

BEXLEY SEABURY SEMINARY
ML 691 – Research Methods

Term and Year Offered: Spring 2021

Learning Environment: Online synchronous course

Meeting Dates/Times/Place: February 22, March 1 and March 15 from 3 to 5 pm central via Zoom.

Instructor: Emlyn Ott

Contact Information: eott@bexleyseabury.edu or via cell at 614-314-7017

Office Hours: Available by phone, video conference or e-mail; appointments can be made at mutually convenient times.

Course Description: This brief one credit seminar is designed to assist Doctor of Ministry students in developing the research and writing skills they will use in their ministry projects and thesis writing. Doctoral-level work requires knowledge of appropriate research methods that include: how to develop research questions; appropriate research methodologies; ethical criteria for working with human subjects; and what constitutes and is unique about a Doctor of Ministry project design and written project.

Course Goals and Outcomes:

The overall goal of this course is to develop experience in research methods in preparation for the completion of a Congregational Study due December 15, 2021. The course lays the groundwork for a research question and accompanying methodology for Doctor of Ministry research and proposal projects developed during and following Thesis Proposal Practicum.

Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

Goal 1: Students who successfully complete this course will engage in enhanced capacities in developing research questions.

Outcome: You will be able to understand the value of connecting with one's interests and passion in choosing research opportunities; understand the "funnel" and "dialectical" approaches to research design; and use your current ministry context for analysis.

Curricular Outcome: DMin 1.1, 2.1

Assessment: Integration of course readings, discussion during synchronous sessions, 3-page problems paper and one sentence problem statement (25%)

Goal 2: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to assess and review appropriate research methodologies for the Congregational Study and potential Doctor of Ministry projects.

Outcome: You will develop a perspective on research from a theological perspective, develop a biblical narrative for your research intention, explore organizational discovery and organizational

development approaches and discern when to employ qualitative and quantitative research methods with an eye toward the ethics of working with human subjects.

Curricular outcome: DMin 1.2

Assessment: Integration of course readings, discussion during synchronous sessions, practicing procedures process and written summary (25%)

Goal 3: Students who successfully complete this course will engage in a brief research project as a prelude to doing research for the Congregational Study.

Outcome: You will identify a research question in your ministry context and develop an appropriate methodology to pursue consider the proposed research question.

Curricular Outcome: DMin 2.2, 4.1

Assessment: Integration of course readings, discussion during synchronous sessions, sample research question and 10-source annotated bibliography related to your research question. (40%)

Learning Methodology: This course will provide students with an introduction to different modalities of research that are used in Doctor of Ministry projects. Presentations of content, group conversations, student presentations and feedback will be included in the synchronous gatherings on Zoom. Students will have the opportunity to post responses to colleague projects on Canvas for feedback between synchronous sessions. and prior to the submission of final projects and papers. Students will need access to highspeed internet during synchronous sessions and access to the course Canvas site following the first synchronous session on February 22, 2021.

Required Resources

Ammerman, Nancy; Carroll, Jackson; Dudley, Carl; and McKinney, William. *Studying Congregations*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998. ISBN 0687006511.

Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011. ISBN 978-1-61097-276-5.

Studying Congregations Toolkit (<http://studyingcongregations.org/studying-congregations-toolkit>)

Turabian, Kate. L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th Edition. University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN 13: 9780226430577.

Woods, C. Jeff. *Designing Religious Research Studies*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2016. Paperback ISBN 13: 978-1-4982-1892-4. Hardcover ISBN 13: 978-1-4982-1894-8.

Course Assignments and Expectations:

Assignment One:

1. Write a 3-page paper identifying and describing three different problems (*one page each*) as potential topics of interest to you. The problems may be of a local or global nature and may or may not involve the church or one's particular context of ministry. The paper should not

attempt to solve the problems, but rather describe the nature of the problems, systemic realities, and relational dynamics. Each problem should consider 1) Biblical/Theological dynamics; and 2) Communal/Contextual implications. The goal of this initial assignment is not to develop a research question, but rather to explore what type of issues draw you as a researcher, identifying questions such as: *What keeps you up at night? Why do you care about this? What difference will it make to explore this problem?* Be prepared to share with the class in a brief presentation.

Post on Canvas prior to start of class on 3/1/21.

2. Be prepared to present a one-sentence problem statement/research question in class for feedback. Students may gain ideas to enhance the research question or may completely alter their research question based upon classroom discussion.

Post on Canvas prior to the start of class on 3/1/21.

Assignment Two:

1. Practicing Procedures Process: Complete *ONE* of the following in order to practice data gathering techniques. Create and include a research question that is specific to this data gathering exercise:
 - a. Conduct a *focus group* conversation incorporating suggestions outlined in Ch. 8 of *Designing Religious Research Studies* and Ch. 7 of *Studying Congregations*. Write a 3-5-page summary of your project that includes reflection and learnings regarding the process itself. Include your list of questions.
 - b. Conduct a series of *field observations* that include a minimum of three site visits incorporating the suggestions outlined in Ch. 8 of *Designing Religious Research Studies* and Ch. 7 of *Studying Congregations*. Write a 3-5-page summary of your project that includes reflection and learnings regarding the process itself.
 - c. Conduct a series of *interviews* that include a minimum of three personal interviews incorporating the suggestions outlined in Ch. 8 of *Designing Religious Research Studies* and Ch. 7 of *Studying Congregations*. Write a 3-5-page summary of your project that includes reflection and learnings regarding the process itself. Include your list of questions.
 - d. Design, write, and pilot test a *survey* incorporating the suggestions outlined in Ch. 8 of *Designing Religious Research Studies* and Ch. 7 of *Studying Congregations*. Write a 3-5-page summary of your project that includes reflection and learnings regarding the process itself. Include your survey in the Appendix.
 - e. Select and distribute to a group of your choosing a published *instrument* measuring a particular concept/construct that may fall within your field of interest and describe the results of the data obtained. Draw from the suggestions contained in Ch. 8 of *Designing Religious Research Studies*. Write a 3-5-page summary of your project that includes reflection and learnings regarding the process itself.

Assignment Three:

Write a 5-page paper that includes a sample research question (RQ) and accompanying methodology that may serve as a beginning prompt for a project proposal. Include a ten-source annotated bibliography related to your chosen topic. The accompanying proposed methodology should thoroughly answer each of the following questions **that pertain** to your study (not all of the questions may be applicable):

- a. How are you choosing to define the key terms used in the RQ?
- b. What is the overall topic being addressed?
- c. What is the overall research design?
- d. What is the RQ seeking to discover or develop?
- e. How will this project advance God's mission in your ministry context?
- f. What are the key leverage points within the chosen topic and how will each be used as an avenue of development?
- g. What is your leadership role in this project?
- h. What "intervention" is taking place to achieve the desired change or gap?
- i. What are the key criteria by which the success of the project will be evaluated?
- j. Approximately how many subjects will be a part of your qualitative research and how will they be selected?
- k. What is the sample and pool for the subjects of your research?
- l. What specific quantitative or qualitative techniques will be employed to collect data?
- m. How will the data be analyzed?
- n. How will you present the data?
- o. Who are the key stakeholders and how will each be involved in the project?
- p. What are some sample headings that may appear in your summary section?
- q. What is the proposed timeline for the project?
- r. As an appendix, include a minimum ten source bibliography and add a sentence detailing how each resource relates to your chosen topic.

Evaluation:

1. 25% – 3-Page Problems paper (**DUE 3/1/21**)
2. 25% – Practicing procedures paper (**DUE 3/15/21**)
3. 40% – Research Question and accompanying methodology & bibliography (**DUE DATE determined by class**)
4. 10% – Class participation and presentations

Course Grading & Feedback:

- Grades for this course will be Pass/Fail.
- Feedback will be given for online and submitted materials within two weeks of submission. Written feedback will be given as well as a scheduled conversation via phone or video conference about the three submitted materials as well as class participation.
- The equivalent of a C is the minimum passing grade for Pass/Fail.

- Participation in course evaluation is required prior to notification of grades.

Rubrics for Assignments are included on the course Canvas site.

These rubrics will be used in evaluation of all written work for the course as well as the upcoming Congregational Study.

Bexley Seabury requires a minimum grade of C to pass a course.								
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 (low)	C+ (2.33)	75-79	Acceptable (high)
C (2.00)	70-74	Acceptable/Adequate						
F/NC (0)	<70	Unacceptable (Fail/No Credit)						
A grade of "P" in a Pass/Fail course is equivalent to a grade of C or above.								

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: **Assignment Three: Research Question and accompanying methodology & bibliography.**

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), or the Academic Dean, (Terry DeLisio, tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu).

Course schedule:

Mondays, February 22, March 1 and 15 via Zoom
3 to 5 pm central

Meeting One (February 22): Devotions, Introductions, and Overview of the Course

Course Objectives and Goals

Personal (Vocational)

Theological (Biblical, Spiritual, Communal)

Practical (Contextual, Methodological)

Reviewing “Funnel” and “Dialectical/Dialogical” Processes

Assignment: 3-Page Problems paper (DUE 3/1/21)

Meeting Two (March 1): Devotions, Personal Exploration and Potential Research Questions

Assignment: Practicing procedures paper (**DUE 3/15/21**)

Meeting Three (March 15): Devotions, Overview of Research Methods and Design
Debrief and Closing Hopes

Assignment: Research Question and accompanying methodology & bibliography (**DUE DATE determined by class**)

Additional Information:

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