

*Houston Graduate School of Theology equips women and men to be ministers and messengers of
God's mission of reconciliation through academic excellence,
personal transformation, and leadership development*

**MC 850 Public Theology Specialization (2 credit hours)
Spring 2020**

MC 850 Texts and Podcasts:

- Boyd, Greg, Shane Claiborne, and Chuck Colton. "How to be a Christian Citizen: Three Evangelicals Debate." The Onbeing Project. www.onbeing.org.
- Breitenberg, E. Harold, Jr. 2003. "To Tell the Truth: Will the Real Public Theology Please Stand Up?" *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 23, 2: 55-96.
- Butterfield, Rosario. *The Gospel Comes with A House Key: Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. (ISBN 978-1-4335-5786-6)
- Volf, Miroslav, and Matthew Croasmun. *For the Life of the World: Theology That Makes a Difference*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019. (ISBN 978-1-58743-401-3)
- Wright, Tom. *God in Public: How the Bible Speaks Truth to Power Today*. London: SPCK, 2017. (ISBN 978-0-28107-423-5)

Course Description:

This course develops the biblical, theological, and missional rationale for a public theology which shapes the values and practices of faith communities and leaders.

Student Learning Outcomes: DMin-1

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Summarize the historical patterns of interaction between the church and its sociocultural contexts. (pre-seminar book reviews)
2. Describe the historical and conceptual development of public theology as an ecclesial and academic discipline. (pre-seminar book reviews)
3. Identify biblical and theological convictions and practices that fund a faithful public theology. (pre-seminar book reviews)
4. Evaluate the common ways in which churches and other groups function in the public arena as compared to those practicing a more mature public theology. (post-seminar paper)
5. Develop a personal approach to public theology that can provide a basis for faithful leadership in the church and in public arenas. (post-seminar paper)
6. Converse with a wide array of authors on the subject of Public Theology by compiling a bibliography of resources related to the topic that will serve as a foundation for your doctoral study in this area. Survey current and dated resources to give you a broad perspective and to hear multiple voices. The list should have 20+ entries and should include resources that reflect a diverse perspective on the topic. (post seminar)

Pre-seminar Assignments: Due Thursday, January 16, 2020 (emailed submission)

- (1) Read the Breitenberg article and compose a 2- to 3-page outline of the content.
- (2) Listen to the podcast and draft your response to what you hear in 1,000-word essay attempting to find a fourth perspective rather than just agreeing with their conversation. Boyd, Colson, and

Claiborne wrestle with politics and theology in this podcast featuring the three evangelical leaders. Take notes on what points or positions you agree with, what points or positions that you find new to your thinking, and what points or positions you think are good conversational strategies for public theologians to practice.

- (3) Read the three texts and write a 1500-word critical review for each book, using the approved Book Review Guide, that concisely summarizes the authors' main points and assesses the content and quality of their arguments. The completed assignments for the three texts will adhere to the following guidelines: double-spaced pages; 12-point Times New Roman font; one-inch margins. Follow Turabian for form and style. (50% of total grade; 10% for each of the four readings; 10% for podcast essay)

Post-seminar Assignment: Due April 15, 2020

Compose a 5000-word paper that incorporates the assigned readings and class discussion to describe the student's theological and biblical convictions regarding public theology. Adhere to the following guidelines: double-spaced pages; 12-point Times New Roman font; one-inch margins. Follow Turabian for form and style. (50% of total grade)

Student Workload Expectations:

Class Time – 6 hours
 Textbooks - (~550 pages @ 12 pp/hr) = 45 hours
 Pre-seminar article outline and book reviews – 20 hours
 Pre-seminar podcast and reaction essay - 3 hours
 Post-seminar bibliography for public theology - 2 hours
 Post-seminar Paper = 24 hours
Total – 100 hours

Course Grading Scale: “A” represents excellent work in all categories (fulfillment of assignment, writing and formatting, and doctoral level content); “B” represents good work in all categories; anything below a “B-” is considered below doctoral level.

A	98-100	C+	84-85
A-	94-97	C	80-83
B+	92-93	C-	78-79
B	89-91	D	70-77
B-	86-88	F	0-69

Grading Rubrics

Grading for the following assignments will be assessed and weighted as follows:

Pre-seminar Assignments: Content (Displays mastery of assigned reading; Analysis of the implication of the reading for Christian life and leadership): 90%; Completed on time: 10%

Post-seminar Assignments: Research Content (Thorough inclusion of the key categories of information required in the assignment: 80%; Format (Effective form and style): 10%; Completed on time: 10%

Classroom-related Academic Policies

- A. Work is expected on the due date. Late papers will receive no less than a one-letter grade reduction.
- B. Turnitin.com
 1. Assignments may require submission to www.turnitin.com to check for originality and style. The assignments that are required for submission will be described in the syllabus.

