

# BRIERCREST

## LE 641 Creative Problem Solving and Polarity Management Spring 2019

Professor: Paul Magnus  
[pmagnus@briercrest.ca](mailto:pmagnus@briercrest.ca)  
Phone: 306-756-3436  
Course Dates: June 11-14, 2019

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students understand the perspectives, procedures, and processes needed for problem solving, polarity management and vision-setting. Emphasis is given to strategic and creative processes applied to a problem or polarity issue, but these processes are also readily adaptable to numerous leadership/management settings. Problem solving will be presented as one of three strategic planning approaches using a problem reengineering design.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

This course is designed to teach the leadership process of problem based planning as an opportunity and skill set that compliments clean or white page strategic planning. The course is designed to set students up well for the action research course expected of all leadership/management degree students. The course is enriched with Biblical and theological integration as we exegete biblical problems and how they were solved and as we delve into some controversies in history as well.

### COURSE TEXTS

McGoff, Chris. *The Primes: How Any Group Can Solve Any Problem*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2012. ISBN 978-1-118-17327-5. **OR** Crystal Strauss Einhorn, *Problem Solved: A Powerful System for Making Complex Decisions with Confidence and Conviction*, Career Press, 2017. ISBN 13: 978-1632650863.

Catmull, Ed. *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*. Toronto: Random House, 2014. ISBN 978-0-307-36117-2. **OR** Sara Taylor, *Filter Shift: How Effective People See the World*. Morgan James Publishing, 2017. ISBN 13: 978-1630479787.

Roy Oswald & Barry Johnson. *Managing Polarities In Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities*. Herndon, Virginia: Alban Institute, 2010. ISBN 978-1-56699-390-6. **OR** Kathy Anderson, *Polarity Coaching*. Human Resource Development Press, 2010. ISBN 13: 978-1599962078.

Prather, Charles. *Manager's Guide To Fostering Innovation and Creativity in Teams*. Toronto: McGraw Hill, 2010. ISBN 978-0-07-162797-9.

Stanley, Andy. *Visioneering*. Colorado Spring: Multnomah Press, 1999. ISBN 1-57673538-9. **OR** Matt Perman, *How to get Unstuck: How to break free from barriers to your Productivity*. Zondervan, 2018. ISBN 978-0-310-52681-0.

Vangundy, Arthur. *Getting to Innovation*. Amacom, 2007. ISBN 13; 978-0814408988.

#### OPTIONAL READING:

Ascough, Richard S., and Sandy Colton. *Passionate Visionary: Leadership Lessons from the Apostle Paul*. Ottawa: Novalis, 2005. [ISBN 2-89507-566-2]

Heath, Chip & Dan. *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*. Toronto: Random House, 2013. ISBN 978-0-307-36113-4.

Martin, Roger. *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win Through Integrative Thinking*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007. ISBN 13-978-1-4221-892-4.

Schwartz, Barry. *The Paradox of Choice: How The Culture of Abundance Robs us of Satisfaction*. New York: Haper, 2004. ISBN 10-0-06-000569-6.

Brussee, Warren. *All About Six Sigma*. Toronto: McGraw Hill, 2006. [ISBN: 0-07-145372-5]

Collins, Dave. *Vision That Works: Turning Your Churches Vision into Action*. Pickering, ON.: Castle Quay Books, 2008. ISBN 978-1-894860-38-3

Engel, Herbert. *Handbook of Creative Learning Exercises*. 2nd Edition. Amhurst, Mass.: HRD Press, 1994. [ISBN 0-87425-239-3]

Harvard Business Essentials. *Strategy: Create and Implement the Best Strategy for your Business*. Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2005. [ISBN 978-1-59139-632-8]

Hawkins, Greg, and Cally Parkinson. *Reveal: Where Are You?* Barrington, IL: Willow Creek 2007. [ISBN 13-978-074419234-6]

Howes, Brue. *Six Sigma: The Essentials of the most Powerful Improvement Methodology in the Business World*. Toronto: McGraw Hill, 2006. [ISBN 0-07-143008-3]

Groseschel, Craig. *It: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. [ISBN 978-0-310-28682-0]

Leonard, Dorothy, and Walter Swap. *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999. [ISBN 0-87584-865-6]

Michalko, Michael. *Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-thinking Techniques (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Toronto: The

Speed Press, 2006. [ISBN 13: 978-1-58008-773-5]

Silberman, Mel, and Karen Lawson. *101 Ways to Make Training Active*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1995. [ISBN 0-88390-475-6]

Van Gundy, Arthur, ed. *101 Great Games and Activities*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998. [ISBN 0 7879-4138-7]

Van Gundy, Arthur. *101 activities for teaching creative Problem Solving*. San Francisco: John Wiley, 2005. [ISBN 0-7879-7402-1]

Whitney, Diana, and Amanda Trosten-Bloom. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003. [ISBN 1-57675-226-7]

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

### Cognitive

1. The student shall understand the problem solving, visioneering and polarity management processes to the extent where it will be natural to follow the steps instinctively.
2. The student shall become aware of the historical development of problem solving, visioneering and polarity management perspectives.
3. The student shall master the principles behind the techniques, tools and instruments used in problem solving, visioneering, and polarity management.
4. The student shall integrate the biblical concepts, examples and principles relevant to the visioneering, problem solving and polarity management processes.
5. The student shall understand the distinctions, principles and strategies important to the improvement of visioneering, problem solving, and polarity management memory, understanding, analysis, creativity and synthesis.
6. The student shall be able to distinguish between problem thinking (backward focus), opportunity finding (forward thinking) and group facilitation skills.

