

# Bexley Seabury Seminary

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## ML575/675 – Making Mission Possible in Tough Times – January 11-29, 2021

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Intensive Online January Course (with synchronous and asynchronous connections)

**Online, synchronous meetings Tuesdays and Thursdays: Jan 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28:**  
**10.00-1.30 am Central Time**

Note that Tuesdays will have the last 1 hour (12.30-1.30) with M.Div Students and Thursdays will have the last 1 hour (12.30-1.30) with D.Min Student

There will be additional 1.5-hour meetings with your small-group/hub each week.

The Rev. Dr. Lisa R. Withrow

Contact information: [lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu) – 740.815.6131

Office hours: Appointments by request via Zoom or phone

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**Course Description:** Particular attention to change in the vocation of ministry challenges us to understand sharp-edged relevance which locates people in specific time and space. Diversity and intersectionality summon us to the broad living space that human communities find essential for life. This course focuses on the dynamics of change for the church and other ministries in the midst of (and post) COVID-19 and ongoing racial unrest, and the impact liminal space has on the missional practice of ministry. Change theory, liminal thinking, creating movements outside the church with a missional mindset, as well as tools for managing change, including its accompanying dilemmas, will be incorporated into class work and discussion.

### Course Goals and Outcomes:

**Goal 1:** To create a container and define terms for the course, particular and universal. “Tough times,” “missional opportunities,” “movement” “post-colonial, global mindsets,” “intersectionality,” “stakeholders,” and “sectors” will be terms used frequently and commonly.

*Learning outcome:* Students will be able to interpret contexts in their particularities while balancing the universality of the human condition, with particular attention to each person’s social location/lens informing his or her perspective. (Competency)

*Curricular Outcome:* DMin-1.1, 1.2, 2.3, 3.2                      MDiv-3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

*Assessment:* Students will understand their own intersectional lenses in conversation with others’ intersectionality as demonstrated by their responses to the questions presented for video assignments. Evidence of competency will be seen in verbal responses to difference, understandings of the definitions above, and articulation of how diversity matters in ministry contexts. They will also demonstrate understandings of stakeholders and missional opportunities in their written responses to case study work in hubs.

**Goal 2:** To understand the impact of globalization and emerging futures on local context, from which missional ministry can derive deeper significance and relevance.

*Learning outcome:* Students will be able to connect the global nature of ministry with their particular ministries based on a missional and theologically reflective focus. Understanding the impact of oscillating between particularity and universality when discerning mission will be addressed in the midst of learning principles of Source, Islands of Sanity, and Theory U. (Competency)

*Curricular Outcome:* DMin-1.1, 1.2, 3.2 MDiv-3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3

*Assessment:* Students will demonstrate level of missional ministry focus in light of the readings through two assignments: Peace/Wheatley and final project (M.Div.) or paper (D.Min.). Level of effective integration of course material based on ability to understand mundi/macro-contexts interacting with micro-contexts will be indicated in professor's feedback/grade.

**Goal 3:** To incorporate understanding of change theory, liminal thinking, managing anxiety and conflict through polarity management, and introducing appreciative inquiry tools.

*Outcome:* Students will become proficient with these tools for use in missional ministry relevant to contexts and issues presenting themselves in their work.  
(Skills)

*Curricular Outcome:* DMin-2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2 MDiv-4.2, 5.1, 5.3

*Assessment:* Tools practiced effectively and evaluated through hub responses, Steinke paper, and class participation.

**Goal 4:** To integrate intersectionality as social location with missional ministry in turbulent, globalizing times for effective, relevant leadership in faith communities with particular attention to a particular social sector based on Theory U.

*Outcome:* Students will show integration of concepts and practices in the class conversation and in case study hubs (the process is based on the "U" in Theory U), connecting them to their own missional ministry in tough times.  
(Competency)

*Curricular Outcome:* DMin-1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1 MDiv-3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3

*Assessment:* Level of engagement with and incorporation of Theory U in class, in hub process, and in final projects/papers as described below (artifacts) will demonstrate students' understandings of emerging missional ministry in light of intersectionality and particular sectors of focus.

## **Methods**

1. Synchronous – students will meet twice per week, online, with the professor, and once per week, online with their hub for case study work. Total 23.5 hours online.

