



WINEBRENNER

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



MISSION STATEMENT

Winebrenner Theological Seminary equips leaders for service in God's kingdom.

Doctor of Ministry Program Overview [2017-19 Academic Year]

This program overview contains relevant information concerning the policies, practices, and procedures for the Doctor of Ministry degree program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. It is effective the beginning of the 2017 Fall Trimester and will be revised when necessary.

Purpose

The purpose of the course of study leading to the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree is to enhance the practice of ministry for persons holding the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or its equivalent, and who are currently engaged in positions of Christian leadership. The program is practical in nature and is designed to increase professional competency. Students will be equipped at a more advanced level of theological reflection, critical thinking, communication skills, and leadership formation than that achieved in the foundational work of the M.Div. A program assumption is that the ministry of the doctoral student will provide the context for the research project.

Doctor of Ministry Director’s Vision: “Professional and personal development of Christian leaders is a vital objective to globally enhance the extension of God’s kingdom. The currency of the 21st Century is time; this becomes the primary challenge for doctoral students to experience freedom in Christ’s *Kairos* kingdom time zone!”

—Dr. M. John Nissley

Program Outcomes for D.Min. Graduates

1. Knowing: The graduate will investigate and reflect on critical ministry challenges and theological issues with a cogent biblical worldview.
2. Being: The graduate will manifest growth in achieving personal, spiritual, and professional formation.
3. Doing: The graduate will contribute new insights to the body of ministerial practice through quantitative and qualitative research during an intensive field research process based on her/his ministry context.

Description

As a four-year, in-service degree, the Winebrenner Doctor of Ministry degree program affords students the opportunity to complete the program while remaining in full-time ministry. The program consists of 32 credit hours composed of seminars focused in personal and professional development while completing a comprehensive research project report. A distinctive feature of this D.Min. program begins with the initial one-week seminar as the student designs a prospectus to guide his or her research project, instead of waiting until mid-way through the program to begin the research process. These intensive seminars are held twice annually on the Seminary’s campus located in Findlay, Ohio.

The focus of a Winebrenner doctoral candidate’s research project is “Personal Research Design” (PRD), which is not constrained by a specific program track or other institutional parameters. The design and intent of this degree program is to provide an opportunity for students to be engaged in prolonged research for the duration of the four-year degree program. The research process is a unique feature of the Winebrenner doctoral program that affords a venue for in-depth research, reflection, and review with feedback from peers, mentors, and professors in the student’s specific area of research emphasis. The parameter for research emphasis is to be within the broad scope of kingdom ministry.

Mrs. Jaclynn Krum-Frisch, Doctor of Ministry Graduate 2010

“Winebrenner was an experience of growth for me. I gathered with people of all ages and backgrounds to pursue a common passion—God’s Word. Thank you to all who walked that path with me.” In speaking to those seeking theological training, she says, “Winebrenner is a place to continue your education in a format that applies to life and ministry.”

Components

1. Intensive Week Seminars

Students meet with professors and other students for intensive, week-long learning experiences twice each year. Pre- and post-course assignments are to be anticipated, as well as assignments during the week of the intensive courses.

Doctoral students meet to focus on personal formation, resilience, leadership, conflict management and resolution, and wholeness issues, by completing courses addressing these issues. In the research seminars, emphasis is focused on contemporary professional development, addressing theological and ministry issues within diverse cultural contexts. These research seminars undergird doctoral students’ theological formation and help shape their research projects.

In addition, doctoral students complete eight research and writing seminars. Doctoral students meet in cohorts to focus on the research process and on writing their project reports as they present a current chapter for cohort processing, evaluation, and feedback. Faculty and students each bring academic and practical knowledge to the discussion.

While professors shape the seminar design and provide class leadership, students are free to discuss, interact, and share, creating a positive communal learning environment and experience.

2. Individual Self-Directed Learning

Adult learners function best when they are directly involved in the learning process. The D.Min. program assumes that the students are adult learners who not only receive information but who also actively participate in their own learning. Students are held accountable for their own learning through pre- and post-session readings and projects related to their ministry contexts.

