

Schedule for D.Min. Courses – Initial Leadership Cohort – Duke Divinity School

Schedule	Morning Class	Afternoon Class	Formation/Integration
Term 1	<p>Old Testament & Christian Leadership Explores topics related to God’s core commitment to working through human vessels to bring about God’s purposes on earth, with particular attention to the formal leadership roles found in the OT—prophet, priest and king—in the light of particular characters who filled them and their institutional contexts.</p>	<p>Introduction to Christian Leadership Explores leadership as a Christian practice, focusing on how individuals are formed to lead and how they might offer leadership in a theologically astute and sophisticated way.</p>	<p>Formation Seminar Facilitates the integration of classroom study with the practices of Christian discipleship.</p>
Term 2	<p>New Testament & Christian Leadership Examines several key points at which the study of the New Testament intersects with, informs, or critiques contemporary understandings of leadership, with primary focus on the figures of Jesus and Paul.</p>	<p>Analysis: Understanding and Interpreting Context Equips Christian leaders with tools by which to analyze their particular situations (both as individuals and as members of groups, institutions, and cultures), and asks them to consider what it means theologically for a community to thrive and what systemic structures and interpersonal relationships might enable or hinder such thriving.</p>	<p>Formation Seminar</p>
Term 3	<p>Church History & Christian Leadership Considers figures and topics, conflicts and contexts from various periods in the history of Christianity, across the broad theological spectrum of the Christian tradition, in order to provide D.Min. candidates with conversation partners in their reflection on challenges facing church leaders.</p>	<p>Strategy: Forming and Implementing Vision Examines the strategic work of Christian leaders, in particular, how they conceptualize God’s future and then seek to move toward it, a process that involves both imagining desirable goals and managing concrete realities.</p>	<p>Formation Seminar</p>
Term 4	<p>Theology & Christian Leadership Encourages the cultivation of theological imagination and the nurture of creative witness, equipping students to think theologically about leadership and also to act as theologically informed leaders.</p>	<p>Communication: Inspiring and Guiding Change Considers the role and seeks to enhance the effectiveness of Christian communicators, especially as they work to inspire and guide change, whether individual, communal, cultural or political.</p>	<p>Formation Seminar</p>
Term 5	<p>Thesis Seminar(s) Equips students with tools required for the completion of the D.Min. thesis, including basic instruction in research methods.</p>	<p>Integration: Sustaining and Strengthening Mission Considers the ongoing practices of fruitful Christian leaders, especially those practices that promote individual, programmatic and institutional health and longevity.</p>	<p>Formation Seminar</p>
YEAR 3(-4)	Research and Writing of Thesis		

D.Min. Course Synopses*

I. The Tradition of Christian Leadership

The Old Testament and Christian Leadership

This course will explore topics related to God's core commitment to working through human vessels to bring about God's purposes on earth. It will also consider the formal leadership roles found in the Old Testament – prophet, priest and king – in the light of particular characters who filled them and their institutional contexts. Given the challenges of preaching the Old Testament, the class will seek continually to consider the way in which Old Testament texts and topics are most fruitfully appropriated in the Church. Focused work on particular texts will examine relevant aspects of God's relationship to humanity, including the following:

- Incidences of God's call
- Discernment of God's will
- Opportunities for divine-human negotiation
- The handling of mistakes and failure
- The measurement of "success."

The New Testament and Christian Leadership

This course will examine several key points at which the study of the New Testament intersects with, informs, or critiques contemporary understandings of leadership. The primary focus will be on the figures of Jesus and Paul; therefore, central to the course will be a careful exegesis of selected passages in the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline epistles. Secondary readings will encourage students to reflect more deeply on these New Testament texts as resources for understanding Christian leadership, asking questions such as the following:

- In what ways might Jesus and Paul (and perhaps other NT figures) be helpful examples? How might their examples be unhelpful or irrelevant?
- What do the Gospels, Acts, and Pauline epistles have to say about issues such as power, authority, hierarchy, ambition, status and identity?
- How does the concept of servanthood integrate with other Gospel and Pauline perspectives(s) on leadership?

* These descriptions are meant to provide prospective students with a general sense of the nature and flow of the D.Min. curriculum as a whole and of the content and purpose of each of the courses individually. Please note that these synopses are not syllabi; they do not represent the exact or complete shape of the courses as they will be taught by individual professors to particular cohorts.

- What models did these NT authors employ when conceptualizing the relationships amongst believers?
- In what ways were early Christian communities organized? What were the points of stress and/or disagreement? How did Christian leadership evolve over time?
- In what ways might a vision of leadership informed by the New Testament be in harmony or in tension with institutional practices of ministry today?

