

## **DM 702 Research Design and Methodology Spring 2024**

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*Appreciation to Dean Mai Ahn Tran and Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith for use of their syllabi to design this course.*

### **Course Description**

This Practical Theology online course seeks to provide tools for examining lived religious faith in concrete situations, settings, and contexts by Christian religious leaders. Such research is undertaken to gain better insight into the habits, beliefs, and practices of individuals and their religious communities, and even within broader cultural-religious landscapes. Such understanding is gained to enhance practical wisdom and imagination for religious leadership and can generate new practical theological insight for the Church and its faithful witness and mission in the world.

The course seeks to explore and expose students to theological and philosophical goals and methods of *qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods* research that may be employed as practical theology research. We will consider statistical principles, research designs, methods, techniques, and tools used in performing and interpreting research in counseling. The course also draws on literature from the fields of (inter)cultural studies, congregational studies, pastoral care and counseling, Christian religious education, practical theology, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and educational evaluation.

The course will consider the epistemologies of differing approaches to research, read and evaluate the work of other researchers, practice and evaluate methods of data gathering, and write an operational question for a pilot research project/proposal.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Define, differentiate, and critique various qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research approaches and their relevance to practical theological research.
2. Analyze and evaluate various methods of collecting and reporting qualitative and quantitative data in Practical Theology
3. Articulate a philosophical and theoretical foundation for Practical Theology methodology.
4. Articulate and operationalize a research question.
5. Design and pilot a practical theological research project.

## Required Books

### Online in the Styberg Library Catalogue Unless Otherwise Indicated by Price

Wright, Almeda M. *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*. New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Court, Deborah. *Qualitative Research and Intercultural Understanding : Conducting Qualitative Research in Multicultural Settings*. 1st ed. Milton: Routledge, 2017.

Creswell, John W., and Cheryl N. Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design : Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Fourth edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*. Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

- All Reading Assignments are in e-format and found in the Styberg Library Online Catalog.
- Additional reading assignments will be posted on Moodle.

## Required Movies

*God Tell It On The Mountain*

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70V0MAxLSlw>

Street Level (Homeless Youth Documentary, 2019)

## Recommended Books

Andrews, Dale P., and Robert London Smith. *Black Practical Theology*. Edited by Dale P. Andrews and Robert London Smith. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2015. (e-format)

Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research, Second Addition: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, Oregon: (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011) ISBN 13: 978-1-61097-276-5. [Amazon Price: \$47.00]

## Assignments

**1. READING & CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%).** Reading and class participation is extremely important. Reading assignments and activities, as indicated under Course Outline, should be completed early each week. As instructed, students will then complete an activity by providing their 100 – 150 word response/reflection bi-weekly or **every two weeks**. Posts will be due by noon Thursday of the assigned week.

**2. Essential Components for Developing a Research Protocol (40%)** Each student will complete the activities that move toward designing a research method for practical theological research. Details for each activity will be posted in Moodle and include due dates.

A. Develop a Research question and a theoretical/philosophical perspective. (10%, **Due 3/8**)

- B. Develop questions for survey and interview protocols, and other relevant approaches for your research as well as ethical concerns. (10%, Due 4/5)
- C. Develop/Determine ethical concerns, a process for analyzing data and a validity/reliability process. (10%, Due 4/5)
- D. Design a research protocol with the appropriate qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods (10%, Due 4/19)

### **3. Toward the DMin Research Project (20%).**

Select **three** peer-reviewed journal articles (of great interest and related to your question), read them, and write a one-page single spaced review paper for each article. The journal articles should be based on empirical research, which uses either a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method. Include a summary of the research question, the author(s') hypothesis, the methods of analysis, the results of the study, and the conclusions made. Include your overall impression of the study. Assess its strengths and limitations and its usefulness for your DMin Research project. **Due April 12<sup>th</sup>**

**4. DMin Pilot Research Project (20%)** Each student will do a pilot of their research project based on their research protocol. This is a selected segment of your research protocol such as an interview with one or two people using your interview protocol or the development of a survey for distribution to 5 - 10 people. The reporting of the pilot research will be presented in a PowerPoint Presentation and presented via Zoom on a schedule provided by the instructor. Detail guidelines will be given via lecture synchronously as well as in Moodle.