3. Community Peer Learning

Participants in the D.Min. program are expected to think and work both independently and collaboratively. The traditional model assumes that teachers transmit significant knowledge to passive receivers of that knowledge. Learning, however, also takes place in community. Adults bring a large pool of previous experience and wisdom to the classroom. Thus, collaborative learning in community with other ministry peers and practitioners creates an atmosphere where students can learn from and share with one another.



Shafer Library is adjacent to the seminary building on the University Findlay campus.

4. Research Project

The D.Min. research project is the culminating experience of the doctoral program, and is intended to challenge the candidate to think and act theologically with integration by identifying a specific problem in ministry, organizing an effective research model, gathering appropriate resources and data, and evaluating the results. The research should be conducted within the applied setting of the student's own context of ministry. The research project may not be started until the prospectus has been approved by the Program Director.

The candidate has great latitude in the selection of a focus for the research project, which may include many possible ministry situations. In terms of quantity and quality, each research project report will be evaluated according to professional standards commensurate with doctoral level work as defined by the Seminary's comprehensive chapter evaluation rubric.

The purpose of the research project is to provide students with an opportunity to study a particular ministry problem and provide an effective solution. Research projects can emerge out of such areas as administration and leadership, church development and planting, Christian education, counseling, discipleship, evangelism, missions, pastoral care, preaching, spiritual formation, stewardship, teaching, worship, youth work, and other areas. The research project should demonstrate doctoral level work and display how the candidate's competence in ministry has been strengthened or transformed. Research projects are completed under the direction of a project mentor, external reader, writing stylist, and the D.Min. Director.

Research Emphasis

The unique emphasis at Winebrenner is that the doctoral degree program is completed in a sequence of eight Project Research and Writing seminars over the duration of the degree program. Students will engage in exploring and designing creative approaches to issues that are experienced within their specific area of research. Winebrenner has a distinctive approach in guiding students through the four-year research experience that provides a unified structure for all D.Min. students, yet affords diversity in research emphasis while engaging the students in cohorts for peer evaluation and feedback during the research journey.

Research Project Template Options

The D.Min. program has two template options for students to select in designing their research project report. The preferred template is selected by students during the first year of their doctoral program. The following chart provides a basic explanation to guide students in making this vital decision:

Components	Project Report	Applied Project Report
Focus	Students research a ministry or theological issue that will benefit the student’s ministry context and the broader church. In this option, students develop an in-depth report that describes their research journey.	Students research a ministry or theological issue that will benefit the student’s ministry context and the broader church. In this option, students develop a succinct report that explains their research journey and resource materials focused on their ministry issues.
Format	Students craft a six-chapter project report that follows the research design process yielding a 200-page, high quality, written document. This is a qualitative and quantitative research process that utilizes theological reflection, cogent research models, and practical ministry outcomes.	Students craft a six-chapter project report that follows the research design process yielding a 120-page high quality written document, plus 120 pages or more contained in the appendix in the form of a practical application manual, a book, or a book and application manual. This is a qualitative and quantitative research process that utilizes theological reflection, cogent research models, and practical ministry outcomes.
Follow-up	Students apply research findings in their ministry context and in the broader church.	Students apply research findings in their ministry context and in the broader church. Students may also publish their resource materials developed during the research process.

Pastor Joe Carney, Doctor of Ministry Graduate 2010

“The one word that I would use to extol the Doctor of Ministry program at WTS is “collegial.” There is certainly diversity among the student body in all programs at WTS but I think the program format and the interaction of the students with one another’s project allowed that diversity to evolve into something higher. I am using the word collegial because I think it best describes that character of interaction that demands respect for one another’s uniqueness without requiring a compromise of one’s individuality. The WTS Doctor of Ministry program allows students to gain a healthy and positive understanding of the larger body of Christ and thus produces better informed graduates who can more effectively serve the Church universal.”

