



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/333-6254

CED670 RESEARCH PRACTICUM in CHRISTIAN EDUCATION Fall 2008

Instructor Information

Professor: Dean Blevins, Ph.D.
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between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

Catalog Description

(Prerequisite: CED570) Project development of research skills within a ministerial context, including providing presentations and writing for ministers and laity.

Course Narrative & Rationale

This course is designed to demonstrate appropriate research and writing at the graduate level including developing the basics for contextual research in local ministry settings. A continuing assumption remains that graduate students must be able to demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research through current print and electronic sources including a critical assessment of appropriate resources for any given topic. The student must also be able to communicate their command of the research material and be able to argue effectively for their interpretation of the material gathered. In addition, since most practical theological research emerges out of ministry contexts, students should be able to engage others in research projects that result in improved ministry practices. While practical theology may embrace a number of approaches, the current emphasis on action research provides one helpful approach for contextually based research.

Educational Assumptions:

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to the processes of Christian education at any level. I will consistently request the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community. Christian community remains the gift of the Spirit, enhanced or hindered by human effort.
3. Students are valued not only as persons who have potential to learn, but also as persons who already have significant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the purposes of the course. Consequently, some of the course assignments will require cooperative efforts among students. Such cooperation is inherent in a Christian community of learning.
4. The course focuses on the community of faith expressed in a local congregation or parish. In order for the purposes of the course to be fulfilled, each student should have a local church or parish in which he/she regularly participates or is able to "call to mind" a recent congregation that provides a living context for ministry discussion..
5. This is a graduate course. The quality of thinking, writing, speech, and class participation should reflect a graduate level quality. Higher levels of thought (e.g., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), writing style, spelling, grammar, as well as faithful attendance, consideration of fellow students and their ideas, and timely submission of assignments is expected.

Students with Disabilities:

It is my commitment to make a reasonable effort to facilitate learning for students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities as the course is presently designed should contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss alternative educational practices that have served the student well in the past, and appropriate, mutually acceptable strategies for the present to insure the student's maximum participation and appropriate evaluation in the course. Student learning limitations need to be based on sound clinical diagnosis and include referential material to help with assessment.

Course Outcomes

As a result of successfully completing this course students will have opportunity to:

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the resources available for research.
- Demonstrate their ability to identify and satisfy the basic acceptable standard for writing style to be utilized in research papers, book critiques, exegetical papers, & essays submitted to graduate faculty.
- Demonstrate an ability to identify and respond to contextually based research issues for the sake of ministry

Required Texts & Course Materials

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN 0-226-06584-7 (270 pp.)

Stringer, Ernest T. *Action Research: Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. ISBN 0-7619-1713-6 (222 pp).

Thorsen, Don and Vickie Becker. *Inclusive Language Handbook: A Practical Guide to Using Inclusive Language*. Grantham, Pa.: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy Inc. 1998. Available on-line [accessed 5/20/2006]

http://www.messiah.edu/whwc/booklets/inclusive_language.html#seven

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers. 6th ed.*, revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937; revised, 1996.

Electronic ONLINE! Citations Guide for Chicago Manual of Style Citation website available on-line [accessed 5/20/06] <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>

Other Texts TBD

In addition you will be asked to read resources provided either online or in class during the semester.

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Submit a 2-3 page **Action Research proposal** including ministry context, project goals, and possible academic resources for consultation of both traditional print and electronic sources. All written proposals/projects should demonstrate appropriate form and style (*Turabian*) as well identifying (in parentheses) the appropriate elements of claims and warrants, evidence and qualifications (detailed in *The Craft of Research*). **Due September 22nd**
 - a. Consideration of the topic's applicability within Stringer's three-fold approach (Look, Think, Act) or another approved approach to contextual learning within a community context (such as Appreciative Inquiry).

