

BRIERCREST

LE 701 Strategic Thinking, Learning, and Planning Fall 2021

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Course Dates: November 15-19, 2021

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an examination of the perspectives and processes necessary to establish and sustain momentum in an organization, utilizing best practices in doing strategic personal and organizational thinking, learning, planning and leading. The course will include strategic assessment, shaping, alignment and delivery of a missional vision and strategy that is designed with a keen sense of need and with careful consideration of both the internal and external environments.

COURSE TEXTS

Please note that there are four required texts for this course. If you have read one or more of them, you can choose the specified substitute for the book(s) you have already read. If you have read both options, please contact the professor regarding other substitutes.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

If you have read this book, you can substitute it with the following book:

Rendle, Gil, and Alice Mann. *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2003.

Grant, Adam. *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*. New York: Viking, 2021.

If you have read this book, you can substitute it with the following book:

Heath, Chip & Dan. *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*. New York: Random House, 2013.

Herrington, Jim, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

If you have read this book, you can substitute it with the following book:

Kotter, John P. and Dan S. Cohen. *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

McChesney, Chris, Sean Covey and Jim Huling. *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*. (2nd edition). New York: Simon and Schuster, 2021.

If you have read this book, you can substitute it with the following book:

Johnson, Mark W. and Josh Suskewicz. *Lead from the Future: How to Turn Visionary Thinking into Breakthrough Growth*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review, 2020.

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

This course is designed to help students obtain new vision, perspectives, tools, and commitments to ensure strategic and theologically infused leadership in their generation as follows:

- Have recommitted themselves to the service of Christ and His church with an enhanced mission, strategy and meaning.
- Have refocused their priorities for the development of strategic steps toward increased intimacy and integrity in personal relationships with Christ and others so as to bring change to their values, habits, style and impacts in the future.
- Have reviewed the biblical and theological foundations for strategic thinking, planning and action.
- Have observed, experienced, tested and applied new perspectives, processes, strategies and skills most useful in strategic thinking and planning.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

We will meet via Zoom for this class. Please note that all times are Central Time (CS).

Monday, November 15

9:00 – 10:00 am – Introductions, Course Overview

10:00 – 10:10 am – Break

10:10 – 11:00 am - Theology of Vision Discernment and Strategic Planning (Part 1)

11:00 – 11:10 am – Break

11:10 am - 12:00 pm – Theology of Vision Discernment and Strategic Planning (Part 2)

12:00 – 2:00 pm – Lunch and Technology Break

2:00 – 3:00 pm – Discerning God's Will Together

3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break

3:10 – 4:00 pm - Leading Change Step #1: Increase a Sense of Urgency

Tuesday, November 16

9:00 – 10:00 am - Roger's Adoption Innovation Curve
10:00 – 10:10 am - Break
10:10 – 11:00 am – Leading Change Step #2: Build the Guiding Team
11:00 – 11:10 am – Break
11:10 am – 12:00 pm – Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 1: Planning Approach)
12:00 – 2:00 pm – Lunch and Technology Break
2:00 – 3:00 pm – Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 2: Mission)
3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break
3:10 – 4:00 pm - Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 3: Environmental Scan)

Wednesday, November 17

9:00 – 10:00 am – Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 4: Core Values)
10:00 – 10:10 am - Break
10:10 – 11:00 am – Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 5: Vision)
11:00 – 11:10 am – Break
11:10 am – 12:00 pm – Leading Change Step #3: Get the Right Vision (Part 6: Strategic Priorities)
12:00 – 2:00 pm – Lunch and Technology Break
2:00 – 3:00 pm – Leading Change Step #4: Communicate for Buy-in
3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break
3:10 – 4:00 pm - Leading Change Step #5: Empower Broad-based Action (4 Disciplines of Execution – Part 1)

Thursday, November 18

9:00 – 10:00 am – Leading Change Step #5: Empower Broad-based Action (4 Disciplines of Execution – Part 2)
10:00 – 10:10 am - Break
10:10 – 11:00 am – Leading Change Step #5: Empower Broad-based Action (4 Disciplines of Execution – Part 3)
11:00 – 11:10 am – Break
11:10 am – 12:00 pm – Leading Change Step #5: Empower Broad-based Action (4 Disciplines of Execution – Part 4)
12:00 – 2:00 pm – Lunch and Technology Break
2:00 – 3:00 pm – Leading Change #6: Generate Short-term Wins
3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break
3:10 – 4:00 pm - Leading Change #7: Don't Let Up

Friday, November 19

9:00 – 10:00 am – Leading Change #8: Make Change Stick (Part 1)
10:00 – 10:10 am - Break
10:10 – 11:00 am – Leading Change #8: Make Change Stick (Part 2)
11:00 – 11:10 am – Break
11:10 am – 12:00 pm – Additional Topics and Course Wrap-up

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments in Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignment:**Course Textbook Reading Reflections (worth 25% of your final grade, submitted through Canvas)**

After reading each of the course textbooks, respond to the following questions (up to two pages for each part of the assignment):

Part 1 – Discerning God’s Will

Leadership teams make many decisions. Obviously, we want to make the best decisions in keeping with God’s will. For this part of the assignment, begin developing a theology of discerning God’s will together. Based on Scripture and *Pursuing God’s Will Together* (or *Holy Conversations* if you have previously read *Pursuing God’s Will Together*), briefly describe a biblical approach to discerning God’s will as a group. What is the role of prayer in this discernment process? How might a group grow in its capacity to hear from God? To what extent should discussion and strategic thinking/planning influence a group’s sense of God’s leading? What are other factors that contribute to discerning God’s will together?

