

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 or 6 one-week intensives on campus

5 days in late October or early November, 5 days in May, during each of first two or three 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

Courses such as those listed below will be designed for DMins and offered on a rotating basis 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.*

Forming Faith in a Digital 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.

Social Justice and Faith Communities

This course will examine social justice in the context of the faith community. Students will examine how we as Christians can engage in the current dialogues and activism around social justice and the progressive movements that have erupted after the death of George Floyd. The class will explore themes such as the (mis)appropriation of Biblical texts from a historical perspective, the historical role of the Black Church in America in the pursuit of civil rights, and the role of the church and Christians in the 21st Century pursuit of social justice. To situate the life of the church in the context of struggle toward an equitable, common public life where all are valued, a commitment to social justice is imperative. Valuing all of God’s good creation is a social justice mandate, which faith communities should embrace. The historical record in 29 America however tells a different story. This course will encourage critical thinking to foster workable solutions to some of the social justice issues of the day.

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.

Crisis Intervention and Trauma

This course examines the phenomena of clinical crises and emergencies, as well as intervention strategies. Attention will be paid to specific types of crises such as suicide, relational losses such as divorce or breakups, sexuality, substance use disorders, domestic violence, racial trauma, sexual abuse and PTSD in order to increase students understanding of the developmental, psychological, and cultural dynamics driving the crisis. The course will help students assess the individual in crisis as well as the larger system dynamics. The course will provide a very concrete model to practice during the class so the student can apply their new knowledge in a practical way.

What Happens When All Are Welcome?

This course will examine the concept of hospitality as experienced in human social contact. Anyone who has experienced any degree of alienation or displacement in a social/religious setting knows that there is a big difference between being invited and being welcomed and affirmed. Invitations require nothing more than words. Genuine welcome and affirmation require us to examine the assumptions, practices, and ethos that characterize our affiliated contexts. This course will challenge students to move from mere invitations to becoming more welcoming and affirming of the diversity that is embedded in God's human creation, including the diversities of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic location, gender, sexual orientation, ability, theology, et al.

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 Improvisation

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 church.

Spiritual Programming

A chaplain will be on campus during the intensive 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 late March or early April. It provides an opportunity for graduating students to present their work and receive feedback on it. Each DMin student is required to participate in the DMin Symposium annually.