- b. Include information addressing supervisory oversight, including an immediate supervisor contact information and means of supervision (i.e. relation with student, means of accountability, etc.).
 - c. Write inclusively, acknowledging the dignity of all persons.
 - d. In addition all writing assignments should reflect appropriate levels of analysis and synthetic thought. See the research and writing assessment rubric available at the end of the syllabus
2. **Develop a comprehensive Action Research project** following the three basic steps of Look, Think, Act; or another approved approach). While the student may not complete the project during the semester, the student should demonstrate the viability of the research practicum till completion. Project reports include the following
 - a. **Comprehensive project proposal (elaboration of Action Research proposal) with detailed steps due Oct 1st.**
 - b. **Mid-term Progress report due the Monday following Reading/Research detail progress on the various steps**
 - c. **Final project “report” written in a manner suitable for publication (5-7 pages) based on accomplishments in the project**
3. Present a portion, if not all, of the **Action Research project** during a CE Research Forum or other public venue (tbd). The depth and focus of the **presentation** may be determined in consultation with the professor. Presentations should be recorded when possible and submitted prior to granting final grade.

Program Requirements: Currently NTS requires Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian format. However many resources in Christian Education utilize either APA or MLA standards, these should be noted for future reference.

As a rule of thumb: all major papers submitted to the faculty should be typed, double spaced, using a font/type size 11, or 12, with one inch margins on all sides. A cover page should accompany all major writing assignments. Indicate all works used for research in a complete bibliography. Document all sources of information used in writing of a paper by means of footnotes, endnotes, or in-text citations according to accepted style. Use "quotation marks" to identify more than five consecutive words from any source, cite the location of this information or any pertinent information gleaned from a source or sources (such as definitions, key terms, historical insights, etc.). Indent quotations more than three lines long according to the prevailing form and style. All thesis work will follow that same standard. **ANY SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS GIVEN IN ANY COURSE BY ANY PROFESSOR WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THESE GUIDELINES!**

Inclusive Language: Student Handbook Statement

As a Christian community, NTS administration, faculty, staff, and students desire to treat all persons with dignity in both verbal and written communication. *A Handbook for Inclusive Language* is available in the office of the Dean of the Faculty to assist in that endeavor.

Plagiarism: Student Handbook Statement

[Professor Introduction: *usually plagiarism occurs unintentionally. In other words, writers unintentionally employ information without realizing the need to cite the source. In a world of “cut & paste” resources online, data of this sort emerges almost unconsciously, often under the radar of student awareness. However, such practices may still be judged as plagiarism. I offer the following statement, a portion of the Student Handbook comprehensive statement, primarily to remind us all to remain vigilant of the danger.]*

Plagiarism is the use of the words or ideas of another person and presenting them as one’s own work. There are few original ideas and especially in the field of theology and ministry few original

ways of expressing ideas. The issue of plagiarism is not the borrowing of ideas or words, but doing so without appropriate acknowledgement of one's sources of those ideas or words. For this reason plagiarism is dishonest and unacceptable in academic work done at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Seminary students are expected to learn the appropriate methods of citing the sources they have used.

Plagiarism should be distinguished from collaborative and cooperative work that is permitted in some assignments. Students who are uncertain regarding the style and degree of citation expected for any assignment should request clarification from the professor....

The faculty member will determine the penalty for plagiarism that he or she discovers in student work. The penalties may include zero credit on an assignment or failure in the course. Faculty are requested to place a record of plagiarism in the student's academic file. Students may be denied permission to continue enrollment at Nazarene Theological Seminary following a second incident of plagiarism. A student who is discovered selling or lending work to be copied by another student knowing that it will be plagiarized may be denied permission to continue enrollment at Nazarene Theological Seminary. In either case, appeals for permission to re-enroll must be approved by the Academic Policy and Admissions Committee of the faculty.

Meeting Schedule

Meeting dates TBD in consultation with the professor. As an independent project, students will concentrate on local context including meetings with their field supervisor where applicable, and document meetings. All students will be expected to present at the CE Research Forum or another public venue.

Method for Submitting Assignments

Please use the assignments section of Black Board unless otherwise directed.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

Late posts receive a 15% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Posting after the assigned week will not be graded. All research/project work is due midnight of the date assigned. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 10% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after the last day of the regular semester.

Course Grading

1000-901: A 900-801: B 800-701: C 700-600:D 599 or Below: F

Grade Descriptions

"A"-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)

"B"-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)

"C"-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)

"D"-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)

"F"-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

See rubrics for major assignments and posting for further information on assessment.