

# Boston University School of Theology

## Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership Handbook



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## Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership

### Handbook

## Table of Contents

<b>1 GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>0</b>
1.1 The Doctor of Ministry Degree.....	0
1.2 Admissions Procedures.....	0
1.3 Time to Completion.....	0
1.4 The D.Min. Committee .....	1
1.5 The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program .....	1
1.6 Academic Review Procedures for D.Min. Candidates .....	1
<b>2 COURSEWORK .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Plan of Study.....	2
2.2 Coursework Guidelines.....	2
<b>3 PROJECT THESIS PROPOSAL .....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Elements of a D.Min. Project Thesis Proposal .....	3
3.2 Length of the Project Thesis Proposal .....	5
3.3 Elements of an Institutional Review Board Proposal .....	5
<b>4 SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Submitting the Project Thesis Proposal to the D.Min. Committee.....	6
<b>5 WRITING THE PROJECT THESIS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 Project Thesis Format Requirements and Timeline .....	6
<b>6 THE PROJECT THESIS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
6.1 Administrative Guidelines for the Project Thesis.....	6
6.2 Drafts of the Thesis.....	7
<b>7 THE PROJECT THESIS ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
7.1 Abstract Guidelines.....	7
<b>8 PROJECT THESIS REVIEW .....</b>	<b>7</b>
8.1 Dates and Scheduling of Project Thesis Review .....	7
8.2 Project Thesis Review Committee Structure.....	8
8.3 Project Thesis Review .....	8
8.4 Follow-up.....	8
<b>APPENDIX A - PROJECT TEMPLATES .....</b>	<b>9</b>

# 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

## 1.1 The Doctor of Ministry Degree

The Doctor of Ministry degree (D.Min.) is designed to assist religious professionals to deepen their understanding of and commitment to ministry by providing a context in which to update and refine their theological knowledge, sharpen existing skills, and learn new ones. The aim is to help students bring together their experience with additional academic studies to create a fresh synthesis of theory and practice.

The primary learning outcomes of the D.Min. include:

- 1.1.1 an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of transformational religious leadership;
- 1.1.2 enhanced competencies in contextual analysis and leadership skills;
- 1.1.3 growth in one's capacity for a robust embrace of and engagement with social and theological diversity and one's capacity to relate across difference;
- 1.1.4 the integration of knowledge, contextual analysis, and leadership skills into a theologically reflective vocational praxis;
- 1.1.5 new knowledge about religious leadership in global contexts;
- 1.1.6 continued growth in spiritual maturity, and development and appropriation of a personal and professional ethic.

## 1.2 Admissions Procedures

Applicants must possess an MDiv degree (or equivalent) with a minimum GPA of 3.3 from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency. Degrees from institutions outside of North America may also be accepted (subject to review by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs). Applicants also must have completed a minimum of three years of full-time professional ministry or its equivalent.

Admission to the D.Min. program will be determined by the D.Min. Committee or by procedures and policies superintended by the committee and implemented by the Director of Admissions, the DMin Program Director, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Admission also includes the appointment of a program advisor (usually the Director of the DMin Program) by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The program advisor guides the student in coursework selection and in navigating the program more broadly. Students are appointed a faculty thesis advisor by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs typically in the second year of study.

Transfers from the STH PhD program into the Doctor of Ministry degree require that all four intensive cohort seminars be taken at STH.

## 1.3 Time to Completion

Students enter the program on a part-time basis as a cohort and can expect to complete the program in 3 to 3 and ½ years. Courses are taken with one's cohort. All students must complete the program in no more than five years.

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## 1.4 The D.Min. Committee

The D.Min. Committee provides oversight for the operation of all second-level masters and doctoral degrees. Specifically, it serves as the admission committee for these degrees, reviews project proposals, makes recommendations to the faculty regarding degree program policies, and monitors student academic progress.

The daily operation of the D.Min. program is under the oversight of the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program.

Decisions of the D.Min. Committee may be appealed to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School of Theology.