- Each class period will last 2.5 hours, followed by an additional 1-hour meeting, rotating between M.Div. and D.Min. students each week.
- Each hub will meet for 1.5 hours per week at the time agreed upon by participants.

2. Asynchronous – individual online time will be required for videos. Students will work offline to read and write as assigned. 144.5 hours or more as needed.

### **Course Readings and Assignments:**

#### Required readings:

1. Choose one poet, musician, or artist who comes from a different social location (race, sex, gender, economic “class”, language, geography, background, age, or experience, etc.) than you. Bring your choice to class every morning to share via voice or camera – and please post on Canvas in case others wish to revisit your contribution.
2. Dennis, Marie, Renny Golden, and Scott Wright. *Oscar Romero: Reflections on His Life and Writings*. Orbis, 2000.
3. Peace, Jennifer Howe, Or N. Rose, and Gregory Mobley, eds. *My Neighbor’s Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012.
4. Scharmer, Otto C. *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*. Berrett-Koehler, 2018.
5. Steinke, Peter L. *Uproar: Calm Leadership in Anxious Times*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
6. Tutu, Desmond Mpilo. *God is Not a Christian (and other provocations)*. HarperOne, 2011.
7. Wheatley, Margaret J. *Who Do We Choose to Be? Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017.

#### Supplemental readings:

Branson, Mark Lau. *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry, Missional Engagement, and Congregational Change*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2016.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York, NY: Spiegel and Grau, 2015.

Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016.

hooks, bell and Amalia Mesa-Baines. *Homegrown: Engaged Cultural Criticism*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006.

Jaworski, Joseph. *Source: The Inner Path of Knowledge Creation*. Berrett-Koehler, 2012.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Abounding in Kindness: Writing for the People of God*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2015.

Oswald, Roy M. and Barry Johnson. *Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010.

Rendle, Gil and Alice Mann. *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2003.

Rivera, Mayra. *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2007.

Snow, Luther K. *The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2004.

Volf, Miroslav. *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.

Withrow, Lisa R. *Leadership in Unknown Waters: Liminality as Threshold into the Future*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2020.

Withrow, Lisa R. *Claiming New Life: Process-Church for the Future*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008.

Woods, Jeff C. *On the Move: Adding Strength, Speed, and Balance to Your Congregation*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2009.

#### Assignments and Expectations:

General comments - Students who are taking the course for credit are required to complete the student course evaluation at the end of the semester. You also are encouraged to participate in worship as an integral part of faith formation and cohort solidarity.

Worship will be available to students at designated times; all are encouraged to participate.

For the course (all times for items due are Central U.S. time)

1. Write a personal introduction and post it on Canvas by [January 11 at 5.00 pm](#). Include this information in no more than 500 words:

- hopes for ministry
- any experience that have significant impact in your ministry
- conflicts you may have encountered
- hopes for this course
- anything else you would the class to know about you

This submission will be graded on thoroughness of answers and writing capability (grammar, flow, transitions, use of vocabulary, clarity of sentences). (5%)(Goal 1)

2. Complete all readings prior to the first day of synchronous online class ([January 12](#)).

3. Videos will be posted for class discussion during the week ([January 12, 19, 26](#)). Please watch them and have these reflections in mind for synchronous class; no writing is

required but preparation for discussion is essential, with course goals in mind. (Included in participation grade; Goals 2, 4):

- What is the main point the video is attempting to make?
- How do you understand these terms in light of the video: “Tough times,” “missional opportunities,” “movement,” “mission,” “post-colonial, global mindsets,” “intersectionality,” “stakeholders,” and “sectors”?
- What does the video have to do with ministry in your setting?
- How does the video connect with the authors you are reading?
- What is the takeaway from the video that informs your theology?
- What impact might the video make on your work?