### **TECHNOLOGY NOTES**

Given the lack of personal contact during the course, students will need and it's a student's responsibility to be certain they have sufficient technological ability to access and participate in this course. The instructor is not obligated to take technological difficulties into account when assessing the student's work.

Minimum Technological Requirements:

- Internet Connection - Students must have regular, reliable access to a high-speed internet connection that is sufficient to run streaming video with no difficulty. Usually, cable or DSL would work. Modem dial-up cannot be sufficient. Courses will have regular deadlines that must be accomplished with online activity.
- Web Browser - Students must have the latest version of the web browser (Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, etc.)
- Operating System – Students must have access to a reasonably up-to-date computer and operating system (Windows, Mac OS, etc.). Computers must play sound. The Styberg Library has a limited number of laptop computers available for check-out. The Northwestern University Library has a computer center as well.

- Moodle Learning Management System – Students should have access to the Moodle LMS and know how to take quizzes and post in discussion forums as well as submit writing assignments on Moodle.
- File Format – Students must be able to work with files normal to the Microsoft Office environment, especially .doc/.docx. Many students with Apple computers can manage such files with the iWork suite of applications. Students without MS Office or Apple iWork might try the freely available OpenOffice applications: <http://www.openoffice.org>. Also available to students is the Google Drive suite to create documents and presentations (<http://drive.google.com>).

## **CLASS POLICIES**

*Assignments & Submissions:* All assignments should be completed, on deadline and as assigned, in order for a student to pass the course. Late papers and other assignments will be accepted without penalty only in extreme and documented situations, such as a death or serious diagnosis in the family, a lengthy illness, or other emergencies. Please plan ahead so that an acute emergency (e.g., brief illness, computer problems, pastoral emergency) does not interfere with submitting the work on time. Unexcused late assignments will be accepted for one week following the due date with a penalty of 10 percentage points for each day the paper is late. Papers must be typed, double spaced, with a 12 point font size. Times New Roman Style is required. Please proofread papers and follow the standard citation format using Turabian style and include title page and bibliography page.

*Academic Integrity:* G-ETS has a clear policy concerning plagiarism (See the plagiarism policy in the latest G-ETS Academic Handbook). Students are responsible for knowing and observing this policy. All written work will undergo an online plagiarism check. Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and reported to the Academic Dean.

*Language:* In all writing and class discussions, use inclusive language and think critically about language use, particularly about gender, race, ethnicities, cultures, differently-abled bodies, and theological differences. In an online discussion, take the time to express oneself clearly and make sure that one's post contributes to the flow of discussion. Because spelling and grammar convey the seriousness that students bring to the task, please proof-read the posts before submitting them.

*Special Needs:* Students with special learning needs should contact the Office of the Dean of Students at the beginning of the course. Please speak with the instructor regarding any needs they might have after speaking with the Dean of Students.

### ***Proviso***

The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at any time should it be warranted by the demands of sound pedagogy. Changes to the syllabus will be announced in Moodle.

## **Course Schedule**

**Weeks 1 February 5 – 10, 2024**

**Zoom Session on February 9<sup>th</sup>**

Community Building and Introduction to the Course

What is Practical Theology?

Read Miller-McLemore, Definition of Practical Theology and *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, “Introduction: The Contributions of Practical Theology” & cursorily review Part II in the online book. Also, read her more condensed encyclopedia article on Practical Theology in Moodle.

Post an image that represents your understanding of Practical Theology as informed by the reading assignments. Discuss who you are, where you pastor/serve, DMin concentration, and why you selected the image. No more than 100 words please. We will discuss your post in comparison to others during our **Zoom session on February 9<sup>th</sup>**.

## **Week 2 February 12 – 17**

## **Zoom Session on February 15<sup>th</sup>**

Research Methodology in Practical Theology

Read *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*, by Wright, Introduction, Chapters 1-2

Respond to the following questions using Microsoft Word and upload your responses in Moodle

1. What is the primary question for the research in the book?
2. What are supporting research questions?
3. What was the approach for collecting data? Try to map it in a flowchart.
4. Post your flowchart on Moodle. Be prepared to discuss your work in our **Zoom session on February 16<sup>th</sup>**.

