questions are to show familiarity with the required reading and exhibit prior reflection on a preliminary DMin thesis topic and research design. An imaginative and creative stance toward church leadership is greatly encouraged.
* Completion of assignments following classroom sessions, due no later than **February 23, 5 p.m.** (25%)
* Completion of the student course evaluation
* Participation in worship, while not required, is an integral part of students’ formation.

**Required Reading:**

* **Please note: you need the editions indicated below**.

Earlier editions are outdated. And though Turabian, 8th ed., contains much of what is in *Craft of Research*, you will be better helped by having both Turabian and *Craft of Research*.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research,* Fourth Edition. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)

Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation,* 4th Edition, Jossey-Bass, 2015. ISBN-10: 111900361X; ISBN-13: 978-1119003618.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Eighth Edition, ed. Wayne C. Booth et al. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) ISBN: 978-0226816388

Joseph M. Williams and Gregory G. Colomb, various selections from idem., *The Craft of Argument,* Second Edition. (NY: Longman, 2003) – **available on Moodle site**

*Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation Guidelines for Rerseach with Human Subjects* (2014) - **available on Moodle site**

Recommended texts and websites:

*Texts*:

William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*.

There are many editions of this classic, all of them helpful short guides to good writing. Highly recommended.

Karen Elizabeth Gordon, *The Transitive Vampire: A Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, *The Well-Tempered Sentence: A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*

These are short and enjoyable handbooks, with unusual examples; e.g., “She lay tastefully dying in an unruffled green gown and never once complained.”

“Seminary Writing 101: Your Guide to What ~~Lays~~ Lies Ahead,” from Trinity Lutheran Seminary; available on Moodle.

Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley and McKiney,eds., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

Osmer, Richard, *Practical Theology; An Introduction.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008.

*Websites*:

As a Bexley Seabury student, you have full access to the Styberg Library and through it the Northwestern University Library System, *including online resources* (<http://library.garrett.edu/>). In addition, the United Library reference staff is available to chat online: <http://library.garrett.edu/index.php/2013-07-26-04-50-21/2013-07-26-04-50-20>

Many colleges and universities have Online Writing Labs (OWLs) and often have resources for those who are not instructors or students at the university. Here are a few:[[2]](#footnote-2)

* The Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
* Ohio State University Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing: <http://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center>
* *The Chicago Manual of Style* Online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/contents.html>

And there are specific sites with specific foci, such as:

* “Basic Guide to Writing an Essay” at <http://lklivingston.tripod.com/essay/>
* “Procrastination: A Reflection” at <http://www.writing.northwestern.edu/procrastination-a-reflection/>
* Northwestern University Writing Place section on grammar at <http://www.writing.northwestern.edu/tag/grammar/>
* *Chicago Manual of Style* Quickguide to citations at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>

**Assignments and due dates:**

*Due Friday, December 1, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.*:

Write a 2-page (500-word) paper where you identify your area of interest in terms of research and the writing of your thesis. What is your specific issue or concern? Why is this important and valuable for your own ministry as well as making a contribution to the broader practice of ministry? At this early stage in the DMin program, indicate your preliminary thinking as to research approach. Post this paper in the designated site on Moodle *and bring an electronic copy with you.*

*Due Tuesday, January 2. 2017, at 5:00 p.m.*

* Post your final paper for Congregations in the 21st Century on Moodle.[[3]](#footnote-3) We will review these papers as a diagnostic exercise. *Bring an electronic and a print copy of this paper with you for use in class.*

*Due before first classroom session* (January 12):

* Read
  + *Craft of Research*, Parts I-III
  + *Qualitative Research*, Part One, chapters 1-4
* Review your submitted course paper in light of *Craft of Research*. Note places where this paper could be better organized, make key points more strongly, or be more clearly written. We will also be reviewing these papers as a diagnostic exercise. *Bring an electronic and a print copy of this paper with you for use in class.*

*Due after classroom sessions*

* Prepare a preliminary bibliography for your topic of interest, consisting of no fewer than 20 credible resources available in print or online. For online resources, be sure to include URL. Use Turabian to learn how to format items in the bibliography. *Post this bibliography on the Moodle course site no later than Monday, February 14, at 5 p.m.*
* Write a 2-page (500-word) paper where you explore using qualitative research methodology in your research. What is your specific issue or concern? How might you articulate a research question? What qualitative data can help you answer this question or explore your issue or concern? What theological and theoretical understandings will help you shape your research design and data analysis? *Post this paper on the Moodle course site no later than Monday, February 14, at 5 p.m.*
* Post a reflection on each colleague’s paper that has been posted on the Moodle. *Post this response on Moodle no later than Friday, February 23, at 5 p.m.*

**Note:** Extension on work in this course will be granted only in extraordianary circumstances, and must be requested in advance of due dates. See the section on Extensions and Incompletes below.