Qualifications of Applicants

Applicants for the Doctor of Ministry degree program must have the following four prerequisites:

1. Applicants must possess an ATS accredited Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree or its educational equivalent, as determined by the Academic Dean.
2. Applicants must give evidence of ability to do doctoral level work as indicated by a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) at the graduate level.
3. Applicants must have three years of ministry experience. Applicants with less than three years of ministry experience may provide proof of alternative life experience for three or more years in other types of professional, business, and/or military service.
4. Applicants must be involved in a current ministry context and remain in ministry throughout the duration of their doctoral program.

Admission Process/Program Entrance Process

The following five items are required in completing the application/entrance process for the D.Min. degree program:

1. Applicant must submit a completed application with a \$30 non-refundable application fee.
2. Applicant must submit evidence of prior quality academic work documented by a final official transcript for all coursework completed in undergraduate and graduate institutions.
3. Applicant must submit a 750-1000 word *Ministry Assessment Essay* (see page 7) and specifically answer how participation in the Winebrenner Doctor of Ministry degree program will contribute to his or her ministry.
4. Applicant must submit a *Ministry Study Endorsement Letter* from his or her church board or appropriate supervising body acknowledging their support and encouragement of the applicant's doctoral study program.
5. The D.Min. Director will schedule an interview via telephone or Skype, and/or a campus visit.

Pastor Mark Brodbeck, Doctor of Ministry Graduate 2010

“One of the greatest things that I ever did was work on my doctorate program at Winebrenner. You first need to know that I had no interest in doing such a program. However, my son, Josh, felt differently.” He said, “You need to do this dad. You would be great being a teacher for those who are going into ministry.” So, long story short, I applied and participated in this outstanding program. Not only were the classes beneficial, but getting to know pastors and leaders from other denominations was the most vital part of the program. It was fun and challenging bouncing ideas, doctrines, and traditions off of individuals who had no background or pre-determined opinion about one's denomination. So, if someone were to ask me if I would recommend the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner? The obvious answer is, “You need to do this.”



The Doctor of Ministry degree program is a journey. . . .

Pastor Jason Arant, Doctor of Ministry Graduate 2010

“Winebrenner Seminary has played an essential role in my personal formation and vocational growth. It has provided me with unparalleled opportunity to experience interdenominational community and spiritual formation. Winebrenner prepared me to take advantage of doors that otherwise would never have been opened to me.” When talking to prospective students, Jason says, “I would enthusiastically encourage anyone considering ministerial preparation, and who are willing to submit to the challenging and disciplined processes of higher education, to consider taking advantage of the educational opportunities that WTS makes available.”

Ministry Assessment Essay

The 750-1000 word Ministry Assessment Essay is one important evaluative component of the entrance process at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. It will be used by the D.Min. Director to assess a prospective student’s writing ability and potential for success in the D.Min. program, and will be evaluated on these academic writing criteria:

- Purpose—establishes a clear focus for the essay
- Organization—presents a logical order, flow of thought, and sequence
- Content—develops information in a complete and relevant manner
- Style—uses effective words and displays a professional tone
- Grammar—demonstrates knowledge of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling

If the essay does not meet Winebrenner’s academic standards, applicants may be required to complete a refresher writing course at a college or university of their choice before entrance into the Doctor of Ministry program.

The essay will have six clearly defined sections:

1. Description of Ministry Experiences. Describe your commitment to Christ, both past and present ministry accomplishments and disappointments, as well as strengths and challenges that you presently bring to ministry.
2. Theological and Ministry Issues. Discuss two theological or ministry issues that have clearly contributed to your identity and maturity as a Christian ministry professional.
3. Participation in the Doctor of Ministry Program. State how your participation in the Doctor of Ministry program will contribute to the fulfillment of your personal and professional development and goals.
4. Family and Collegial Support. Comment on the encouragement and support that you expect to receive from family, friends, colleagues, and others as you enter the Doctor of Ministry program.
5. Other Related Information. Explain what other aspects of your background (abilities, accomplishments, education, personal qualities, and professional history) will contribute to your potential for success at Winebrenner. Please include an assessment of your computer skill level.
6. Verification. Complete your essay with a statement, along with your signature and date, that it represents solely your own work and not the work of any others.