## 1.5 The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program

The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program works closely with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who stands in a supervisory role, and the Director collaborates with the D.Min. Committee and faculty to design details of the D.Min. program, initiate and administer all aspects of the D.Min. program (including intensives and online components), and serve as the primary advisor for D.Min. students. As noted in section 1.2, each student also has a faculty advisor who helps guide coursework selections in light of intended specialization and research and who works along with the D.Min. Director to facilitate the student's development of a D.Min. project and supervises the writing of the project thesis.

## 1.6 Academic Review Procedures for D.Min. Candidates

A minimum grade of B- is required in all courses taken to fulfill D.Min. requirements and all students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. The D.Min. Committee shall undertake an academic review of a student when it receives a report of an unsatisfactory GPA or course grade or other unsatisfactory outcome such as required withdrawal from a course .

If a student has failed to meet degree deadlines without approved petition for an extension, the D.Min. Committee may undertake an academic review.

Any faculty member may request an academic review of a D.Min. student's standing by submitting to the D.Min. Committee a memorandum detailing the grounds for such a request.

In carrying out the academic review of a D.Min. student, the D.Min. Committee shall

- Solicit the perspectives of the advisors, course instructor, and other faculty directly involved.
- Inform the student of the review process and provide him or her with an opportunity to submit to the D.Min. Committee any factors or circumstances which he or she believes should be considered by the committee. The student may solicit faculty to write in his or her support as well.

After discussion, the D.Min. Committee shall decide whether to recommend formal academic probation to the Registrar, to terminate the student from the program, or to continue the student in the program. A memo shall be sent to the candidate, with copies to the professor and the advisors, informing all parties of the D.Min. Committee's response and decision.

Two unsatisfactory course grades result in termination of candidacy, except by approved petition to the D.Min. Committee. In such cases, no academic review is necessary. The D.Min. Committee, upon being informed of the relevant events, shall notify the student of termination from the program, and unless the D.Min. Committee, within six weeks of the notification or at its next scheduled meeting, whichever is later, receives and approves a petition from the student to continue in the program, the Registrar shall be informed of the D.Min. Committee's action and the student's candidacy terminated.

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## 2 COURSEWORK

### 2.1 Plan of Study

In keeping with the School of Theology's mission "to cultivate leaders for communities of faith" and "to equip women and men for ministries and vocations that foster personal and social transformation," the D.Min. program is oriented around Transformational Leadership as its central theme. Students may focus their studies within a particular field of specialization to the extent that coursework is available in that field.

The degree is composed of 4 seminars that meet on site at STH for approximately one week of intensive work (with preparatory assignments and follow-up work), one in August and one in January in each of the first two years of the program. The intensive seminars provide a rigorous academic foundation in the study of religious leadership, community transformation, and contextual theological analysis, as well as grounding in research methods and opportunities to discuss and shape research projects with faculty and peers. Other cohort and elective courses for the program are offered online, though a student might petition to take an elective course on site at the School of Theology. All courses contribute to the research and professional goals of doctoral students by including reflection opportunities that are directly or indirectly preparatory for the D.Min. project.

Online courses will supply the three cohort courses and the free elective for the D.Min. All of the courses will contribute to the research and professional goals of the doctoral students by including reflection opportunities that are directly or indirectly preparatory for the D.Min. project. Instructors will be encouraged to design major assignments for their courses in such a way as to enable students to pursue their project interests within their shared coursework. The number of options will be limited in order to maximize the strength of the courses and the cohorts, but the flexibility comes for the students in the research-driven nature of the D.Min. and the potential of each course to support that research. Transfers from the STH PhD degree program into the Doctor of Ministry degree program require that at least the four intensive cohort seminars be taken at STH.

### 2.2 Coursework Guidelines

Students are required to register for courses at the 800 or 900-level. Undergraduate and 700-level courses will not count toward the required coursework for the D.Min. program. No more than 4 credits may be taken outside of Boston University through the Boston Theological Institute (BTI). Students may not register for a BTI course unless registered for an equal number of credits at Boston University.