### Affective

1. The student shall appreciate the visioneering, problem solving, and polarity management sequences to the extent where they will become an instinctive practice in her/his personal, group and institutional practices.
2. The student shall value the techniques, instruments and tools of visioneering, problem solving and polarity management to the extent where he/she practices them in personal, group and institutional experiences.

3. The student shall commit her/himself to eliminate the “gap” between the current condition and the desired condition in every possible way.
4. The student shall prize the skills of visioneering, problem solving, and polarity management sufficiently to commit her/himself to lifelong development of the same.
5. The student shall acknowledge the central place of godly wisdom, sought in humility, in the group facilitation, visioneering, problem solving, and polarity management processes for a Christian.

#### Skills

1. The student shall become competent at using several group-facilitation, visioneering, problem solving and polarity management processes instinctively.
2. The student shall become equipped to use the tools, techniques and strategies of problem solving, visioneering, and polarity management.
3. The student shall extend her/his basic skills in thinking necessary for understanding the problem or polarity generating creative solution or management alternatives, actually deciding on the best solutions, designing a vision and an action plan for the necessary change to bring resolve or polarity management.

#### COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

½ day	<p><b>UNIT I: The Possibility of Visioneering in a real problem filled life</b></p> <p>A. Concept of Vision</p> <p>B. Concept of Forward Thinking</p> <p>C. History and theoretical foundations of the Visioneering Priority</p> <p>D. Philosophy of Visioneering (Personal, Biblical, etc.)</p> <p>E. Psychology of Visioneering (Vision Killing - Vision Fueling)</p> <p>F. Principles of Visioneering (Vision – Courage – Determination – Accountability)</p> <p>G. Processes of Visioneering</p> <p>H. Relationship Between Visioneering &amp; Problem Solving</p> <p>I. The Gospel of John 9 approach to Problem Solving</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the concept of vision.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the concept of forward thinking.</li> <li>3. Present a grid on the leadership sequence toward vision.</li> <li>4. Present the foundations of visioneering.</li> <li>5. Demonstrate the psychology of visioneering.</li> <li>6. Develop the principles of visioneering.</li> <li>7. Design &amp; experiment with a visioneering process (Gather – Develop – Cast – Re-cast).</li> <li>8. Watch Bill Hybels’ or Andy Stanley video on Visioneering.</li> <li>9. Sara Taylor &amp; Stanley Textbook review</li> </ol>
½ day	<p><b>UNIT II: The Probability of Problem/Polarity Management while Visioneering</b></p> <p>A. Concept of Problem Solving</p> <p>B. Perspectives on Problem Solving</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the concept of problem solving.</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C. Proposals on Solution Friendly Problems (opportunity Finding)</li> <li>D. Styles of Problem Solving</li> <li>E. Principles of Problem Solving</li> <li>F. Change the Name of the Problem Game</li> <li>G. Processes of Problem Management</li> <li>H. Developing Process Expertise</li> <li>I. The ACTS 1-3 problem Solving preparation journey.</li> <li>J. Managing Unsolvable Problems/Polarities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Review historical, philosophical, sociological perspectives on problem solving.</li> <li>3. Present several ways of finding and stating problems to make them solution friendly.</li> <li>4. Experiment with styles of problem solving.</li> <li>5. Brainstorm for principles of problem solving.</li> <li>6. Create prompts/primers to problem solving</li> <li>7. Introduce a number of problem solving processes.</li> <li>8. Ed Catmull textbook McGoff book review</li> </ul>
Day 2	<p><b>UNIT III: Problem/Polarity Situation Analysis With Vision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Recognize the Problem/polarities</li> <li>B. Separate the Problems/polarities</li> <li>C. Define the Givens (Reasons/Cause-Effect, etc.)</li> <li>D. Establish Priorities</li> <li>E. Establish Targets/Priorities</li> <li>F. Identify the Possibilities (Resources)</li> <li>G. Select a Path for Problem Resolution/polarity management</li> <li>H. Vision Enriched Analysis</li> <li>I. The Science &amp; Role of Action Research</li> <li>I. The Acts 6 Problem Solving journey</li> <li>J. The action research approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a problem statement together.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the problem separation.</li> <li>3. Illustrate cause-effect and rationale development.</li> <li>4. Illustrate the role and reality of priorities.</li> <li>5. Explain and apply target setting and objective setting</li> <li>6. Illustrate problem to possibility shifts.</li> <li>7. Assign decision on problem resolution pathway.</li> <li>8. Vision while Analyzing?</li> <li>9. Action Research as a continuous problem management approach</li> <li>10. Prather &amp; Polarity textbook reviews</li> </ul>
Day 3 & 4	<p><b>UNIT IV: Problem/Polarity Alternatives That Promote Vision Toward Resolution (Generating and Deciding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Tools/Strategies/Skills to Generate Alternatives</li> <li>B. Group Facilitation Skill Development</li> <li>C. Gathering Alternatives</li> <li>D. Assessing the Alternatives</li> <li>E. Proposing the Alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group presentations applying chosen &amp; class assigned solution generating systems.</li> <li>2. Engage in intensive group work to generate alternatives.</li> <li>3. Private assessment &amp; defense of alternatives to group.</li> </ul>