4. Bring poetry, music, or art offering to each online, synchronous class session for devotional time. (Goal 1)

5. Attend and participate in all class discussions, both with professor and in arranged small group “hubs” (10%) (Goal 1)

6. Write a paper focused on the Peace (et al.) and Wheatley texts with the following points (1000-1200 words, post on Canvas by [January 14, 9.45 am](#). (20%). This paper will be graded based clarity and thoroughness of thought, attention to questions, and writing capability (grammar, flow, transitions, use of vocabulary, clarity of sentences). (20%) (Goals, 2, 3, 4)

- Identify the purpose or thesis of each book
- Imagine the variety of authors in conversation with each other during a day together
  - What, if anything, do they hold in common?
  - What would they debate about in light of current events/pandemic/world discord?
  - How could 1-2 authors of your choice from Peace (et al.) inform Wheatley’s work and *vice versa*?
  - What difference does this material make for missional ministry?
- Draw a conclusion about the significance of/insignificance of these Stories/Testimonies and Islands of Sanity for your ministry of today and tomorrow (Goals 2, 3, 4)

7. Meet as a designated (by the professor) “hub” of 3-4 people for the purpose of case study work. This hub will [meet weekly January 12-29, for 1.5 hours](#) based on the group’s convenience, to employ the case study method. Each week, one person will present a case from his or her ministry setting/experience, with the remaining group creating a coaching format to address the case. The intent is not to “fix” a problem, but to engage the presenter in conversation until the presenter identifies a new or reframed way forward with stakeholders, sectors, and missional opportunities in mind. *Written case studies and reflective responses from the author and each member of the hub will*

be turned in to the professor after the hub meets – [due January 15, 22, 29](#). (15%) (Goals 3, 4)

Format for hubs:

- Check in (5 minutes)
- Choose timekeeper/facilitator (1 minute)
- Presenter brings particular scenario/case (10 minutes)
- Scenario with brief background
- Named dilemma
- What has been attempted or experimented with and what has not worked
- What the hopes for the scenario/case are for the future
- Participants ask clarifying questions (data) (10 minutes)
- Silence – pay attention to images, thoughts, bodily responses arising in self (3 minutes)
- Participants feed back to presenter what emerged in the silence (presenter is listening only) (10 minutes)
- Presenter asks questions of participants based on what strikes him or her – conversation led by presenter based on questions about stakeholders, sectors, and missional possibilities (10 minutes)
- Participants ask questions of presenter based on what is emerging in conversation and on class material engaged thus far (DO NOT GIVE ADVICE OR FIX THE SITUATION) (10 minutes)
- Takeaways from conversation spoken by everyone, connected to class material (10 minutes)
- Presenter develops next steps in conversation with participants (10 minutes)
- Presenter names how he or she can be supported in action plan and how she or he will be accountable (5 minutes)
- Closing

The case will be written as outlined under the format above. Length 400-600 words. Due [January 15, 22, 29](#). Reflective response also required as per next paragraph.

Reflective responses by each participant including the presenter will be written as personal takeaways (do not repeat the case in the response) and potential insights to missional ministry in his or her own setting. Length 300-500 words. [Due January 15, 22, 29](#).

8. During the course, write a reflection on Steinke’s thesis and its relevance for local ministry (600-800 words, post on Canvas by [January 19, 9.45 am](#)). This paper will be graded based on clarity and thoroughness of thought, insights and connections for ministry, and writing capability (grammar, flow, transitions, use of vocabulary, clarity of sentences). (15%) (Goal 3)

- Identify the thesis of the book
- What is important about Steinke’s claim and method?
- What did Steinke miss?
- What is the particularity for local ministry in light of other religions and globalization?

9. Final project/paper: (Goals 1-4)

Masters Students: (35%) Write an interview script where you are the host. The interview introduces Tutu, Romero, and Scharmer (imagine a podcast or online interview webinar). The interview script should be approximately 2500 words, and emailed to the professor by [January 29, 5.00 pm](#), Central – [lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu)). This script will be graded on creativity, thoroughness of the subjects covered by the authors, insights and connections for ministry, and writing capability (grammar, flow, transitions, use of vocabulary, clarity of sentences). (Assessment artifact)

*Cover these topics:*

- The thesis of each book, with the authors in conversation with each other and you as facilitator (overlaps and differences)
- What Theory U and attending to the poor and/or powerless have to do with each other
- What each one suggests to address troubled times
- What each might say to the audience of faith organizations about a way forward that leads to thriving
- Concluding comments that have a “wow” factor for this interview; what do you want the audience to take away as facilitator? What would the authors themselves want the audience to take away? What do the takeaways have in common and also hold as difference?

