



Hartford International
UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGION & PEACE

DM-811 Doctor of Ministry Colleague Seminar II

Hartford International University Spring 2026

Instructor: Charissa Mikoski, PhD

Course Modality and Meeting: Synchronous Online
7-9:30pm ET: 1/26, 2/9, 2/23, 3/9, 3/23, 4/13, 4/27

Zoom Link:
<https://hartfordinternational.zoom.us/j/99623884647>

Instructor contact information: Email: cmikoski@hartfordinternational.edu
Course Q+A Discussion (on Canvas page)
Office: 80 Sherman Street, second floor
Office hours: 30 minutes after all class sessions and by appointment

Course Description

The purpose of the second semester of the two-year Colleague Seminar series is to explore the reflective practice of ministry in an atmosphere of personal and professional sharing, eventually producing a set of analytical papers as background for the Ministry Project. In Colleague Seminar II, students will be introduced to various field research tools and learn to reflect strategically and systematically on the insights gathered through their use.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Establish a research-based foundation to be used throughout the remainder of the D.Min. program;
- Explore a handful of fieldwork methods in order to more accurately understand the contextual and cultural dynamics of one's ministry setting and surrounding community;
- Interpret the results gathered from fieldwork in a discerning manner that recognizes alternative points of view and strategic implications;
- Practice the discipline of credible, evidence-based argument in support of strategic, ministry proposals for change.

Program Requirements and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Doctor of Ministry, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications for ministry settings.
- Demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths.
- Cultivate advanced critical thinking and the tools necessary for lifelong theological and sociological reflection in the practice of effecting change in their ministry and community leadership setting.
- Complete a substantive and relevant ministry project that analyzes the religious and social dimensions of real-world contexts and proposes new approaches to religious leadership that makes a substantive contribution to their area of ministry, chaplaincy, or other vocational concentration.

Procedure

The course alternates between 7 synchronous zoom class sessions (see “course calendar”) and the intervening periods for individual exploration by students in their own settings. The class sessions rely on group discussions, instructor presentations, and fieldwork exercises to introduce new tools and deepen the insights emerging through previous sessions. The intervening periods rely on assigned readings, fieldwork assignments, discussion forum participation, and written work to extend the class topics and prepare for ensuing sessions. A final paper provides an occasion to integrate work from the entire semester into a practical analysis of the dynamics of one’s ministry setting and the strategic implications and theological challenges inherent in leading change within this context.

Course Reading

Required Texts

Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney. 1998. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Cahalan, Kathleen A. 2003. *Projects That Matter: Successful Planning and Evaluation for Religious Organizations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield/Alban Books.

Sensing, Tim. 2022. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Dissertations*. 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

**All other required reading will be available for download and/or viewing in Canvas or DTL.

Course Expectations

The basic assumption of this course is that learning results from a continuing process of discourse. Within the course, there are both opportunities and responsibilities. In this course, you have the opportunity to learn. Your responsibilities are to maximize your learning from the course, to maximize and assist in the learning of your classmates, and to apply what you learn to your context and setting. To take advantage of the opportunity and to meet your responsibilities, you are to:

1. Prepare thoroughly for each week in accordance with the course calendar and instructor's request—come to live lectures or forum discussions having completed reading and other assignments and ready to learn, asking/answering questions and participating in discussions;
2. Adhere to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor;
3. Participate fully and constructively in all course activities and discussions as scheduled;
4. Display appropriate courtesy to all involved in the course (courteous behavior specifically entails communicating in a manner that respects, and is sensitive to, the cultural and other individual differences at Hartford International University) including giving each person who is speaking or each forum posting your undivided attention; and
5. Provide constructive feedback to the instructor regarding the course. I want to know how things are going for you in this class. If something is not working, tell me! I value your feedback and want to make this both an enjoyable and challenging learning experience.

The instructor will:

1. Provide course content that is pertinent and based on sound research;
2. Provide consultation, advisement, and/or problem-solving time for students;
3. Provide clear instructions regarding assignments and expectations;
4. Honor and respect students;
5. Provide and consider constructive evaluations and feedback; and
6. Return assignments in a timely manner (usually within one week).

Course Requirements, Assignments, and Means of Assessment

Class participation 25% of grade

Attendance at and active participation in every class session is expected of all students. Exceptions are only allowed if advance permission has been granted by the instructor, and only for unavoidable absences. In all cases, failure to be in attendance at more than one class session automatically precludes successful completion of the course.

Discussion Forum Participation 10% of grade

Completing the required discussion posts will contribute to the discussion forum participation grade. There are a total of 6 discussion forums throughout the semester.

Writing assignments 40% of grade

Completion of all four fieldwork exercises/writing assignments is essential to advance the learning in this course. All writing assignments must be posted on Canvas and/or be sent by e-mail to the instructor by the due date. Each student will be required to survey participants in their ministry setting or in another setting.

Final paper 25% of grade

The final paper integrates the central methods, insights, readings, and research findings from the semester into a practical and analytical paper on one's ministry placement. This paper will discuss learnings and research from the course and address strategies and challenges in changing something in one's ministry setting. Details for the final paper, including focus and format, will be provided in canvas.

Academic Policies and Grading

Accommodations

For students who could benefit from writing assistance, or to request accommodations, please contact Eamon Ormseth, the Student Services Coordinator (eormseth@hartfordinternational.edu).

Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined.

For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism:
 - a. the submission of another person's work as one's own;
 - b. the submission of a commercially prepared paper;
 - c. the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself;
 - d. the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.
2. Plagiarism by paraphrase:
 - a. mere re-arrangement of another person's works and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism;
 - b. paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism.