	<p>F. Designing the Alternatives  G. Selecting the Best Alternative(s)  H. Inspiring Vision in Process  I. The Acts 15 Problem Solving journey</p>	<p>4. After group assessment and debate, write a problem solution proposal to test on your group (&amp; to the class as chosen randomly).  5. Have the group analyze the solution proposal and then design the proposal(s) more fully.  6. Select the best alternative with group consultation.  7. Planned Celebration of progress at end of the day.  8. Van Gundy textbook</p>
Day 5	<p><b>UNIT V: Problem/polarity Actionalizing</b>  A. Plan for Implementation  B. Re-set the Priorities  C. Re-ignite the Vision  D. Release the Action  E. Review the Progress  F. Refine the Plan  G. Re-cast the Vision  H. The Acts of the Apostles  Problem/vision journey by way of executive summary report  I. Light from the Four Disciplines of Execution</p>	<p>1. Presentation &amp; review of action plans.  2. Illustrate the re-statement of targets.  3. Build a link to vision casting &amp; problem solving.  4. Schedule for action release &amp; monitoring.  5. Establishing a progress report plan.  6. Building contingencies  7. Demonstrate re-casting of vision (planning &amp; action)  8. Watch and Reflect together of the implications of "vision drift" after watching the Caldwell, <i>Turning Vision Into Reality</i></p>

## ASSIGNMENTS

### *Pre-Course Assignments:*

- 1) Each student will be responsible to read all of the assigned textbooks in advance of the course and provide an integrative 10-12 page paper on the readings to include the following:
  - a) Summary of memorable insights
  - b) Book values – a set of reasons why each book should be read and by whom.
  - c) Book limitations – a set of statements about how each book could be improved (if you or an expert as sharp as you) were to write on the same subject.
  - d) Book application to real life setting(s).
  - e) Integrative comparison and contrast of the key concepts and ideas presented in the books.

**Due:** June 10, 2019

**Value:** 25%

**Basis of Grade:** Written work and oral presentation when the books are discussed

## 2) Mini-Case

Prepare a report on three problems or polarities you have (one of which they will apply the group facilitation, visioning and problem-solving process to during the class). The problems should be presented as a mini-case and so presented that they could be used as a case study and potentially as your program final research project as well.

In clarifying each of the problems the student should attempt to articulate the following for each:

- a) A problem statement
- b) Apparent rationale for this being a problem and for why the writer sees a resolution as highly important
- c) Contextualization of the problem
- d) Possible approaches and alternatives to resolution of the problem
- e) Estimated success levels in resolution path proposed
- f) Best Case potential outcomes

**Due:** June 7, 2019

**Value:** 25%

**Basis of Grade:** Clarity and completeness of the case.

***Mid-Course Assignments:***

## 3) In class group process work

This is a course on "community" problem solving and thus will entail a good deal of work to the presentation/demonstration referred to in item 2 (Mini-Case) above:

Each student will be an active participant in discussion, presenting their problem/polarity, leading their group and/or the class so that they gain help toward a clear vision and direction on how best to resolve their chosen problem.

**Due:** Daily in-class teamwork and as distributed throughout the week

**Value:** 25%

**Basis of Grade:** Quality of their conversations and leadership of chosen/assigned solution processes evidenced in group process and conclusions

Please expect evening group work. Just think, your course assignments will be 90% completed by the last day of class!!! Please expect to work on your projects at least three evenings of the class week so as to complete the work all but the summarizing paper below before the week ends. If the problem is well selected it could be the first iteration of your final program RD 809 assignment.

***Post-Course Assignments:***

- 4) You will have experienced the entire problem solving and polarity management processes and will have worked through a real community problem applying each of the steps in the process with excellent insights and feedback from your peers. The post course task will be to write up the entire report of what was processed and to give focused attention to shaping and including the implementation of initiatives and steps and will design a map to show what, how and when

the steps will be started and when they will be completed. This paper will provide a full report on a strategic plan, path and implementation for cycle one of a problem or polarity journey. The report should be ready to be presented and lived in a chosen context.

**Due:** August 2, 2019

**Value:** 25%

## SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

### ***Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible, arrangements must be made with the course professor. A maximum of 1 full day of class can be foregone. Students should request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit if additional time is missed.

### ***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

### ***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

### ***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or illness who may need academic accommodations should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Student Success Centre in person (Room #215), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca)).