Church History and Christian Leadership

The Church History component of the D.Min. curriculum will examine figures and topics, conflicts and contexts from various periods in the history of Christianity, across the broad theological spectrum of the Christian tradition, in order to provide D.Min. candidates with conversation partners in their reflection on challenges facing church leaders. Such topics may include:

- Ecclesiology: The call and mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church
- Theologies of vocation and ordination: The meaning of being “set apart” to lead
- Hierarchies: The development of ecclesial institutions and structures; the history of pastoral ministry
- Virtues for Leadership: What is the character necessary for faithful leadership?
- Ministerial Ethics: Problems confronting church leaders.

Theology and Christian Leadership

This course will help Christian leaders to cultivate theological imagination and to nurture creative witness, abilities of vital importance during times of cultural anxiety. The goal is not only to equip students to think theologically about leadership but also to act as theologically informed leaders. Readings will focus on texts from the modern period that name and explore crux times in the life of real congregations and communities, such as the following:

- Søren Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*
- Karl Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans*
- Timothy Gorringer’s *Karl Barth Against Hegemony*
- Dorothy Day’s *The Long Loneliness*
- Martin Luther King Jr.’s *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*.

II. The Practice of Christian Leadership

Introduction to Christian Leadership

“Leadership” is a topic much in discussion in today’s church. This foundational course will explore leadership as a Christian practice, focusing on how individuals are formed to lead and how they might offer leadership in a theologically astute and sophisticated way. Students will be asked to reflect on the responsibilities of leaders in both sound management and in missional service. At the same time, they will be equipped to critique approaches to leadership that are inconsonant with authentic Christian practice. Among the specific questions to be addressed are the following:

- How might we understand leadership to be a Christian practice?
- What is Christian about “Christian leadership”?
- How are we formed to lead in a theologically wise way?
- What are the habits of heart and mind that enable the fruitful practice of leadership?
- In what forms is leadership exercised in the church?
- What is the end (*telos*) of Christian leadership?

Analysis: Understanding and Interpreting Context

The first step in helping to lead a group from “A” to “B” is to come to a clear understanding of what “A” is. This course will equip Christian leaders with tools by which to analyze their particular situations both as individuals and as members of groups, institutions, and cultures. Students will be encouraged to consider what it means theologically for a community to thrive and what systemic structures and interpersonal relationships might enable or hinder such thriving. A range of relevant subjects will be considered, such as the following:

- Self-knowledge, including knowledge of one’s limitations as well as one’s gifts
- The differing contexts within which a Christian church or organization must operate, including the denomination and the broader church.
- The social and political structures that define communities and relationships within them
- The complex relationship between the church and the broader culture
- The rapidly changing world of the 21st century, including the effects of globalization on local institutions, especially churches.

Strategy: Forming and Implementing Vision

The ability to think strategically is an essential leadership skill. Getting from “A” to “B” requires a vision of “B” and a plan to move toward it. This class will examine how leaders conceptualize change and then work to implement it. This process involves both imagining desirable goals and managing concrete realities, both creating dreams and constructing budgets. This course will include consideration of a range of topics, such as the following:

- Traditioned innovation
- Social entrepreneurship
- Institutional renewal
- Leading for change
- Complex planning strategies
- Institutional vision
- Sustainability planning.

Communication: Inspiring and Guiding Change

Central to the work of most Christian leaders is communication, especially for those who hope to inspire and guide change, whether individual, communal, cultural or political. This course will focus on understanding the role and enhancing the effectiveness of Christian communicators. Students will seek to envision the future into which God is inviting the Church, including their particular organization, and will consider the practices by which they might communicate that story to others. To that end, the course will consider issues such as the following:

- Communications theory and theology
- Assessing one’s gifts and effectiveness as a communicator
- Strategies for communicating a vision of God’s future
- Tools for more effective communication
- The use of communications technologies
- Connecting audience and story (marketing)
- The arts in Christian communication.

Integration: Sustaining and Strengthening Mission

It is can be harder to maintain, much less to build upon, a positive change than it was to implement it initially. This course will consider the ongoing practices of fruitful Christian leaders, especially those practices that promote individual, programmatic and institutional longevity. In particular, it will consider how one sustains a life spent in Christian leadership. Among the topics to be considered are the following:

- Integration and balance in Christian leadership
- Handling stress and avoiding burnout
- Personal accountability and peer support
- Managing human resources, including conflict management
- Improving administrative efficiency, including time management
- Signs of institutional health and practices of healthy congregational life
- The pattern of sustainable change
- Maintaining theological motivation and vision for mission.

III. Thesis Seminar

The Thesis Seminar will students with tools required for the completion of the D.Min. thesis, including basic instruction in research methods.