DM 9014 Project Proposal I

(Topic Seminar)

Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University
January 9-10, 2013
6 to 9 p.m.
Prothro Hall TBD

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Read all of The Professional Practicum Project Guidelines. Pay special attention to: pp. 4-8; 27-28.

I. Course Description

A seminar for first year Doctor of Ministry students designed to develop a formal topic proposal for the student's intended professional project practicum and project thesis. The course also addresses theological writing and research techniques, Required of all D.Min. students. One and a half term hours.

II. Course Objectives

A. To review the purpose of the D.Min. professional practicum and project thesis.
B. To develop an approved project topic.
C. To review different processes for the writing of a thesis.
D. To review research methodologies appropriate for the D.Min. project practicum and thesis, especially congregational studies.

III. Requirements and Assignments

A. Submit an initial draft of the topic; this is due to the instructor **no later than two weeks prior to the seminar (December 26)**. **Please send this electronically, with a copy also sent to your DMin project advisor.** Additional copies the draft topic should be brought for each member of the seminar.
B. Participation in the project topic seminar discussions.
C. Read all of *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* prior to seminar.
D. Submission of the revised topic due two weeks after this class. After revisions have been made and approval obtained from the advisor one copy as an attached e-mail document (MS Word or RTF) or two (2) hard copies of the topic should be sent to the Doctor of Ministry office (Advanced Ministerial Studies), and a copy to each member of the professional project committee.

IV. Schedule

1st Session:
- Introduction; Review Process for Topic Seminar
- Review of the Flow of a Perkins D.Min
- Writing Format & Style in Theological Studies
- Review of Student Topic Proposals

2nd Session:
- Review of Student Topic Proposals
- Research methodologies for the D.Min

V. Required Textbooks

Sensing, Tim *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*, WIPF & Stock, Eugene Oregon, 2011.

Turabian, Kate L., John Grossman, and Alice Bennett *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th edition* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

VI. Recommended Outline for Topic Paper

It should be typed single-spaced and contain at least the following information:

1. **Title**
2. **Problem/Issue**
3. **The Purpose**
4. **Major Steps**:
   This should briefly state:
   a. The areas of research;
   b. The type of planning to be done;
   c. The action steps or periods to be taken;
   d. An evaluation phase that will examine theory, design, execution of the project, and the leadership of the student;
   e. A writing period.
   f. If known, a listing of future D.Min. courses to be taken.
5. **Preliminary Annotated Bibliography**

Excluding the preliminary annotated bibliography, the topic proposal should be one and one-half to two pages in length. The preliminary annotated bibliography should be an additional one and one-half pages.

D.MIN THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICUM PROJECT: PAGES 4-8

I. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICUM/PROJECT (DM9396 /DM9398) It is based on research, design, execution and evaluation of an aspect of ministry uniquely related to the candidate's personal goals and setting of ministry. These guidelines are applicable to all Perkins' D-Min degrees.

A. Description Projects are varied and cover every possible ministry assignment. Projects need not be something no one has done before. If it is new to the candidate and his or her ministry, then it is acceptable. Those in the Evangelism concentration will need to relate their practicum/project to evangelism.

B. Purpose and Aim The format followed is chronological, as far as possible, so that the candidate may sense when things should be done. The candidate is responsible for taking the initiative and meeting the deadlines in the process. The Practicum/Project should be designed to do the following:

1. Be relevant to the candidate's own ministry.
2. Make a contribution to the practice of the candidate's ministry.
3. Equip the laity to fulfill their calling to ministry.
4. Bring to bear upon that ministry a component of objectivity and critique. Include substantive biblical and theological reflection.
5. Develop critical, reflective skills that focus on the practice of ministry. While the minister's task has significant elements of advocacy (e.g., sermons, teaching) the project is intended to develop critical, reflective and investigative skills, and in that sense, move beyond reporting and description.
6. Show evidence of genuine new learning by the candidate.

C. **Criteria for Acceptability** A project is acceptable when it adequately demonstrates the following:

1. Research (biblical, theological, and theoretical) designed to summarize what others have learned about this aspect of ministry.
2. Ministry design.
3. Work done in a setting of ministry with others.
4. Evaluation of theory, design and leadership.

D. **Approval of Practicum Project Proposal** The Practicum/Project approval process is composed of two stages.

The topic stage will normally be complete by the end of the first project seminar (DM9014) that meets during May of the first year for those in the regular D Min Program. It will be completed during the time a candidate is on campus for the next-to-last seminar in the concentration. This stage defines the purpose of the practicum/project.

The prospectus stage is completed as a rule by the end of the second project seminar (DM9019), which meets during May of the second year for those in the regular D Min program and during the final on-campus seminar in the Evangelism concentration. This stage develops the working plan of the practicum/project.

Candidates who are unable to gain approval at these sessions must have their topic and/or prospectus approved by the Director of the D. Min. Program or a person(s) to whom the Director has delegated that responsibility. Should a candidate change his or her practicum/project to an area of ministry other than the one approved, a new topic and prospectus must be submitted to the Director for review by the appropriate persons for approval. **It is mandatory that these approvals be made prior to beginning the practicum/project.**

II. TOPIC – (DM 9014 Topic Seminar)

A. **Aspect of the Ministry Stage** Six months before the topic stage seminar, the candidate should begin serious reflection on the selection of his or her topic. In this regard, the first task of the candidate is to select an aspect of ministry in which practicum project is to be done. That selection may be used for several reasons such as a desire to explore or improve knowledge and skills, the need to develop and carry out a distinctive ministry in a particular situation, or a combination of both.