The following 32 credits of coursework is required for the Doctor of Ministry degree:

- (1) 4 DMin one-week Intensive Seminars in the first two years (offered on-site at the School of Theology, in August and January):
  - Transformational Leadership (4)
  - Contextual-Theological Analysis (4)
  - Research Methods (2)
  - DMin Project Colloquium (2)
- (2) Four 4-credit Cohort Courses offered online and taken together with other DMin students as a cohort. All Cohort courses must be taken at STH. In special circumstances and by petition to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, one of these may be taken on-campus at STH or through the Boston Theological Institute.
- (3) 2 Directed Study Courses after the completion of the above coursework to conduct DMin Project research and thesis writing. These are 2 credits each, for a total of 4 credits. Students must register for additional 2-credit directed studies in order to maintain a continuing status if they remain in the program beyond the three-years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformational Leadership Intensive Seminar at STH (4)</li> <li>Cohort Online Course (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Methods Intensive Seminar at STH (2)</li> <li>Cohort Online Course (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directed Study (2)</li> </ul>
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contextual Analysis Intensive Seminar at STH (4)</li> <li>Cohort Online Course (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DMin Project Colloquium Intensive Seminar at STH (2)</li> <li>Cohort Online Course (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directed Study (2)</li> </ul>

### 3 PROJECT THESIS PROPOSAL

#### 3.1 Elements of a D.Min. Project Thesis Proposal

The following guidelines are meant to serve as a framework for students and faculty in the School of Theology to meet the requirement of a Project, to help students clarify the nature and significance of their writing project, and to allow the faculty of the School of Theology to give constructive criticism, advice, and approval. Students should remember that they are trying to communicate not only to the experts in a field but also to knowledgeable non-specialists in the study of religion and theology. Avoid jargon or technical language as much as possible.

It is expected that the Proposal will be written clearly, effectively, and with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting according to Turabian.

##### 3.1.1 Present a Title that Succinctly Condenses the Main Ideas of the Project

This should be understood as a condensed version of the one-sentence summary of the project the student has worked throughout the duration of the program.

##### 3.1.2 Identify a Problem and Put it in Context

In brief, your proposal will be assessed on the following elements:

- Expresses the issue (e.g., problem, threat, or opportunity) in ways that make it relevant to a broad audience

- Applies secondary literature to explain the extent of the problem

- Funnel the big issue into the student's particular context

- Describes how the problem manifests itself in the student's place of ministry, giving attention to factors that exacerbate the challenge, such as demographic, theological, sociological, or organizational patterns.

As you think about the issue, consider the following questions. Some may be more relevant than others. What needs to be transformed? What is your relationship to the situation? What is your responsibility in the face of this situation? What will you need to learn about this issue/context in order to effectuate transformational change? What motivates or inspires these people? How can you gather that info? Is the data you need already available in articles or books? Do you need empirical research or is there data available to you elsewhere? Does your research need to focus on educational issues, demographic issues, psychological issues, ethnographic issues, historical issues, or some combination of the above? For some, this will be a body of written materials; for others, it will be the results of certain tests and/or questionnaires; for yet others, it will be the results of a series of interviews or experiments from some other sources. You must make clear why you need this information and how you will gather it.

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### 3.1.3 Provide a Normative Ideal and Justify its Use

In brief, your proposal will be assessed on the following elements:

- Roots a vision of a better future in rich theological soil
- Analyzes biblical, theological, and/or social scientific sources to illuminate the ideal
- Demonstrates that the ideal is coherent and compelling within the context and tradition wherein the student is situated

As you think about the ideal or vision, consider the following questions. Some may be more relevant than others. What does the literature (theological and otherwise) suggest as a creative response to this context/situation/opportunity/problem/threat? What ideal, vision, promise or opportunity can be articulated that would call for a transformation within or among these people? What is your opportunity in the midst of this perhaps wider call? As part of your explanation of the vision or ideal, you should describe the body of literature (theological, scriptural and/or social scientific) that will serve to structure that vision. What other scholars and practitioners have wrestled with the problem before you, and how will your research and analysis move beyond theirs in theory and/or practice? How will you put authors in dialogue to create a new synthesis of ideas?