M.Div. Equivalency

Applicants who have completed a master’s degree(s) or doctoral degree(s) but do not hold the Master of Divinity degree may apply for M.Div. equivalency by submitting an evaluation worksheet (obtained from the Seminary’s Admissions Staff) and supporting documentation, in addition to the documents that were submitted as part of the admissions process.

Winebrenner considers M.Div. equivalency as the successful completion of a master’s degree, and a minimum of 72 semester hours or comparable graduate credits. Transcripts of all post-secondary studies must demonstrate successful completion of graduate credits that represent broad-based work in theology, biblical studies, and the arts of ministry, in order for equivalency to be granted. Ministerial experience alone is not considered the equivalent of, or a substitute for, the master’s degree, but at least five years of full-time ministerial leadership is required.

After all documentation has been submitted, the equivalency portfolio is evaluated by the Academic Dean. Equivalency applicants will be required to complete an interview with the Academic Dean. On occasion, the Academic Dean and the D.Min. Director may request additional documentation in order to verify equivalency.

Once a student has been granted Winebrenner M.Div. equivalency, he or she will be admitted to the D.Min. program on probation and given permission to begin work on the degree. Students admitted on probation will be required to meet individually with the Student Academic Support Coordinator to help ensure his or her success in the program. The probationary status will be removed following completion of 12 hours of study with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher. 6/2013

Transfer of Credit

Students qualified for admission into the Winebrenner D.Min. program may be permitted to transfer nine credits of D.Min. coursework from another ATS-accredited institution.

Probationary Admission

The Admissions Committee may, at times, admit an applicant on probation with a cumulative GPA below 3.0. The reason for granting admission on probation is evidence presented by the applicant that his or her cumulative GPA does not necessarily reflect his or her competence to do doctoral level work. A student admitted on probation is required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and adhere to any other stipulations imposed by the Admissions Committee. Otherwise, he or she will be dismissed from the program.



Doctor of Ministry cohort engaged in discussion during a class session.



Centered and blessed at the Cross!

Research Topic

D.Min. students engage in research that will utilize a focus on their current ministry context that may be one of the following broad categories, which have been utilized by previous D.Min. students: chaplaincy, church development, counseling, discipleship, education, leadership, multi-cultural ministry, pastoral ministry, spiritual formation, and worship. Students will explore and design creative approaches to address issues that are experienced within their specific area of research. Winebrenner has a distinctive approach in guiding students in a four-year research experience that provides a unified structure for all D.Min. students, yet affords diversity in selecting their research topic while engaging students in cohorts for peer evaluation and feedback during the research journey.

Program Matriculation and Communication

Enrollment in the Doctor of Ministry degree program is based on competence in ministry and theology. Evidence of the motivation and ability to pursue further study at the doctoral level must be demonstrated, not only by the applicant's previous academic work, but also by the endorsement of the church or para-church organization to which the applicant is accountable. An applicant's file will not be acted upon until all necessary components are received. An applicant who has previously been enrolled in any academic program at Winebrenner must still complete the Doctor of Ministry application and all other entrance requirements.

It is required that applicants own or have available a computer with E-mail and Internet access. Communication between students and administration, students and faculty, and students and peers will be aided by this technology.

Next Steps

Engaging in a doctoral degree program at an accredited seminary like Winebrenner requires setting aside time for advanced study, research, reflection, and writing in the midst of an already active, meaningful ministry role. Prayer, exploring various schools, and sharing your vision with your family, friends, and mentor will be helpful for you to discern: Is now the right, opportune time to embark on the Doctor of Ministry degree journey?

Contact Dr. John Nissley, Doctor of Ministry Director, is available to help you pray and discern whether now is the *kairos*-opportune time to begin doctoral studies at Winebrenner to enhance your personal and professional development. You may contact Dr. John at (419) 434-4247 or E-mail: jnissley@winebrenner.edu to continue the discussion. . . .



Winebrenner Theological Seminary
950 North Main Street
Findlay, Ohio 45840
800-992-4987

