BRIERCREST SEMINARY

LE 641 Creative Problem Solving and Polarity Management
Fall 2024

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Course Dates: November 4-8, 2024
Course Delivery: Online modular course

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

Required Reading

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

McGoff, Chris. *The Primes: How Any Group Can Solve Any Problem.* New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2012. ISBN 978-1-118-17327-5. **OR** Roam, Dan. *The Back of the Napkin (Expanded Edition): Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures*. New York, NY: Portfolio, 2013. ISBN 978-1-59184-269- 9.

Strauss Einhorn, Cheryl, *Problem Solved: A Powerful System for Making Complex Decisions with Confidence and Conviction,* Career Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1632650863.

Arnold, Tim. *Lead with AND: The Secret to Resilience and Results in a Polarized World.* Jordan Station, ON: Leaders For Leaders, Inc. 2022. ISBN 978-1-7779014-0-0.

Barton, Ruth. *Pursuing God's Will Together*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012. ISBN 978-0- 8308 3566-9

Suggested Reading

Emerson, Brian, and Kelly Lewis. *Navigating Polarities: Using Both/And Thinking to Lead Transformation*. Washington, DC: Paradoxical Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-73338-283-0.

Johnson, Barry. *Polarity Management, 2nd Edition: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*. Amherst, MA: H R D Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-87425-176-0.

Roy Oswald & Barry Johnson. *Managing Polarities In Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities.* Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2010. ISBN 978-1-56699-390-6.

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 978-1-59052-456-5.

Taylor, Sara, *Filter Shift: How Effective People See the World.* Morgan James Publishing, 2017. ISBN 978-1630479787.

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

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*) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.*

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. The student shall understand how to identify a problem to be solved and a polarity to be managed and learn to apply the correct strategy and tools in each case.
2. The student shall integrate relevant biblical concepts, examples, and principles.
3. The student shall acknowledge the central place of godly wisdom, sought in humility, in the group facilitation, problem solving, and polarity management processes for a Christian.
4. The student shall become competent at using several group-facilitation, visioneering, problem solving and polarity management processes.
5. The student will apply what they have learned to problems and polarities in their context.

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COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Day 1	Welcome and Introductions MALM Overview Introduction to Problem-Solving Engaging with Biblical Examples of Problem-Solving Genius Problem Solving Case Studies and Group Work
Day 2	Linear and Cyclical/Systemic Problem-Solving Models Case Studies and Group Work
Day 3	Creative Problem-Solving Models Introduction to Polarity Thinking Applying Polarity Management strategies to relevant Case Studies
Day 4	Polarity Mapping and the "Dance of Polarities" Group Processes of problem solving and polarity management Discernment Group Work
Day 5	Group Presentations Wrap Up

ASSIGNMENTS
Please submit all written assignments to Canvas in Chicago or APA format.

Students will be required to be a "class expert" on one of the "either/or" texts throughout the week. Come prepared to share the essence of the text with those who have not read it.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Integrative Reading Report

    Students will provide an integrative 8-page paper on the required readings that includes:

    a) An introduction that introduces the books covered and themes uncovered.

    b) A response to each reading that includes a summary of key concepts, how they interact and integrate with the other readings, and evidence of personal reflection.

    c) A conclusion that sums up, integrates, and lays out a path towards application.

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Due: DUE BY 8PM THE FRIDAY BEFORE CLASS (November 1, 2024)
Length: 8 pages (2000 words)
Value: 30%
Basis of Grade: Written work and oral presentation when the books are discussed

2. Mini-Case Study

Each student will prepare a report on **three** problems or polarities they are facing in their leadership context. If unable to draw from their immediate context, students will refer to real-life problems they see around them in an academic institution, church, or business. The problems should be presented as mini-case studies. Students will choose the one most pressing/likely problem to apply the group facilitation, visioneering and problem-solving process to during class.

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

   a) A problem statement

   b) A rationale for this is a problem and why the writer sees a resolution as highly important

   c) The context of the problem

   d) Possible approaches and alternatives to resolution of the problem

   e) Potential pitfalls and estimated success levels if the proposed resolution path is followed

   f) Potential best-case outcomes

Due: DUE BY 8PM THE FRIDAY BEFORE CLASS (November 1, 2024)
Length: 3 pages (750 words)
Value: 15%
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.

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On the final day of class, each student will give a presentation that gives evidence of the work they have done throughout the week developing their "statements" that will give shape to their final paper. These statements are:

- Problem statement: The problem we face is… There is a gap between (what is currently true) and (what we need to be true)

- Challenge Statement: We must… So we might… How might we…

- Stakeholder statement: The people this matters to are…. Because…

- Opportunity statement: Wouldn't it be nice if…

- Vision/dream statement: I long for…

- Model statement: A perspective on this that will be helpful is…

- Appreciative Statement: We can build on…. Which is already happening.

- Outcome/target statement: I will know we have succeeded when…

- Proposal statement: I propose that I/we…

- Action statement: Our plan for action is…

Due: Daily in-class teamwork and presentation of statements on the last day of class.
Value: 25%
Basis of Grade: Quality of conversations and leadership of chosen/assigned solution processes evidenced in group process and conclusions.

Time will be given during class, but students should expect to work on their projects in the evenings as well.

Post-Course Assignments:

4) Final Paper

Students will have experienced the entire problem solving and polarity management processes and worked through a real community problem applying each of the steps in the process with insights and feedback from their peers. The post course task will be to write a report demonstrating an understanding of what was learned and giving focused attention to shaping the implementation of steps towards problem solving/polarity management in your context. Design a map that shows what, how and when the steps of your problem or polarity journey will be started, and how and when they will be completed. As well as submitted for marking, the report should be ready to be carried out in a chosen context.

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Due: January 3, 2025 at 8pm (submitted to Canvas)
Length: 8 pages (2000 words)
Value: 30%
Basis of Grade: Integration of chosen models, evidence of incorporating peer feedback and class discussion, depth and breadth of approach, and application of Biblical insights.

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
Modular 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

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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

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

> Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

> Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e.,

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how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Ascough, Richard S., and Colton, Sandy. *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.

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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 Parkinson, Cally. *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*

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

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Michalko, Michael. *Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-thinking Techniques (2ⁿᵈ 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 78794138-7.

Van Gundy, Arthur. *101 Activities for Teaching Creative Problem Solving.* San Francisco: John Wiley,
2005. ISBN 0-7879-7402-1.