Part 2 – Thinking Outside the Box

If you were to do a training session on some key ideas from *Think Again* (or *Decisive* if you’ve read *Think Again*) with your leadership team that would help them expand their capacity to think and plan strategically, what would be five ideas that you would want to communicate? Why are these important for your leadership team? What would be most challenging for your team in implementing these ideas more fully?

Part 3 – Leading Change Processes

Think about a major change initiative that you were a part of in a church (or that you observed, if you have not been directly involved in helping to lead major change). Using principles from *Leading Congregational Change* (or *The Heart of Change* if you previously read *Leading Congregational Change*), what did your team do well? How could you have strengthened your approach?

Part 4 – Making Change Stick

Thinking about the *Four Disciplines of Execution*, how do you think this approach might fit in your ministry or work context? What wouldn’t work? What changes could you make to the Four Disciplines approach to make it work better (or what other mechanism for implementing change over the long-term could you use)? What challenges would you have to overcome and how would you do so? If you had already read the *Four Disciplines of Execution* and read *Lead from the Future* instead, how do you think the Future-back approach might fit in your ministry or work context? What wouldn’t work with this approach? Based on ideas from the book, how you would execute the three stages (creating an inspiring and actionable vision, converting vision to strategy, and programming and implementing your strategy) in your ministry or work context.

The maximum length of this assignment is eight pages (2,400 words) and is due by 9:00 am (SK Time) on **November 15, 2021**.

Post-Course Assignments:**Design a Strategic Planning or Evaluation Process (worth 25% of your final grade, submitted through Canvas)**

For this assignment, you can either design a strategic planning process or develop an evaluation process for an existing program, ministry, or other initiative.

Option #1 – Design a Strategic Planning Process

For this option, design an in-depth strategic planning process for your ministry (e.g., your church, youth ministry, parachurch ministry, small group Bible Study, Sunday School class) or work (e.g., workgroup, department). Make sure that you design the process in consultation with your team (working collaboratively with team members to design the process will help them own it and engage the process in a more meaningful way). Using the course texts, instructional content, and the discussions with your team as a guide, create a two-month process with your team that will help your ministry clarify its vision and take steps to achieve that vision (this could focus on several steps of the change process or just one of them). If others from your team are taking this course, you may do this assignment together. Be realistic as to what you think you could actually accomplish in two months. You do not have to execute the process at this point, although you will implement part of it between now and the due date for the major project. Of course, you are free to start implementing the plan before the due date for this assignment.

OR

Option #2 – Develop an Evaluation Process

For this option, develop a process for evaluating a ministry, program, or activity that incorporates key ideas from the course texts and other sources. To what extent is your ministry, program, or activity actually accomplishing its mission? As with option #1, include your team in the design of the process. Then, for the major project, you would report on the findings of the evaluation and the steps you plan to take based on the evaluation results. Make sure that you integrate the course texts/discussions and other sources into your plan.

Note: If you are not currently part of a group where you could design and implement a strategic planning process, then I would ask that you do this Develop an Evaluation Process option.

The maximum length of this assignment is five pages (1,500 words) and is due by midnight (SK Time) on **November 27, 2021**.

Major Project (worth 50% of your final grade, submitted through Canvas)

For this project, you will have an opportunity to follow through on the process you described in your Design a Strategic Planning or Evaluation Process assignment by implementing your strategic planning process (option #1) or engaging in an evaluation process (option #2).

Option #1 – Implementing Your Strategic Planning Process

This option has two parts:

Part 1 – Strategic Planning Process

Facilitate the strategic planning process you created for the Strategic Planning or Evaluation Process assignment (or as much of it as you can). Make sure that you take careful notes related to each step.

Part 2 – Analysis of the Process

At the conclusion of the project, craft a 10-page analysis of the process based on your observations and those on your leadership team (it will be important to regularly debrief with others on your leadership team throughout the process). The analysis should incorporate insights about effective strategic planning techniques from the course readings, class discussions and other relevant sources. It should also describe where the process was most successful and where you could have improved it in light of your personal observations, the course instructional content, and what you discover in the literature. It will also be important to include some discussion about possible next steps in the strategic planning process. In addition, include any materials that you used during the planning process (you can include any additional materials as appendices - these will not count toward your 10-page limit).

Option #2 – Engaging in an Evaluation Process

For this option, you will actually evaluate your ministry using the process that you described in the Design a Strategic Planning or Evaluation Process assignment (option #2). This option has two parts:

Part 1 – Analysis of the Evaluation Process (three pages)

Describe the process of evaluating the ministry. What worked well? What obstacles did you encounter?

Part 2 – Report on Evaluation Findings (seven pages)

For this part, give a detailed report on the evaluation findings. Assess the findings in light of the team's mission and core values. What would you recommend based on the findings to help the team better achieve its mission? Make sure that you integrate relevant ideas from the course discussions, course textbooks, and other sources. How does the literature intersect with and inform the findings?

Please include any additional materials as appendices - these will not count toward your 10-page limit.

The maximum size for the project is 10 pages (3,000 words) and is due by midnight (SK Time) on **January 14, 2022**.

GRADE SCALE

SEMINARY GRADE SCALE			
Percent Value	Letter Grade	Point Value	Comments
98-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
93-97	A	4.0	Very good
90-92	A-	3.7	
87-89	B+	3.3	Good, sound work
83-86	B	3.0	
80-82	B-	2.7	
77-79	C+	2.3	Acceptable work
73-76	C	2.0	Needs improvement
70-72	C-	1.7	
67-69	D+	1.3	Passing, but marginal
63-66	D	1.0	
60-62	D-	0.7	
below 60	F	0.0	Unacceptable work

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

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

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 health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of Student Success in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (egordon@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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