The Topic development is one of the most crucial stages of the project. The candidate should meet with the proposed advisor to review the practicum/project, prior to developing a topic. The candidate in consultation with the proposed advisor should then develop a draft of the topic. The focus of the topic is to be clear, sharp, and specific. The topic must not be too broad, vague, lengthy, or general.

B. **Description** The topic is a formal statement by the candidate of what his or her project entails, why the project is worth doing, and briefly how the candidate intends to execute the project. It should be about one and one-half typed single spaced pages in length and contain the following:

1. **Title**: Should be very specific using ten to fifteen words.
2. **Problem**: There should be a clear description of the problem to be engaged. It should relate to the project in very specific terms: the need in the setting of ministry, the skill to be developed, and/or the knowledge to be acquired. It is important that the problem be described as a problem and not as a conclusion at which the candidate has already arrived.
3. **The Purpose**: This should be one concise, sharply focused sentence. The intent of this sentence is to serve as the critical guiding goal of the project.

4. **Major Steps**: This should briefly state:
    a. The areas of research;

b. The type of planning to be done;
c. The action steps or periods to be taken;
d. An evaluation phase that will examine theory, design, execution of the project, and the leadership of the candidate;
e. A writing period.

Successful topics depend upon prior background reading and exposure to an issue. A topic cannot be developed without care, reflection, and effort. Preparation of a topic is integral to the execution of the project. Time, work, and effort expended on the topic will pay off in the execution of the project.

The purpose of the careful, precise writing of the topic is to insure an adequately conceived project. A successful topic can be stated effectively in a few words if those words are carefully honed and arise from a background of substantial preparation. If the topic does not achieve these standards, then the candidate is not yet prepared to go ahead with the project.

The candidate should not be surprised or dismayed if the topic is not approved upon the first presentation. Getting started well is essential to success, and those who work with the candidate are concerned to help prevent potential problems at the outset, rather than encourage or approve marginal or poorly conceived proposals that will be problematic at a subsequent phase of the project.

C. Topic Approval **(see page 20 also)** The approval of the topic is arrived at through a consultative process involving the candidate, the proposed advisor, the candidate's peers, the colloquium leader, and a committee of colloquium leaders. The process is as follows:

1. **Topic Proposal**: In consultation with the proposed advisor, the candidate must draft a topic proposal of his or her intended professional project. (For a guide see a sample topic in Appendix A).
2. **Submission of Topic Proposal**: The candidate must submit two copies of the topic proposal to the D. Min. office at least 10 days before the topic seminar. One copy will be given to the colloquium leader and the other placed in the candidate's file. At this time, the candidate should also submit copies of the topic to those proposed to serve on the candidate's project committee.
3. **Colloquium Presentation**: The candidate must bring to Perkins eight additional copies of the topic proposal for use in his or her first colloquium session. During that session the candidate will have about 30 minutes for discussion of his or her topic proposal. Based on the discussion the candidate usually revises or modifies his or her topic proposal.
4. **Colloquium Leader**: The colloquium leader plays a crucial role in the approval process. His or her functions are:

    a. Facilitate the group process, provide feedback, offer suggestions, and decide when the topic proposal is ready for approval.
    b. Represent the topic proposal at the colloquium leaders' committee, make notes of the committee's suggestions and recommendations, and determine if the proposal is acceptable, or needs revision.
    c. Consult with candidates, when necessary, to explain suggestions and recommendations of the colloquium leaders' committee.
    d. Receive revisions and approve them.

Note: Candidates will submit the names and supporting documents for approval to the D. Min. office prior to the first topic seminar DM9014. In addition to approving the Topic at this seminar, the colloquium leaders will approve the candidate's D. Min. committee. For those proposed to serve on the committee it will be necessary for the candidate to submit a vita or resume of non-Perkins committee members

VII. Minority Concerns and the Perkins Curriculum:

In 1975 the Perkins Senate passed resolutions which bear on the relation of the Perkins curriculum to this school's common concern for the status of ethnic minority groups and of women both in education for ministry and in the ministry itself. The following statement summarizes these resolutions with respect to all courses except those in the area of Ministry.

1) Instructors and students alike are urged to use inclusive language, images and metaphors that give full and positive value to both the past contributions and the future prospects of ethnic minorities and women in the church and in the society at large.
2) Instructors and students alike are urged to give sensitive consideration to the role of images from a predominately white and male culture in shaping both the language and concepts of Christian theology and the models and methods of Christian ministry that are widely current today.
3) Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide—in the syllabi, assignments and formats of their courses—opportunities (1) for women students and students from ethnic minority groups to pursue their study with special reference to their own status or tradition and (2) for all students to become acquainted with the special problems and conditions that affect women and ethnic minority groups in human society.

VIII. SMU Disability Accommodations:

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

IX. Recommended Resources

Ammerman, Nancy Tatom, Carl S. Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll, ed. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Aponte, Edwin David. "Issues In: Congregational Studies." *Quarterly Review* 24:1 (Spring 2004): 104-110.

Becker, Penny Edgell and Nancy L. Eiesland, ed. *Contemporary American Religion: An Ethnographic Reader*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1997.

Dudley, Carl S., and Nancy T. Ammerman. *Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Hawn, C. Michael. *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2003.

Recinos, Harold J. *Jesus Weeps: Global Encounters on Our Doorstep*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Schreiter, Robert J. *Constructing Local Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.

Strunk, Jr., William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style* 4th edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.