***Tentative* Classroom schedule:**

Friday, Jan. 12

7 p.m. Introductions

Introduction to the course

Introduction of the Congregational Study

9 p.m. Compline

Saturday, Jan. 13

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

9-noon Writing and research for the DMin

1:30 – 4:45 Qualitative research

5 p.m. Evening Prayer

Sunday, Jan. 14

9-10:45 a.m. Pending questions: Congregational Study and qualitative research

11 a.m. Eucharist

Noon Lunch

1:30-3 p.m. Pending questions: writing and research for the DMin

**Absence Policy:**

Due to the intensive nature of our courses on campus, it especially important that you be present for the entire intensive session. Please adjust your personal and employment calendars accordingly. In the event of an unanticipated absence due to illness or emergency, you must notify your instructor immediately. It is within the discretion of the instructor, up to an absence of one day of instruction during an intensive, to determine whether or not and to what extent a grade reduction is appropriate and/or makeup work will be required. Beyond an absence of one day, it is within the discretion of the Academic Dean, in consultation with the instructor, to determine if a passing grade for academic credit will be permitted. It is the student’s responsibility to request class notes for missed classes from another student. Audit or CEU students who are absent for a whole weekend intensive session (2 days) or for more than one day of a week-long intensive will receive a grade of W (withdrawn).

**Course Withdrawal Deadlines and Procedures:**

Students who wish to withdraw from this course must do so by the end of the second day in a week-long intensive or by the Friday following the first weekend instensive. It is the responsibility of the student to formally withdraw from the course either online through SAM (the student portal available to students who have log in credentials) or by completing a “course withdrawal form” (available on the web site under “current students”/ “forms and documents”) and submitting the form to the registration coordinator, Susan Quigley. [squigley@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:squigley@bexleyseabury.edu). Students who stop attending classes but do not formally withdraw from a course in a timely manner will be ineligible for a refund and may receive a failing grade for the course.

**Extensions and Incompletes:**

Extensions for submission of course work required to complete the course are not routinely granted. Extensions for the submission of course work of up to one week beyond the posted deadline at the end of a semester or term are within the discretion of the instructor to grant upon good cause shown. Students who require a longer extension to complete course work, up to a maximum of 30 days, must obtain the permission of the Academic Dean by submitting a completed “Extension Request Form,” signed by the instructor, on or before the originally posted due date. See “Current Students”/ “Forms and Documents” on the seminary web site.

A grade of Incomplete (I) for a course will not be granted in the absence of the most extraordinary or unavoidable of circumstances as set forth in the Student Handbook. A completed “Incomplete Request Form,” signed by the instructor, must be submitted to the Academic Dean no later than the last date that course work is finally due. See “Current Students”/ “Forms and Documents” on the seminary web site.

**A Word about Assessment:**

Bexley Seabury Seminary regularly evaluates the quality of our programs using a variety of data and artifacts, including portfolios of students’ work. These portfolios consist of designated student work (artifacts) from each course, along with the instructor’s rubric-based evaluation of the artifact.

At the end of the term, the course instructor will send your final reflection paper with comments and evaluation (Essay: Original Thought) to you before it is placed in your portfolio.

We use your portfolio to assess student learning (in the aggregate) and the effectiveness of our curricula in reaching desired goals and objectives. This process does not involve any further evaluation of your work for grading purposes. No portfolio or artifact is evaluated until all identifying information is removed. No identifying information will be included in any evaluation or report.

For further information, see the Student Handbook. You may also talk with your instructor, your advisor, the Faculty Assessment Officer (Prof. Jason Fout, [jfout@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:jfout@bexleyseabury.edu)), or the Academic Dean, [tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu).

**Plagiarism:** *Bexley Seabury Seminary’s Statement on Responsible Use of Material by Others*

Plagiarism is the taking of the words, ideas, and methods of others as one's own. In academia, plagiarism involves the use of others' words and ideas without adequate reference to the author or indication of quotation. It is a serious form of academic dishonesty or academic fraud, and offenders are subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion from the school. In order to avoid plagiarism, especially by inappropriate use or citation of quotations and ideas, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements and practices of citation found in Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*. Unfamiliarity with these requirements and practices is not an acceptable reason for unintentional plagiarism. Plagiarism cannot be evaded through the alteration of occasional words from one's source.

When plagiarism is detected, the instructor will assign the work an appropriate grade and then refer the matter, together with evidence, to the Academic Dean who, in consultation with the faculty and the President, will make an appropriate disposition of the matter, which may include failure of the course, academic probation for a designated period, suspension for a designated period, or expulsion from the program. The student's bishop will normally be notified of the situation.

Those who have questions about the nature and scope of plagiarism should consult the Academic Dean.

1. DMin Curricular Map (by outcome), 2017-2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. You will easily find more if you search for “online writing lab” or the name of the college or university and “writing.” The college or university from which you received your bachelor’s degree may have services for alumni/ae; it’s worth checking. There are also various commercial writing services and software programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If you have not taken Congregations in the 21st Century, review and submit instead the final or major paper for another class in this program that you have taken. If you have questions, contact Suzi ([sholding@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:sholding@bexleyseabury.edu)). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)