



MB BIBLICAL
SEMINARY

Navigating Power and Conflict

LDR 532

The mission of MB Seminary is to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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Email: randywolff@mbseminary.ca
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: None
Course Term: November 14, 2022 – January 14, 2023
Instruction: Dec. 1-2 (6:30 pm - 9:30 pm), Dec. 3 (8:30 am – 1:00 pm) at Willingdon Church

Course Description

How can leaders understand and manage power and conflict for personal and group transformation? Leaders often feel confused or even paralyzed by the power dynamics around them. How can they strengthen their capacity to recognize and use power in transformational ways? In addition, leaders often encounter conflict. Few interpersonal exchanges have as much catalytic potential for transformation as healthy conflict. Yet, how can leaders best manage it? This course will help leaders enhance their ability to navigate power and conflict in ways that move churches toward reaching their full disciple-making potential.

Objectives

This course will help you:

- Assess the power dynamics in their organizations and to acquire greater skill in using and helping others use power in equitable and God-honouring ways.
- Discern and appreciate some of the different perspectives that individuals and groups may hold within an organization and how to maximize these differences in a healthy way.
- Strengthen skills in analyzing conflicts and use response strategies designed to transform conflict into personal, interpersonal and organizational growth.
- Design and begin implementing a robust leadership development plan (or assess and revise their personal leadership development plan from a previous leadership course)

- Apply the lessons learned in the classroom in real-time ministry settings

Course Textbooks

Patterson, Kerry. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021. 304 pages.

Sande, Ken. *The Peace Maker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004. 317 pages.

Wolff, Randy. *Navigating Church Politics: A Church Leader's Guide for Managing Conflict and Power Struggles while Leading Organizational Change*. San Bernardino, CA: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2017. 218 pages.

Total pages = 839

Required Inventory

Thomas-Kilmann Instrument (TKI) - <https://kilmanniagnostics.com/assessments/thomas-kilmann-instrument-one-assessment-person/>

Note: The TKI will help you discover the degree to which you use the five conflict modes (accommodation, avoidance, collaboration, compromise, and competition) and how you might improve your approach to resolving conflicts and problems.

Intensive Schedule

Teaching Weekend (Willingdon Church)	
Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022	6:30 – 9:30 pm
Session 1	Course Introduction A Theology of Power
Session 2	Navigating Power Dynamics: A Church Case Study
Friday, Dec. 2, 2022	6:30 - 9:30 pm
Session 3	Using Power in God-honouring Ways
Session 4	A Theology of Conflict and Peace-making

Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022	8:30 am – 1:00 pm
Session 5	Making Conflict Transformational – Part 1
Session 6	Making Conflict Transformational – Part 2

Note: Attending all sessions of the course intensive is a requirement for passing the course.

Course Assignments

The assignments for this course include three integration projects, discussion groups, personal leadership development plan, and the course evaluation. If you ever have an idea for an alternative assignment that you believe would have greater personal value and would still meet the objectives of the course, feel free to talk with me about it. In addition, feel free to use other formats (e.g. PowerPoints, Prezi, storyboards, videos) for your assignments. Please double-space all written assignments.

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm (your time) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in Populi. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in Populi where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book). Please note that I typically deduct 5% of an assignment's total possible value for each week that it is late (assignments submitted more than two weeks beyond the due date will not be accepted). If you find that you are unable to complete an assignment on time, I will grant one extension of up to one week for one assignment during the course (without penalty) when you inform me of your need for an extension before the due date for that particular assignment. I will also consider extensions in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency (when a doctor's note accompanies the request). For the times when I allow a student to rewrite an assignment, I will generally take off 20% of the assignment's value before assigning a grade to the rewritten assignment.

Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of them:

Overview of Assignments

Week	Due Date	Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade	Cumulative Percentage
Week 1	Nov. 19	Integration Project #1	25%	25%

Week 2	Nov. 21-26	Group Discussion #1 (date to be determined by group leader)		
Week 3	Dec. 1-3	Learning Intensive		
Week 4	Dec. 10	Personal Leadership Development Plan	20%	45%
Week 5	Dec. 17	Integration Project #2	25%	70%
Week 6	Dec. 19-24	Group Discussion #2 (date to be determined by group leader)		
Week 8	Dec. 31	Integration Project #3	25%	95%
Week 9	Jan. 9-14	Group Discussion #3 (date to be determined by group leader)	5% (for all three group discussions)	100%
Week 9	Jan. 14	Course Evaluation	-----	-----

Integration Projects (worth 75% of the final grade)

During three weeks of the course, you will have an opportunity to do three integration projects based on the required readings. The week after your integration project is due, you will meet in church-based discussion groups to discuss your projects and to explore other related topics. The maximum length for each integration project is 1,800 words.