Doctoral Students: (35%) Write a paper that integrates learning from all authors, including one author of choice from the Peace (et al.) collection, and your hub work to answer this question: What of the themes outlined in the authors are of importance to missional ministry-as-movement in your context? (The paper should be 2800-3000 words, and emailed to the professor by [January 29 at 5.00 pm](#), Central – [lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu)). This paper will be evaluated on critical thinking, thoroughness of understanding, insights and connections for ministry, and writing capability (grammar, flow, transitions, use of vocabulary, clarity of sentences). (Assessment artifact)

*Address these issues:*

- What concepts/authors relate most particularly to the mission of your community’s ministry?
- What would each author have to say about your community’s mission?

- As you balance particularity and universality, how do you create an island or islands of sanity in your context? (Wheatley) What might that sanity look like specifically (spiritually, programmatically, pastorally)?
- What new action plan might you create for your community's ministry based on what you know now?
- Conclusions, takeaways, and next steps for your ministry based on your learning in this course. Delineate how you can be supported in action steps, and be held accountable to follow through.

**Calendar of Due Dates:**

Date/time due	Assignment 1	Assignment 2
January 11 – 5.00pm	Personal introduction posted	Video
January 12 – 10.00am	Readings completed/video	Hubs meet during week
January 14 – 9.45am	Peace/Wheatley paper posted	
January 15 – 5.00pm	First case posted	Reflections on case posted
January 19 – 9.45am (paper)	Steinke paper/video	Hubs meet during week
January 22 – 5.00pm	Second case posted	Reflections on case poster
January 26 – 10.00am	Video	Hubs meet during week
January 29 – 5.00pm	Final project or paper emailed	
January 29 – 5.00pm	Third case posted	Reflections on case posted
<b>January 31 – 9.00pm</b>	<b>Grades posted by professor</b>	

**Feedback from the Professor:**

Dr. Withrow will attempt to provide feedback and grading on assignments within 3 days of their due date. Papers submitted on Canvas will be returned on Canvas, with thorough commentary and a grade assigned at the bottom of the paper based on the percentages listed above. Questions about comments/grades should be directed to the professor via email.

Grading for this course (see below for information about withdrawals, extensions, and incompletes)

1. D.Min students will earn a Pass or Fail grade, which is the equivalent of a C or better for passing.
2. M.Div students will earn a letter grade, with a minimum of a C or better to pass the course.

<b>Bexley Seabury requires a minimum grade of C to pass a course.</b>								
Grade	Points	Description	Grade	Points	Description	Grade	Points	Description



A (4.00)	96-100	Superior/Mastery	A- (3.67)	90-95	Excellent	B+ (3.33)	87-89	Very Good
B (3.00)	84-86	Good (high)	B- (2.67)	80-83	Good	C+ (2.33)	75-79	Acceptable
C (2.00)	70-74	Acceptable/Adequate			(low)			(high)
F/NC (0)	<70	Unacceptable (Fail/No Credit)						
<b>A grade of "P" or in a Pass/Fail course is equivalent to a grade of C or above.</b>								

### **A Word about Assessment:**

Bexley Seabury Seminary regularly evaluates the quality of our programs using a variety of data, including documents that are deposited into student portfolios. These portfolios consist of designated student work (artifacts) from each course, along with the instructor's graded artifact and a scored rubric that assesses the work in light of desired curricular outcomes. The designated assessment artifact for this course is the final project/paper.

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 identifying information will be included in any evaluation or report provided to our accreditors or other outside parties. For further information, see the Student Handbook. You may also talk with your instructor, your advisor, the Assessment Coordinator (Lelia Fry, [lfry@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:lfry@bexleyseabury.edu)), or the Academic Dean, (Terry DeLisio, [tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu)).

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### Course Schedule

#### **Monday, January 11: Personal introduction posted on Canvas**

**Watch Ted Talk "The Urgency of Intersectionality"  
by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016 – 18:49)**

*Trigger warning for short clip "Say Her Name" 16:19-49 - violence*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o>

#### **Tuesday, January 12: 10.00-12.30 online together**

**Featured authors: Peace (et al.) and Wheatley**

**Due today: Video discussion, Peace (et al.), and Wheatley**

- Devotions – Poems, music, art (can be posted on Canvas if you like)
- Introduction to the course – requirements, description of hubs
- Creating the container
- Defining terms and discussion about diversity and intersectionality
- Wheatley discussion
- Short break
- Peace discussion and integration of author themes
- Video reflection: intersectionality and framing narratives
- Theological Reflection on our learning
- Takeaways