2. Students will create an account at www.turnitin.com. After doing so, the student will join the course page with the code and password supplied by the instructor. A list of assignments and due dates will be available on the course page.
3. Students will submit assignments by the due date and time and will be required to submit the assignments in a hard copy format as well.

C. Electronic Equipment Usage in Classrooms

It is expected that students will use technology (cell phones, laptop computers, iPads, etc.) during classes only for the purposes of class work. Therefore, students should turn off cell phones and refrain from texting and using laptop computers during classes except for the purposes of taking notes or doing research specifically authorized by the course instructor. Students who have emergency needs not covered by this policy must ask for an exception from the course instructor.

- D. Review the Academic Catalog for requirements regarding Incompletes and Plagiarism issues. For more information on Library Services, please download the Library Handbook from the HGST website.

Doctor of Ministry Policies: (find the full listing of DMin Policies in the HGST Academic Catalog, pages 28ff)

A. Assignments

Students in the DMin program will read, research, study, experience, and evaluate applied theology and personal spiritual concepts. This degree promotes research on vital issues affecting the quality of life in faith communities as well as the development of new approaches, strategies, and styles of ministry in a wide variety of institutional and cultural settings. The resulting learning process equips the student for critical evaluation in the context and practice of ministry and fosters an integration of theory and effective pastoral practice with a view toward transforming communities.

Pre-seminar assignments are due no later than the course start date. Students are encouraged, however, to bring all written assignments the first day of the seminar week. Students, with missing pre-seminar assignments, may be dropped from those sections of the seminar, may not be permitted to attend those sections, and may receive a failing grade for those sections.

Students should expect approximately 2,000 pages of reading each semester. It is expected that the books will be acquired and that the reading assignments will be completed in order that candidates may be exposed to the material prior to the seminar.

Post-seminar written assignments are to be submitted within ninety days after the session ends, at prescribed deadlines. Assignments should be emailed directly to professors on or before the due date. Competence will be demonstrated through creative projects and papers, which apply professional experience in connection with course content. These assignments will demonstrate an understanding of the writing skills required for the doctoral level and of the subject matter, bibliography, theory, and methodology covered in the seminar.

Written work will follow the prescribed HGST/Turabian style and should meet the deadlines required in each course syllabus. Grades will reflect the meeting of these criteria as well as the content.

Students are encouraged to email copies of completed assignments to the Director and to keep hard copies and external digital copies on file to protect work from being lost due to a computer malfunction. Graded papers are usually available for pick up at the following seminar unless they are returned via email.

Written assignments for Project and Practicum completion are described and delineated in the "Project and Practicum Manual," which is available via the website. The Manual also includes deadlines for Project and Practicum Report completion and all pre-graduation deadlines.

B. Extensions and Incomplete Grade Policy

Seminar assignments are to be completed and mailed or emailed on or before the established due date. However, upon receiving a completed Extension Request Form and payment of \$50 per professor, a thirty-day extension (one for each professor) may be granted by the DMin Office. The extension request should be received before the original due date. The professor shall reduce the grade by at least one-half letter grade. Work postmarked after the due date or the one-time thirty-day extension due date is subject to a minimum one letter grade reduction. No class work will be accepted after the close of the semester (except for previously granted 30-day extensions), a grade of “F” will be given, and the semester will have to be repeated for credit. The student will be placed on Academic Probation at that time until a cumulative GPA of no less than a B average is earned during the next semester.

The student will be given one opportunity to make up a failed seminar section, either the next time it is offered or through make-up work, to receive an acceptable grade and raise the overall GPA to an acceptable score. In order for the GPA to move to an acceptable score, the Academic Office may replace the “F” with an “NCF” so that the make-up work will count appropriately. If the student does not make up the section during the timeframe noted above, the grade will be remain an “F,” the failing grade will appear on his or her transcript, Academic Stop will go into effect, and the student’s file will be sent to the DMin Oversight Committee with recommended action.

Notes for Writing Assignments: All “formal, academic” writing assignments must conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th Edition. This includes matters of style and format. Certain assignments may be less formal, and students will follow the professor’s instructions for those assignments.

For formal, academic writing, the instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation when more than one resource is cited. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right-hand corner, except on pages with major headings (titles). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings (titles) require a two-inch top margin. All students should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student not use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly for academic-style assignments. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- Avoid 1st or 2nd person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. Remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.
- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e., The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Grammar check works as well!
- Pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.