Integration Project #1 – Navigating Power Dynamics (25% of final grade)

Required Reading – *Navigating Church Politics*

Required Inventory – TKI Assessment

Think about a major organizational change effort that you have experienced in the past (preferably one in which you were actively involved). Using *Navigating Church Politics* as a guide, explore how power manifested itself during the change process. How did you see some of the nine types of power at work during the process? What other types of power did you witness? Reflect on how you and others might have used and helped others use power in more equitable ways. In what ways did you see your responses to conflict (as described in the TKI assessment) play out in this change process?

Integration Project #2 – Theology of Peacemaking (20% of final grade)Required Reading – *The Peacemaker*

Based on Scripture, course instructional content, *The Peacemaker* text, the MB Confession of Faith and at least five other sources, develop a biblically sound and personally relevant theology of peacemaking. Your theology of peacemaking should include what you consider are the non-negotiable aspects of biblical peacemaking. Some of the questions you may want to cover are: what is peacemaking, what kind of character should a peacemaker have, how does a Christian peacemaker lead a team, what can we learn from Jesus and other biblical characters about peacemaking, and how does my ministry context (including cultural factors) influence my theology of peacemaking?

Note: I'm open to other creative ways of doing this assignment like developing a podcast, creating an in-person or virtual training session, storyboards, dramatic monologues, musical compositions, blog series, raps, website, animations, poetry, etc. If you would like to express your theology of peacemaking in one or more of these ways (or other ways), let me know so that we can figure out what the final gradable product will look like. I'm also open to students doing this as a group project. However, I would expect that the length (or other appropriate metric) would double for a two-person group project, triple for a three-person group project, etc.

Integration Project #3 – Transforming Conflict (20% of final grade)Required Reading – *Crucial Conversations*

For this assignment, you can choose from one of two options (or suggest another option that you think might fit with the goals of this assignment):

Option #1 - Personal Conflict Project

Visit for at least one hour with a person with whom you have had a conflict within the last six months. Choose a person with whom you can communicate with some trust and comfort. This will normally rule out a person with whom you are in a current conflict, unless perhaps it is a close friend. Do not choose a family member, but someone with whom you work or interact with in some other capacity. Tell the person, "I am trying to understand my personal reaction to conflict, and I would like you to help me. Remember the conflict we had about . . .? It would really help me if you could describe for me, from your perspective, how I responded to and handled that conflict situation." Use your Theology of Peacemaking (Integration Project #2) and insights from *Crucial Conversations* to guide the conversation.

Note: Do not challenge or dispute the observations that the person offers! However, you should:

1) Ask for clarification when what the person says is unclear. "Can you explain that last point for me a bit further?"

2) Inquire about how your actions made the other party feel. “How did you feel when I did that?”

3) Ask for advice. “What could I have done to help you respond more positively?”

From this experience, summarize the insights gained from your interview (give an anonymous name to the person with whom you had the conflict), assess how your TKI tendencies surfaced or didn't surface in this conflict (and why you think this was the case), and conclude with key observations about how you can improve your response to conflict (using your Theology of Peacemaking, Scripture, class discussions, the course texts, and other sources to inform your observations).

OR

Option #2 - Organizational Conflict Project

Interview two people (ideally from different “sides”) who have personal knowledge of an organizational conflict that involved groups of people who had different perspectives about a particular issue or set of issues. Explore how the conflict began, how the two sides responded to it, and how it progressed.

Without betraying confidences, use the information you gather from the interviews to develop a workable conflict resolution process for moderate- to high-level conflict within a group. Make sure that you integrate insights from Scripture, your Theology of Peacemaking, class discussions, and the course texts into your approach.

Discussion Groups (5% of the final grade)

During Weeks 2, 6 and 9, you will meet in a church-based discussion group for 90 minutes to discuss your integration projects, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. A designated leader from the host church will facilitate the church-based discussion groups for students from the host church. If you attend another church, please arrange to meet with a leader from your church (and any other students in the class from your church) to discuss your integration projects (and send me the name and email address of the leader, so that I can contact them about your participation grade). Your group leader will coordinate with you and the other group members as to when it would be best to meet.