- 12.30 – 1.30 – *M.Div students online: integration of material with ministry (D.Min students welcome to stay each time)*

- **Due next class period: Peace/Wheatley paper at 9.45 am**

**Thursday, January 14: 10.00-12.30 online together**

**Featured Authors: Romero, Tutu**

**Due Today: Peace/Wheatley paper at 9.45 am, Romero, Tutu**

- Re-entering the container
- Devotional poems, music, art
- Change Theory and liminality
- Short Break
- Liminal space and liminal thinking with courageous leaders (Romero, Tutu)
- Theological Reflection on our learning
- Takeaways
- 12.30 – 1.30 – *D.Min students online: integration of material with ministry (M.Div students welcome to stay each time)*

- **Due tomorrow: Hub case study and reflections**
- **Due next class period: Video discussion, Steinke**

**Friday, January 15: Hub case study and hub reflections due 5.00 pm**

**Monday, January 18: Watch Tedx Talk “Lessons from the Mental Hospital” by Tuesday**  
by Glennon Doyle Melton (2013 – 17:11)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHHPNMIK-fY>

**Tuesday, January 19: 10.00-12.30 online together**

**Featured Author: Steinke**

**Due Today: Video discussion, Steinke paper at 9.45 am**

- Re-entering the container
- Devotional poems, music, art
- Quick review of last week/check in with hubs
- Steinke discussion and introduction of liminality
- Short break
- Steinke and liminality; anxiety in the in-between times
- Video Reflection: telling the truth (courage) or putting on the cape of anxiety (hiding)
- Theological Reflection on our learning
- Takeaways

- 12.30 – 1.30 – *M.Div students online: integration of material with ministry*

- **Due next class period: Scharmer**

**Thursday, January 21: 10.00-12.30 online together**

**Featured Author: Scharmer (part 1)**

**Due today: Scharmer**

- Re-entering the container
- Devotional poems, music, art
- Quick review of Tuesday
- Scharmer introduction
- Short break
- Theory U practices
- Theological Reflection on our learning
- Takeaways
- 12.30 – 1.30 – *D.Min students online: integration of material with ministry*

- **Due tomorrow – hub case study and reflections**
- **Due next class period: video discussion, Scharmer**

**Friday, January 22: Hub case study and hub reflections due 5.00 pm**

**Monday, January 25: Watch Tedx Talk “Theory U – Learning from the future as it emerges”  
by Otto Scharmer (2016 – 24:51)**

<https://youtu.be/GMJefS7s3lc>

**Tuesday, January 26: 10.00-12.30 online together**

**Featured Author: Scharmer (part 2)**

**Due today: Video discussion, Scharmer**

- Re-entering the container
- Devotional poems, music, art
- Quick review of last week/check in with hubs
- Creative Exercise with Theory U and liminality
- Learning to “coach” in the midst of change
- Short break
- Tools – Appreciative Inquiry, Polarity Management
- Video Reflection: social fields as collective; transforming systems – social, ecological, spiritual – across sectors and stakeholders, locally and globally
- Theological Reflection on our learning

- Takeaways
- *12.30 – 1.30 – M.Div students online: integration of material with ministry*

- **Due next class period: be ready for integration of material**

**Thursday, January 28: 10.00-12.30 online together**

- Re-entering the container
- Devotional poems, music, art
- Quick review of Tuesday
- The emerging church – stakeholders, networks, new frames
- Short break
- Final integration of course material
- Theological reflection on the course – full circle
- Takeaways from the course
- Closing the container
- *12.30 – 1.30 – D.Min students online: integration of material with ministry*

- **Due tomorrow – final project/paper and hub case study and reflections**

**Friday, January 29: Final papers due 5.00 pm to Lisa Withrow: [lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu](mailto:lwithrow@bexleyseabury.edu)**

**Friday, January 29: Hub case study and hub reflections due 5.00 pm (posted)**

ALL STUDENTS IN BEXLEY SEABURY COURSES ARE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION THAT IS PROVIDED ON CANVAS:

- ACADEMIC POLICIES AND FORMS;
- REQUESTS FOR WITHDRAWALS, EXTENSIONS, AND INCOMPLETES;
- TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSISTANCE,
- WRITING GUIDELINES AND ASSISTANCE;
- COURSE NETIQUETTE;
- PROHIBITION OF PLAGIARISM