## **Week 3 February 19 – 24**

Research Methodology in Practical Theology

Read *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*, by Parker, Chapters 3-4

1. What are the salient themes in the research?
2. How does Wright answer her primary research question?
3. Per your understanding of Practical Theology, discuss praxis as found in the book.

Post your answers to the above questions in 100 – 150 words by February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Read Chapters 1-4 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* by Creswell and Poth, Read chapters 1-3 cursorily and focus on chapter 4.

Take the Primer Quiz in Moodle titled *Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry*, **February 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

## **Week 4 February 26 – March 2**

Research Methodology – Formulating a Research Question

Review lecture notes on Moodle

Watch the short documentary *Street Level* (Homeless Youth Documentary, 2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeVa76n-7Oc>

Respond to the following questions in Microsoft Word and upload your answers in Moodle

- List three research questions you as a Practical Theologian might explore about

- homeless youth.
- Upon reading Creswell and Poth, what qualitative research approach would you use for your research questions? Discuss each question.
- What is your rationale for the use of the qualitative research approach?

## **Week 5 March 4 - 9**

### Formulating a Research Question

Review lecture notes on Moodle

Read Chapters 1-4 in *Qualitative Research and Intercultural Understanding*, by Court.

Write your research question in no more than two sentences (first paragraph). Write a paragraph that explains your theoretical/philosophical perspective that supports your research. Post your two paragraphs on Moodle. Comment on two other research questions and their theoretical/philosophical perspectives.

**Due March 8<sup>th</sup>**

## **Week 6 March 11 - 16**

### **Forum Discussion on Posted responses – The Research Question.**

Select your **3 articles** for review and writeup using Microsoft Word on Moodle. Read the articles carefully. Determine the research question in each article.

## **Week 7 March 18 - 23**

### Focus on Ethnographic Methods in Practical Theology

Take the Quiz on Ethnographic Research Methods in Moodle titled *Ethnographic Research Methods*.

Return to the Creswell and Poth chapter on Ethnographic Methods. Read their methodology closely.

Determine how your research question can be investigated using Ethnography.

Develop a protocol for observing practices in the context of your research question.

Share your experience in Moodle in no more than 100 words.

## **Week 8 March 25 - 30**

**SPRING BREAK      March 25 – April 1, 2024**

## **Week 9 April 1 - 6**

### Research Ethics and Data Collection

Review Garrett Human Subject Review Guidelines

<https://guides.garrett.edu/human-subjects-research>

Read Chapters 5-9 in *Qualitative Research and Intercultural Understanding*, by Court

Read Chapters 6-8 & 10 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* by Creswell and Poth

Review Lecture Notes on Moodle

Develop questions for survey and interview protocols, and other relevant approaches for your research. (10%, **Due 4/5**)

**Partner with a classmate and schedule a Zoom session to practice asking interview questions for your Research Pilot Project. Post what you learned from the practice session on Moodle in 100 – 150 words.**

Develop/Determine ethical concerns, a process for analyzing data and a validity/reliability process. (10%, **Due 4/5**)

**Week 10 April 8 - 13**

**Forum Discussion about your Interview Practice Sessions**

For each of your **3 articles** write a summary of the research question, the author(s') hypothesis, the methods of analysis, the results of the study, and the conclusions made. Include your overall impression of the study. Assess its strengths and limitations and its usefulness for your DMin Research project. **Due April 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Quizzes for extra credit: *Narrative Research Method* or *Phenomenological Research Method*. Quizzes found in Moodle.

**Week 11 April 15 – 20**

Research and Preparation Week. Professor is available for drop-in Zoom. TBD

**Design a research protocol with the appropriate qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods (10%) Due 4/19**

**Week 12 April 22 – 27**

ALL PRESENTATIONS ARE ZOOM SESSIONS. TIMES TO BE ARRANGED.

Research Pilot

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 13 April 29 – May 4**

ALL PRESENTATIONS ARE ZOOM SESSIONS. TIMES TO BE ARRANGED.

Research Pilot

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Week 14 May 6- 11 and Selected Dates**

ALL PRESENTATIONS ARE ZOOM SESSIONS. TIMES TO BE ARRANGED.

Research Pilot

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Bibliography of Recommended Books**

John Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011).

Sharon Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Wiley, 2016).

Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013).

Christian Scharen and Anna Marie Vigen, eds. *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2011).