The assessment of participation in discussion groups involves attendance and actual participation in the group sessions (both are worth 50% of the discussion group mark). The discussion group leaders will use the following rubric to assess each group member's participation:

Excellent participation (worth 47-50/50) – The group member consistently engaged in the group conversations. The person did an excellent job listening to other group members and consistently added meaningful content to the conversations.

Great participation (worth 43-46/50) – The group member engaged in the group conversations most of the time. The person paid attention to what others said and added relevant content to the discussions fairly regularly.

Good participation (worth 40-43/50) – The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.

Fair participation (worth 35-39/50) – The group member did not often engage in group conversations. The person seemed out of touch with the group conversation and would rarely add relevant content.

Poor participation (worth less than 35/50) – The group member rarely, if ever, engaged in the group conversations. The person seemed distant and uninterested in the group discussion and even other group members.

Personal Leadership Development Plan (worth 20% of your final grade)

If you have done the Personal Leadership Development Plan assignment in a previous MB Seminary course (e.g. LDR 510: Christian Leadership Practices), please do Option #2: Follow-up Plan below. Otherwise, do Option #1: New Plan.

Option #1 – New Plan

This option is for those who haven't created a Personal Leadership Development Plan in a previous MB Seminary course and has four parts:

Part One – *Understanding Your Personal Calling Workbook* (worth 30% of the assignment's value)

For this part of the assignment, prayerfully work through the *Understanding Your Personal Calling* workbook posted in Populi. I would encourage you to spread out this exercise over several days or longer to give yourself a chance to reflect on the questions and ideas that emerge. Include the completed workbook as part of this assignment.

Part Two - Rule of Life (worth 30% of the assignment's value)

This part of the Personal Leadership Development Plan gives you an opportunity to describe what you are already doing in each of the 12 practices listed in the Rule of Life document (in Populi) and what you could add or change that would strengthen your leadership foundations (and better position you to live out your personal calling). If you are not doing something in a particular area and don't think you should, that's fine. In addition, feel free to add other areas that you have found helpful. To help you identify which areas should be a top priority for you right now, include a short statement at the end of this part where you identify 2-3 Rule of Life elements that will receive extra attention during the next few months. Include a rationale for why you believe these are especially important for you right now. The approximate length of this part is 600 words (point form is fine for this section).

Part Three - Strategic Plan (worth 35% of the assignment's value)

Establish three strategic objectives that will promote your development as a Christian leader over the next three months. Indicate the rationale for selecting each objective (why is the objective important in light of your calling, your Rule of Life, and your TKI results). In addition, identify at least three key action steps for each objective, which will help you take steps toward achieving the objective over the next three months (this means that you will have at least nine action steps in total). Make sure that all the action steps are **SMART**:

- **Specific** (i.e. focused on one clearly defined area)
- **Measurable** (i.e. you should be able to chart your progress and know when you have achieved the action step)
- **Achievable** (i.e. you should be able to achieve the action step within the stated time frame)
- **Relevant** (i.e. the action step should actually help you achieve your overall objective)
- **Time-framed** (i.e. you should include a completion date so that you have a clear target for completing the action step)

Here are two examples of SMART action steps:

- I will memorize one verse per day, starting today, for the next three months.
- I will develop my teaching gift by attending the Teaching Adults Effectively conference next month

At the end of this section, include a one-page summary of your prioritized objectives and action steps that you can use as a quick reference guide. Recognizing that it is difficult to work on three major objectives at the same time, I have asked you to prioritize them in your one-page summary. Make the first one your top priority. You can move on to another objective once you feel you have made reasonable progress on the previous one.

Part Four - Setting up Supportive Accountability (worth 5% of the assignment's value)

For this part, give the entire assignment to someone who will provide some supportive accountability as you implement the plan (e.g. a mentor, friend, family member, pastor). Include a note at the end of your assignment saying who received a copy of this assignment.