### 3.1.4 Your Practical Transformational Proposal/Process for Bridging the Gap

In brief, your proposal will be assessed on the following elements:

- Develops specific and concrete actions that can be employed to narrow the gap in one year
- Bases the proposed methodology on an appropriate theoretical foundation
- Clarifies why the theoretical foundation is relevant and useful in the student's context

As you think about how you are going to lead people from the current problem in its context to the vision or ideal that you will articulate, consider the following questions. Some may be more relevant than others. What are you going to do about it? Who will be leading the change for the wider group, you or a leadership team that you pull together? How will that process occur? What process will you undertake? What is(are) the foundation(s) for that process? How will this process honor the beginning place of the problem and context you described above? How will this process take seriously the help the people involved live the ideal or vision you have described? How are you equipped to lead this process? What knowledge, skills, or dispositions do you need to learn or develop to implement this process?

### 3.1.5 Evaluation or Assessment

In brief, your proposal will be assessed on the following elements:

- Indicates explicitly what will be evaluated
- Chooses fitting means to appraise the outcome
- Determines what will be signs of improvement
- Sets a time, or several times, to evaluate the transformation

As you think about the transformational process you describe, consider the following questions. Some may be more relevant than others. Transformational leadership is inherently an ongoing process. How will you evaluate whether and to what extent the Practical Transformational Proposal/Process is successful? Describe the timeline and a process for such an evaluation or assessment. For some projects the evaluation and assessment may occur prior to the completion of the Doctor of Ministry Project. For others, the implementation of the project will be on a more extended timeline so the evaluation or assessment may be on a longer horizon.

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### 3.1.6 A Sequence or Chapter Outline

The DMin Committee is interested in how you envision presenting the material. Please include an outline (by chapter or some other logical sequence) that indicates how you foresee the Project being constructed.

### 3.1.7 Definitions

Not infrequently a project leads a student to a very precise or specific definition of certain key words or concepts. If such definitions are important to the understanding of this project, they should appear in the Proposal. Be certain all key words in the title or statement of the problem are either self-evident or appropriately defined.

### 3.1.8 Limitations

Make clear any limitations that are inherent to the nature of the project or that have been deliberately set in order to limit the size of the undertaking. Explain the reasons for the limitations.

### 3.1.9 Working Bibliography

List and comment, where appropriate, on the sources you plan to use for your study. Organize the bibliography by categories and provide an introductory paragraph.

### 3.1.10 Appendices

This should list any documents that should be appended for the project to make sense to the world. If the project involves research on human subjects, this should also include in an Appendix the Institutional Review Board Proposal that will be submitted.

## 3.2 Length of the Project Thesis Proposal

Normally, the body of the proposal should be limited to 12-15 pages of typewritten, double-spaced text; the bibliography is not counted within those pages. Having completed the above, the student will be in good position for the writing of the thesis. See Appendix A for approved project templates that outline the structure of the proposal.

## 3.3 Elements of an Institutional Review Board Proposal

All research with human subjects must be evaluated by the Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) to minimize personal risk to participants. Even if you believe your research poses no significant risks to the participants, you still must submit a proposal to the IRB to safeguard the well-being of your research subjects. Your IRB Proposal may not be submitted to the IRB until your project proposal is approved..

After the DMin Committee approves the proposal, you must submit it to the IRB Reviewer for the School of Theology; all IRB proposals must be submitted to and approved by that Reviewer prior to submission to the IRB. The Board will review your proposal, indicating revisions that need to be made to insure that all subjects are treated according to professionally and academically appropriate guidelines. The IRB proposal should be submitted with the final copy of your Project proposal. You must not begin your field research without IRB approval. Submit a copy of the final, approved IRB proposal to the Advanced Studies Programs coordinator, Suite 108. Information and application forms for the Boston University Institutional Review Board – Charles River Campus can be found here: <http://www.bu.edu/irb/>.