3. See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.
4. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.
5. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will receive a failing grade and will need to be resubmitted. The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:
 - Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
 - Fine tuning your research questions;
 - Finding information on your topic;
 - Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
 - Checking grammar and style (e.g. using Grammarly)
 - Using machine translation of text (e.g. using DeepL).

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a Zoom chat.
 - Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
 - Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

When in doubt about permitted AI query usage, please ask for clarification.

Add/Drop Deadline

Students can drop the course without academic or financial penalty if they drop the course before the drop deadline.

General University Policies

Student Handbook can be found at <https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/student-affairs/student-resources/student-handbook>

Attendance policy

For **online courses**—3 or more weeks without posts equal 3 class absences without a serious reason are an automatic failure “without explanation or permission.”

Inclusive language

Inclusive language is encouraged when the writing is the student's own. In general, do not use the terms "man" or "mankind" for human beings; use instead "human beings," "humans," "persons," "people," "individuals," "humanity," "humankind," "figures," etc.

– Pronouns: generally, use the non-binary pronouns "they/them/their" when referring to people whose gender/gender preference is unknown or unrelated to the context, or when the preference is expressed as non-binary.

– Avoid using the third person singular masculine or feminine, unless you are certain that the person referred to is male or female or expresses as male or female exclusively. For example, revise a sentence like: "A student must ask questions if he expects to learn" to something like: "Students must ask questions if they expect to learn," or "A student must ask questions if they expect to learn."

– When a source you quote uses exclusive language, you may quote it as it appears, or substitute/add bracketed words, e.g., "[humanity]" – unless to do so would, in the judgment of the student, defeat the purpose of the quotation or violate the integrity of the student.

– Students who prefer to use male pronouns for the deity should consult with their professor/advisor on a case-by-case basis.

Email Policy

The instructor will use the official HIU student email address for all course communications. Students should check their hartfordinternational.edu email account regularly.

Classroom etiquette

Student etiquette and interactions are specified by the Student Handbook :

<https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/student-affairs/student-resources/student-handbook>

Grading Scale

The Doctor of Ministry program operates on a Pass-Fail grading scale:

- **High Pass** (95-100): Exceptional in most ways; such work completes all tasks, is creative, and original in content, and displays mastery of expression and content.
- **Pass** (83-94): Adequate in all ways; the task is complete, the content might have minor weaknesses, and expression is competent yet not consistently compelling or original and creative.
- **Low Pass** (70-82): Inadequate in some significant way; does not address all the required tasks, shows weak or erroneous content, and written expression sometimes obstructs understanding or student's thoughts.
- **Fail** (below 70): Unsatisfactory in nearly all respects; major tasks are unaddressed, content lacks accuracy or coherence, and written expression prevents clear communication of ideas.

Course Calendar

	Module Dates	Class Meeting	Reading	Discussion Forum Post	Assignment
Module 1: Exploring the Social Dimensions of the Ministry Setting	1/26	1/26	1. Course Syllabus 2. Ammerman et al., Chapter 7 3. Sensing, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 4. Choose either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ammerman et al., Chapter 1 OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning From Case Studies in Chaplaincy</i> Chapter 2 (Canvas) 	N/A	N/A
Module 2: Describing the Local Ecology of the Ministry Setting	1/27-2/9	2/9	1. Ammerman et al., Chapter 2 2. Choose either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eiesland, “Contending with a Giant: The Impact of a Megachurch on Exurban Religious Institutions” OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Without Forgetting the Imam: Lebanese Shi'ism in an American Community</i> Introduction Chapter 	DF #1 Post due: 2/8	Contextual exploration assignment due 2/22
Module 3: Participant Observation	2/10-2/23	2/23	1. Sensing, Chapter 4 (p. 182-195) and Chapter 6 2. <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> Chapters 1-3 (Canvas) 3. choose either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ammerman et al., Chapter 3 OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies</i> Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (Canvas) 	DF #2 Post due: 2/22	Participant observation assignment due 3/8
Module 4: Interviews and Focus Groups	2/24-3/9	3/9	1. Sensing, Chapter 4 (p. 197-224) 2. Edwards and Holland, “What Are the Practicalities Involved in Conducting Qualitative Interviewing?” (Canvas) 3. Morgan, “Focus Groups” (Canvas) 4. Moloney, “Focus Groups as Transformative Spiritual Encounters” (Canvas)	DF #3 Post due: 3/8	Interview or focus group assignment due 3/22

	Module Dates	Class Meeting	Reading	Discussion Forum Post	Assignment
Module 5: Surveys and Mixed Methods	3/10-3/23	3/23	1. Sensing, Chapter 4 (p. 224-243) 2. <i>Survey Research: The Basics</i> Chapters 1-4 3. <i>Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research</i> Chapter 1	DF # 4 Post due: 3/22	Survey assignment due 4/12
Module 6: Understanding What You Have Found – The Strategic Leadership Task	3/24-4/13	4/13	1. Sensing, Chapter 7 and 8 2. Ammerman et al., Chapter 6 3. Meyer, Louder, and Nicolas, “Creating With, Not for People: Theory of Change and Logic Models for Culturally Responsive Community-Based Intervention” (Canvas)	DF #5 Post due: 4/12	N/A
Module 7: Bring It All Together – Final Paper Preparation + Writing	4/14-5/6	4/27	1. Cahalan, Parts 1 and 2	DF #6 Post due: 4/26	Final paper due 5/6