

Lancaster Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry

By the numbers:

3 or 4 years to complete with fall entry

A student might enter in the spring by taking an elective; this would extend the program by a semester.

If a student spends two years on the Major Project, this extends the program to 4 or 5 years.

4 one-week intensives on campus

5 days in October, 5 days in May, during each of first two years

Two “big questions” overarch the one required course and two elective courses offered during each intensive.

12 credits Required courses, offered only in hybrid format with on campus intensive and distance interaction before and after intensive

9 credits Elective courses, 2 offered in each of first three semesters in hybrid format; additional options available

9 credits Major Project

30 credits

Schedules:

4 Year Track:

Year	Fall	Spring
1	Required: Listening as an Act of Love Big questions: What does it mean to be human? What is needed for human flourishing?	Required: America’s Changing Religious Landscape Elective* Big questions: Is God One? How wide is God’s Mercy?
2	Required: Developing Leaders and Cultivating Partnerships Big questions: What is the nature of power? How much agency do humans exercise?	Elective Big questions: Is God One? How wide is God’s Mercy?
3	Elective What does it mean to be human? What is needed for human flourishing? OR What is the nature of power? How much agency do humans exercise?	Required: Major Project Proposal Preparation
4	Major Project	DMin Symposium Graduation

*In one of the first three semesters, an elective and a required course would need to be taken; in all other semesters, just one course is taken.

3 Year Accelerated Track:

Year	Fall	Spring
1	Required: Listening as an Act of Love Elective Big questions: What does it mean to be human? What is needed for human flourishing?	Required: America’s Changing Religious Landscape Elective Big questions: Is God One? How wide is God’s Mercy?
2	Required: Developing Leaders and Cultivating Partnerships Elective Big questions: What is the nature of power? How much agency do humans exercise?	Required: Major Project Proposal Preparation
3	Major Project	DMin Symposium Graduation

Required courses

These sequential courses are the backbone of the shared experience for each cohort. They are offered only in hybrid format with an on campus intensive and distance interaction before and after each intensive.

Listening as an Act of Love

Listening has the potential to transform both the listener and the one being heard; it is an act of love. This course uses ethnographic methodology to create rich opportunities for sharing stories and strengthening interpersonal relationships between individuals and among groups. Students engage in pastoral interviews and life story collection in their ministry settings, gradually enhancing their skills.

America’s Changing Religious Landscape

This course examines the fundamental shifts in society and culture that have occurred in the last few decades and have produced a radically altered environment for the Christian faith. Issues of ideological and religious pluralism, multiple value systems, hybrid spirituality, fluid personal identities, economic polarization, and global cross-pollination will be considered, with an eye to their implications for Christian life and ministry.

Developing Leaders and Cultivating Partnerships

Effective leaders are familiar with an array of emerging leadership models and are continuously developing their repertoire of practical leadership skills. This course includes an exploration of organizational dynamics and contemporary notions of leadership. Projects will help students deepen their understanding of their ministry settings and expand their range of context-specific leadership approaches and tools. Throughout, partnerships will be emphasized, both within and beyond organizational boundaries.

Major Project Proposal Preparation

This course will guide students in the preparation of their Major Project Proposals. Students will identify a suitable topic or area of research, clearly frame their research questions, develop a rationale and methodology appropriate to investigating it, and articulate its anticipated contribution to the wider practice of ministry. Students will assist their peers throughout the course in the design, content, and format of the final project. During the on-campus intensive, students (in most cases) will have opportunity to meet with their Major Project Supervisors.

Electives

The courses listed below will be designed for DMins, offered only in hybrid format with an on campus intensive and distance interaction before and after the intensive. Each course must engage one or more of our “big questions” in light of its content. Most of these courses will also be open to interested pastors with MDivs and to MDiv students who have taken the necessary prerequisites.

Additional elective opportunities will include Directed Studies and masters-level electives with additional work in any of our master’s level tracks.

What Happens When All Are Welcome?

Many communities say that all are welcome but genuine openness to the needs of everyone requires keen attentiveness on the part of leaders and community members. This course will explore what it means to be responsive to race/ethnicity, socioeconomic location, gender, sexual orientation, ability, theology, vocation and other forms of diversity as we foster community.

Sustaining a Spiritual Life in the 21st Century

Do you find it difficult to grow spiritually? Understanding what is happening to us spiritually takes patience, discipline, self-awareness, and grace. There are no shortcuts. God invites us to draw closer in a variety of ways, even in times of spiritual fatigue, confusion, temptation, and over-stimulation. This class will explore these challenges and ways in which historical and contemporary writers on the spiritual life have responded to them.

Theological Improv (not offered in 2017-18)

How do we share Christianity’s good news in intelligible and attractive ways in rapidly changing cultural contexts? This course considers a variety of rhetorical styles, strategies of communication, and conceptual frameworks to enhance one’s ability to think theologically “on one’s feet.” Conversation between inherited Christian formulations and contemporary sensibilities and questions facilitates engagement with those who have never been churchied.

Living and Dying Well: Ministry with Elders

As many are living longer than previous generations, this course examines sociological dimensions of being elderly, the ongoing and distinctive gifts of elders, and the creating and maintaining of inter-generational communities. It further addresses the distinctive pastoral needs of these populations and theological frameworks guiding such issues as the spiritual care of persons across the spectrum of dementia; supporting those moving into institutional living; collaboration with community services, medical personnel, and chaplains; faith-based end of life decision making; issues of forgiveness at the end of life; curative and palliative care and hospice; pastoral presence during life-threatening illness, dying, at the time of death, and in bereavement; and theological reflection on death.

Where Theology and Strategic Planning Meet

Financial challenges often drive many of the conversations in our churches today. This course seeks to cultivate theologically-grounded strategic planning practices for congregations and non-profit institutions to enable medium- and long-term focus on goals beyond what is financially urgent. We will work through the steps of communal strategic thinking and planning, paying attention to issues of church polity, leadership, and acting with integrity. The course will increase students' familiarity and comfort levels with institutional planning, fundraising, and community growth.

Forming Faith in an Internet World

How does religious education capitalize on the ways people learn to live, think and believe in the contemporary world? This course seeks to cultivate innovative educational practices that engage such modes as social networking, texting, blogging and playing online games, as well as the insights of cultural critics, social and natural sciences, and artistic creativity.

Spiritual Programming

A chaplain will be on campus during the intensives to lead required morning and evening prayer services, eat dinner with students, and meet with students by appointment.

Doctor of Ministry Symposium

The DMin Symposium is held annually, usually in early April. It provides an opportunity for graduating students to present their work and receive feedback on it. The presenters and audience may be both live and remote. Each DMin student is required to participate in the DMin Symposium annually.