Madison, D. Soyini. *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance*. Sage Publications, 2019.

#### **Other Recommended Books**

1. Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 3rd ed. London; New York: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 0415396050. (\$44.58)

2. Ruthellen Josselson, *Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach* The Guilford Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1462510009. (\$25.10)

3. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Sage Publications, 2007. ISBN-10: 1412957575

4. Norman K Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, eds., *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and issues*, Sage Publications, Third Edition, 2007. ISBN-10: 1412957583

5. Yvonna Lincoln & Egon Guba, *The Constructivist Credo*: Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1-59874-690-7

6. Behar, Ruth, and Deborah A. Gordon. *Women Writing Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. ISBN 0520202082



7. Scharen, Christian. *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012. ISBN 9780802868640
8. Savage, Carl and William Presnell. *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities*. Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008. ISBN-10: 1892990288
9. D. Jean Clandinin, *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*. Left Coast Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1611321609
10. Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*. Sage Publications, 2007. ISBN-10: 1412953669. \$17.53
11. Robert M. Emerson, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (Chicago guides to Writing, Editing and Publishing)*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN-10: 0-226-20681-5

## Garrett Academic Policy is found on Moodle.

### Notes Regarding Written Assignments

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be typed or computer-printed, double-spaced, no larger than 12pt font, 1” margins, and submitted in e-copies. Please see assignment description for method of submission. Please include **your name**, the date, the course title, and the assignment number at the top left of the first page, single spaced, and please number the pages.

### Hospitality and Language

Theological commitments lead the faculty to identify language use as one way we embody and practice hospitality. We invite all members of our learning community to join us in paying attention to how we use language and in exploring new language practices that cultivate hospitality. Each faculty member approaches language in different ways depending on our areas of academic expertise and our individual theological perspectives and commitments. We write and speak with an awareness of the historical, political, and societal contexts out of which theological language emerges and how language can impact readers and listeners. Out of this diversity, faculty conversations about language are lively and vibrant. We invite students to participate in these intentional conversations and to learn to think theologically and creatively about language.

The following suggested practices represent academic expectations for language use in public speech and writing, including scholarly activity (lectures, presentations, discussions, handouts, and publications), communications (official and internal), and worship (sermons, liturgy, and music). The faculty offers these expectations in order to educate leaders who practice hospitality in a range of settings. Each faculty member is committed to discussing these expectations as they relate to course content and assignments and to including guidelines for classroom participation and written work in course syllabi.

### Suggested Practices

#### Language about God

Theologians, ministers, and worship leaders have an opportunity to give voice to the variety and richness of God’s presence with God’s people. Language used in preaching and worship as well as in academic writing acknowledges and cultivates this richness when it explores diverse ways to write, speak, pray, and sing about and to God.

#### *Examples:*

1. Our language choices can reflect the richness of the divine. Varied metaphors can be used to speak

to and about God. We can name God's attributes. Examples: Rock of Salvation, Fountain of Life, the First and the Last, Refuge and Strength, Shelter from the Storm. We can address God out of our experience of God. Examples: Creator, Mother, Giver of All Good Things, Teacher, Father, Guardian, Redeemer, Friend, Healer.

2. Writers and speakers are encouraged to seek balance when using pronouns to refer to God, for example, alternating between gendered pronouns.

### **Language about Creation and Humanity**

Hospitable language acknowledges and affirms the value of all creation and the humanity of all people. While language about God is a theological choice, language about people needs to reflect standard grammatical practices of inclusivity.

*Examples:*

1. Hospitable language should acknowledge and reflect connections between humans and the non-human context upon which life depends.
2. Words like "people," "us," "humanity," "humankind," etc., should be used in place of words that identify all human experience with the experience of men.
3. Non-gendered language should be used whenever possible; for example, writers and speakers should use "clergy" or "clergy person" instead of "clergyman."
4. Writers and speakers should use person-first language such as "persons with disabilities" instead of "the disabled," or "people who live in poverty" instead of "the poor."
5. Language should affirm diverse and multiple racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and sexual identities by acknowledging varied life narratives. Writers and speakers should avoid language that generalizes human experience (e.g., "all" or "we") and that stereotypes persons or groups. Writers and speakers should use specific examples, rather than generalizations about people or groups, when illustrating a point.