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## 4 SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Submitting the Project Thesis Proposal to the D.Min. Committee

When the candidate's faculty advisor (project director) is satisfied that the proposal is ready for approval and is willing to commit to the direction of a D.Min. thesis based on the proposal, the candidate should submit the proposal to the DMin Committee Coordinator, copying in their project director, who may then signal his or her approval by an email response. A Project Thesis proposal will be accepted for review no less than ten business days prior to the next scheduled D.Min. Committee meeting. A schedule of meetings is available on the STH website. Proposals submitted by a stated deadline will be reviewed within two meetings. Every effort will be made to review the proposal at the next meeting, but it will be reviewed no later than the second meeting after the deadline.

The Faculty Advisor is invited, if he or she wishes, to submit written comments on the proposal for the consideration of the D.Min. Committee. The Committee may accept the proposal, ask for a resubmission with revisions, or reject the proposal. The proposal is a public document within the School. Students are allowed a maximum of 2 submissions. Failure to gain approval by the second submission, or by the end of one year after completion of coursework, whichever comes first, will result in academic review by the D.Min. Committee.

## 5 WRITING THE PROJECT THESIS

### 5.1 Project Thesis Format Requirements and Timeline

Students preparing for graduation must consult the School of Theology "Advanced Studies" website for important information on guidelines for format, format review, thesis submission, and timeline.

When students are writing their project thesis, they should be aiming for 125 pages, plus or minus about 10 pages, double-spaced, in a 12-point font such as Calibri, Times, or Times New Roman, exclusive of bibliography. The project thesis generally will not exceed 150 such pages. Whether footnotes/endnotes, appendices, or other attachments are included in that page limitation will be determined by the faculty advisor and will depend on a number of factors such as whether the student created the appendix, whether it is integral to the project or ancillary, and whether the project could stand alone without the material.

The first complete draft of the thesis is due to the readers by January 15<sup>th</sup> to qualify for graduation in May of the same year or September 21<sup>st</sup> to qualify for graduation in January. Also, the draft must be submitted to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator for the first format review by this date.

The project thesis oral review must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement.

## 6 THE PROJECT THESIS

### 6.1 Administrative Guidelines for the Project Thesis

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Complete the research and write a preliminary draft (or drafts) of the Thesis. Each student should work out an acceptable modus operandi with her or his advisor. Most find it very useful to submit chapters as they are completed. Some will wish to do a whole draft before submitting it, though the latter process entails certain obvious risks.

D.Min. candidates must be registered each semester or be on an official leave of absence. The student must consult the STH “Advanced Studies” webpage regarding thesis guidelines.

## 6.2 Drafts of the Thesis

### 6.2.1 Preliminary Drafts

The initial draft of the thesis, or parts of the thesis, are submitted to the project director for guidance and suggestions on revision. These drafts should be fully legible, footnoted, and in proper English, but they need not meet the stylistic form requirements of a completed thesis. Approval of such drafts is always subject to further revision when the project director sees the whole thesis.

### 6.2.2 Official First Draft

This is the first formal draft of the complete Project Thesis, incorporating revisions and modifications recommended following the reading of the preliminary draft. This should be formatted according to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17<sup>th</sup> ed., 2019), which student find more accessible in Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (9<sup>th</sup> ed., 2018). This draft should include the title page, table of contents, bibliography, and preliminary abstract. This draft should be submitted by January 15<sup>th</sup> (for a May graduation) or September 21<sup>st</sup> (for a January graduation) to the project director and to the DMin Committee Coordinator for format review.

### 6.2.3 Review Draft

Prior to the Project Thesis Oral Review, a complete and formatted draft of the Thesis incorporating all revisions must be submitted to each member of the Review Committee at least three weeks before the oral review.

### 6.2.4 Final Draft

The deadline for submitting a final draft is May 1<sup>st</sup> (for a May graduation) or January 3 (for a January graduation). Instructions for the submission of the final draft can be found here: <http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/>.

## 7 THE PROJECT THESIS ABSTRACT

### 7.1 Abstract Guidelines

The Abstract is a statement summarizing the major or important points of the thesis in no more than 100 words. The Abstract must be approved by the Faculty Advisor.

The first sentence or two of the Abstract should be a succinct statement of the thesis. Describe the method of study or research, and the results or conclusion reached in the study. The Abstract should be written in the third person active voice.