Option #2 – Follow-up Plan

In LDR 510, you articulated a personal leadership development plan. The purpose of this plan was to help you articulate key objectives for developing as a godly and effective servant leader. In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to review and revise

your objectives and specific action steps from LDR 510. There are four parts to this assignment:

Part 1 – Review Your Progress (600 words)

In this section, assess the progress you have made on the objectives/action steps in your previous personal leadership development plan. What obstacles have stood in your way? After reflecting on your progress, carefully review the results of the inventories you did in LDR 510. If you did the Emotional Intelligence 2.0 inventory in LDR 510 and it has been at least six months since you did it, I would like you to do it again (the second test is free) as a part of your review of your inventory results. As you review the results of all the inventories (including the Thomas-Kilmann assessment for this course), discuss areas where you have seen noticeable growth or increased application of particular practices/skills. Which areas seem to have become weaker? Where have you been unable to apply practices/skills in your life and ministry, as you would like?

Part 2 – Revise Your Plan (600 words)

Based on your review of your progress and your inventory results (including the TKI approaches to conflict assessment for this course), what are the three objectives that you think are most strategic in helping you live out your personal calling and develop as a godly and competent servant leader? List them in order of priority. What are at least three steps you will need to take to realize these objectives? Feel free to keep old objectives and actions steps; however, you may find that you have become aware of other objectives and action steps that may be more effective in helping you develop as a leader who can increasingly live out your God-given calling. Alternatively, you may have made significant progress towards accomplishing an objective and would like to focus on a new one. I would encourage you to focus on one objective at a time (trying to achieve all three at the same time could be overwhelming). Make sure that each of the nine action steps is **SMART**:

- **Specific** (i.e. focused on one clearly defined area)
- **Measurable** (i.e. you should be able to chart your progress and know when you have achieved the action step)
- **Achievable** (i.e. you should be able to achieve the action step within the stated time frame)
- **Relevant** (i.e. the action step should actually help you achieve your overall objective)
- **Time-framed** (i.e. you should include a completion date so that you have a clear target for completing the action step)

Here are examples of two SMART action steps:

- I will memorize one verse per day, starting today, for the next three months.
- I will develop my teaching gift by attending the Teaching Adults Effectively conference in March

Part 3 – Plan Summary (300 words)

Make a 300-word summary of your revised objectives and accompanying action steps. It's helpful to keep this document in front of you, so that you have a tangible reminder of these priorities.

Part 4 – Distribute your Revised Plan

As an additional step, give copies of your one-page revised summary to some you trust who can support and guide you in accomplishing your objectives. Include a note at the end of your assignment saying who received a copy of your plan.

Course Evaluation

Because your feedback is very important to me (I will often change future offerings of a course based on the feedback I receive from students), I have made the course evaluation a required part of the course. You will find the course evaluation in Populi.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skillful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references

				and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Assignment Assessment

When I assess written assignments and presentations, I tend to look for the following:

- Appropriateness – The content matches the requirements of the assignments.
- Substantiveness – The content reveals deeper level thinking. This may take the form of critiquing existing ideas and proposing new ones. It may involve applying ideas from the readings and class discussions in deeply personal ways. It could also include a novel integration of ideas from various sources. As you think about substantiveness, I would also ask you to go beyond “left brain” thinking that focuses on systematic and logical thinking. Add “right brain” analysis that views concepts in intuitive and more holistic ways. This may involve viewing assignment topics from creative vantage points by using word pictures, analogies, metaphors, pictures, diagrams, drama, poetry, music, and other creative devices that can often enrich conceptual meaning and make it more personal. In order to get an A on an assignment, **you really need to present your ideas in an integrative and creative way**. Go beyond the stated expectations of an assignment (not in terms of length ☺). Surprise me with a novel combination and/or expression of ideas.
- Coherence – The content flows in a consistent and meaningful way.
- Engaging – The writing style does not distract from the content (e.g. grammatical mistakes), but rather engages the reader’s attention. By the way, I love creative title pages that introduce a theme or multiple themes from your assignment in an engaging way.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to me by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with Dr. Brian Cooper, the MB Seminary Registrar.

Web Support-Student Portal — <https://mbseminary.populiweb.com>

All students at MBS will receive a MBS-Populi username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application. If you have any difficulty with your password or your login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Ministry Support, (keithreed@mbseminary.ca).

Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to your church host and contact.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Consider the [Purdue Owl](#) website for information or, Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire MB Seminary community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at MBS.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the MB Seminary Director of Student Development (briancooper@mbseminary.ca) of that fact **before the beginning of a course** so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience.