

Overview of DMin in Missional Leadership Courses

1) The Mission Shaped Church in Post Christendom (David Fitch)

The practices of the N. American protestant church have largely been dependent upon Christendom assumptions that make mission a program of the established church. The theology of *Missio Dei*, the onset of new post-Christendom contexts in N. America presses for a fresh approach to cultivating missional congregations. This course examines the cultural assumptions and theology that undergirds the practices of the church. It then re-describes the historic practices of church for the shaping of congregations in Mission.

2) Becoming Doctors of the Church (Mark Mulder)

This seminar orients the doctoral student to being a contextual pastor theologian. It teaches the student ethnography as a pastoral discipline and research method. Fundamentally, the course places each student as a pastor within his/her own ministry context as opposed to a researcher above the context operating upon the field as an object for research. The student will learn the basics of constructing an ethnographic project, how to define his/her "field," record the narratives, ask the right questions, make substantive observations, and then reflect theologically about what has been seen and heard.

3) Biblical & Theological Reflection on Ministry & Culture (Geoff Holsclaw/Fitch)

Each of us engages in life and ministry on the basis of our own "working" theology. This course seeks to help the student define his/her own theological assumptions and to then be able to integrate sound theological understandings into the practice of contextual ministry. At the end of this course, the student should a.) Come to grips with several theological convictions that lie at the foundation of his or her life and ministry, b.) Begin the development of a theological framework for engaging the ministry situation/issue the student anticipates as the main issue in the upcoming DMin thesis.

4) Incarnating the Gospel in Culture

This course explores the inter-section of gospel, church, and culture by bringing together biblical, theological, cultural and social science resources to the issues of engagement with one's particular context. We will learn how to exegete the deep patterns and structures of a community's life within a context in order to recognize how such issues as power, distance, gender, place, race, gender etc. influence an understanding of the gospel and contribute to the shaping of the church.

5.) The Bible in Context: Gospel, Kingdom and Salvation (Scot McKnight)

The contextual theologian must both understand the Bible in its original context and be able see his/her own context thru the Bible. He or she must be able to move from the text to interpreting his/her local context through the lens of what God is doing as revealed in the Bible. This course examines three key themes of the Bible: gospel, authority, and kingdom, along with the related issues of atonement, conversion and women in ministry. During this class, we are learning how to understand these issues first Biblically. This provides the foundation from which to reflect off the context and understand the context in terms of what God is doing. The student will leave this course with a thorough understanding of gospel, kingdom, and church for the practice of interpreting these themes in a local context.

6) Missional Leadership (Alan Roxburgh)

While North American culture is passing through a period of rapid, discontinuous change, little has been offered to church leaders in terms of frameworks and resources to understand and lead church systems through this change. This course provides an alternative framework for understanding the nature and effects of discontinuous change, transition and liminality. It provides a constructive methodology for non-linear leadership based in the theologies of God as Trinity, creation, and the Spirit as one who forms a future among a people. Using systems and complexity theory, this course blends theology and ministerial practice in a new understanding of leadership to open up the future and make provocative proposals for the church to move into the future.

7) Thesis Design (Fitch)

This seminar walks the student through constructing a thesis that begins with a driving question and the participant observer located in a ministerial context. Then an ethnographic process is constructed, theological and cultural concepts located, and a bibliography constructed that sets the stage for a final performance of an original contribution to contextual theology. The approval of the thesis proposal that comes from this class sets the stage for the final thesis that provides the capstone of the Doctoral process.