## 8 PROJECT THESIS ORAL REVIEW

### 8.1 Dates and Scheduling of Project Thesis Review

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The Faculty Advisor is responsible for constituting a Project Thesis Review Committee of at least two faculty (including the advisor) and for scheduling the Review. The project thesis review must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement. Copies of the Project Thesis should be distributed to the Committee three weeks ahead of the Review date. Note that the student should also have applied for Graduation with the Registrar by the stated deadline.

## **8.2 Project Thesis Review Committee Structure**

The Project Thesis Review Committee consists of the Faculty Advisor and one other person who has faculty status at Boston University or at another accredited institution and at least a degree comparable to the doctorate. Any external readers require the permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **8.3 Project Thesis Review**

The student will provide a copy of the final draft of the thesis and the abstract to each Committee member three weeks prior to the scheduled review. The Committee will conduct a review with the student of the Project Thesis and its impact on the student's ministry.

Following the completion of the committee deliberations, the Faculty Advisor will complete the Project Thesis Review form (from the Advanced Studies Programs Office), obtain the signatures of the Committee members, and file the form with the Registrar.

## **8.4 Follow-up**

Following the successful completion of the Review, the student is required to make any changes or corrections to the Thesis or abstract requested by the Committee. These changes normally require the approval of the Faculty Advisor. The candidate is then required to prepare the final copy according to the instructions posted on the STH "Advanced Studies" webpage.

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## APPENDIX A - PROJECT TEMPLATES

These templates offer several ways to frame the DMin Project. Other frameworks are possible. All should include an analysis of the relevant context, a summary and analysis of the relevant literature, and a creative dialogue between the two resulting in a practical theological proposal for the context.

1. Retrospective Analysis of a Leadership Case Study
  - a. Brief version of the case with attention to context, process, and outcome
  - b. Contextual analysis
  - c. Analysis of the process with attention to transformational leadership, and the relevant academic topics (e.g., scripture, theology, ethics, history, and pastoral theology)
  - d. What the literature suggests might have been better options at the decision nodes along the way.
  - e. How the work in item d. will or should affect future practice in the local and global contexts
2. Undertake Empirical Research of Relevance to One's Context (will usually require IRB approval)
  - a. Articulation of the presenting problem and contextual analysis
  - b. Literature review (i.e., the relevant transformational leadership, scripture, theology, ethics, contextual analysis, history, and pastoral literature)
  - c. Research design and process
  - d. Research results and analysis
  - e. Implications of the analysis of the research for the problem as presented and as relevant to a wider context
3. Prospective Strategic Visioning
  - a. Articulation of a significant presenting problem
  - b. SWOT analysis with contextual analysis (local and global; social and historical)
  - c. Review of literature relevant to the SWOT analysis (i.e., the relevant transformational leadership, scripture, theology, ethics, contextual analysis, history, and pastoral literature)
  - d. A strategic plan that emerges from the application of the literature to the SWOT analysis.
  - e. An analysis of what problems will remain or are likely to arise once the strategic plan is implemented along with what benefit this strategic plan might offer to a wider context.
4. Educating Others for Transformative Leadership
  - a. Articulation of the leadership model currently in place and analysis of the resultant problems
  - b. Contextual analysis with special attention to learning diversity and leadership habits
  - c. Literature review (i.e., the relevant transformational leadership, scripture, theology, ethics, contextual analysis, history, and pastoral literature)
  - d. Curriculum or similar educational plan for educating or re-educating leaders in the context.
  - e. An analysis of what problems will remain or are likely to arise once the curriculum or educational plan is implemented along with what benefit this strategic plan might offer to a wider context.
5. Generalized Practical Theology Project [Based on Richard Osmer's (2008) *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Italicized questions are from p. 4.]
  - a. What is going on in a given context? Describe the problem.
  - b. Why is this going on? Interpret the context/problem with social science tools.
  - c. What ought to be going on? Set a normative vision with reference to the theological and other literature.
  - d. How might the leader shape the context to better embody Christian witness and mission? Articulate a pragmatic plan/solution that actualizes the vision.
  - e. Conclude with attention to how this response is relevant to the wider community/church.