Applied Graduating Project
INT 610

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.

Instructor: Dr. T. Anderson, D.Min
Email: tanderson@mbseminary.ca
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Completion of 30 credit hours or permission of instructor
Course Term: September 8, 2024 - March 31, 2026

Description

The Graduating Project is a summative and integrative work that serves as a capstone to the student's entire course of studies in the MA program. Building on work already done in pursuit of the degree, the student will have this opportunity to consider unresolved questions and to test or apply ideas formed during the student's course of studies. The project will demonstrate the effective integration of biblical and theological themes, research into relevant literature, and practical ministry applications that are appropriate and effective. The project's objective is for the student to emerge from the degree having successfully described and demonstrated a well-developed understanding, appreciation, and application of at least one significant aspect of their study area.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course's themes are informed by a distinct MB perspective in accordance with the Mennonite-Brethren Confession of Faith. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

Knowledge and Its Application

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the theory and practice of their graduating project topic
- Apply knowledge about their graduating project topic to strengthen their own and others' leadership
- Identify and interpret new ideas and research related to their graduating project topic

Cognitive Complexity

- Engage in academic research, writing, and communication as skilled practitioners who think critically and deeply about issues related to their graduating project topic

- Undertake inquiry and analysis to solve problems with a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking and risk-taking
- Engage in interdisciplinary thinking that bridges multiple disciplines
- Integrate ideas and experiences in a way that generates novel insights related to their graduating project topic

Inter- and Intra-personal Wellness

- Appreciate the role of community in wellness
- Grow in emotional intelligence
- Demonstrate increased professional capacity and autonomy as leaders who employ best practices related to their graduating project topic in ways that strengthen individuals and the groups of which they are a part
- Exhibit superior organizational and time management skills
- Demonstrate academic and personal integrity

Aesthetic Expression and Interpretation

- Consider and practice creative engagement and interdisciplinary thinking
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in a dynamic educational environment within which intellectual and imaginative products are brought into relation with the most pressing human issues of our time

Social Responsibility and Global Engagement

- Analyze, appraise, and evaluate their insights about their graduating project topic in a social context
- Develop the ability to become socially responsive agents with a commitment to understanding global issues
- Build healthy multicultural teams that allow diversity to flourish

Spiritual Formation

- Cultivate a growing relationship with God that increasingly manifests itself in godly character, loving relationships, and missional living
- Demonstrate a greater understanding of and active participation in God's work in the world
- Utilize spiritual practices to deepen their love for God and increase their ministry effectiveness
- Exemplify a Christian ethic in pursuit of truth, reconciliation, compassion and hope

Schedule and Assignments

Important Dates	Course Schedule
September 8	Introductory Teams Meeting 4 pm
October 11	Project Proposal
January 17	Interim Project Report
March 31	Final Project Due

The course will require participation in a mandatory initial group meeting with the professor on **September 8, 2025, from 4:00 to 4:45 pm (PDT)** via MS Teams. The purpose of this meeting is for the professor to outline the course expectations and to address questions from students. Following this initial meeting, students are expected to develop their project plans and submit the project proposal template (see Appendix A) to the professor via email as soon as it is ready, but **no later than October 11, 2025**. Based on your proposal, the professor will assign you to a project mentor who will approve the plan (or require a revised proposal) and offer further direction.

Students must email a progress report to their professor/project mentor by **January 17, 2026,** using the questions delineated in the Progress Report form template (see Appendix B).

The final project will be due to the professor/project mentor by email no later than **March 31, 2026**

Description of the Project

The student is expected to pursue a specific issue in ministry or a significant theological question that has relevance within a local setting or the broader church. This project will evaluate current approaches to the issue and suggest an improved approach. The student will evaluate both current and seminal literature on the chosen subject.

Some examples of projects include "Evaluating the Study of 'Situational Leadership' and its Implications for the Local Church"; "Current Trends in Asian Christian Education"; "Assessing Current Models for Children's Ministry"; "A Theology of Rest and Sabbath for Canadian Churches"; "Worship in the Book of Deuteronomy and Implications for Contemporary Application in the Local Church," "Adopting a New Administrative Structure in a Large Canadian Church," or "Using Non-Verbal Media for Evangelism in Cross-Cultural Settings.

Please note that the Applied Graduating Project is intended to be an integrative project rather than a written essay. Students must demonstrate how their thinking could be applied in the field and seek to impact the student's focus of ministry. While the length or type of each project may differ depending on the idea being investigated, **every project should encompass four main areas:**

1. A **Theological**/biblical foundation of the topic being studied
2. A **Practical** component (i.e. developing a study guide, strategic plan, sermon series, survey and data research, etc.)
3. An **Application** (i.e. teaching the study guide, implementing a strategic plan, or preaching a sermon series)
4. A short **Reflection** of the application that answers questions such as: what did you learn, what would you do differently, and how did you grow?)

The result of this project will be a reflective paper of between ***15 and 40 pages***. Note that shorter papers will reflect projects with a more active field component and, potentially, other written materials (i.e. study guide, handbook). Longer papers will rely less on *application* and more on *analysis*. However, all projects must adequately encompass both ends of this continuum. (Please note that it is acceptable to use work you have written for other MBS courses for this graduating project.)
 You may also want to consider presenting the project in a different format (e.g., creating a ministry handbook, developing a training course, or producing a series of podcasts, etc). Regardless of the form the project takes, **the student must obtain approval from the professor on the scope and deliverables of the project before beginning.**

Within each project, the following elements should be included:

Statement of the Issue

The project should present the issue in a concise summary, providing a clear statement of the project's intent. The student will want to express what they are working on, why they have chosen the subject, and how they propose to address it through the project. Note that the project should clearly articulate how this project is *summative* and *integrative* of his or her program of studies to this point.

Review of Current Thinking and Practice

The student will interact with current thinkers and practitioners relevant to the subject area, demonstrating an understanding of the current state of thinking and practice, both locally and globally.

Biblical and Theological Engagement

The student will demonstrate a sound grasp of the relevant biblical and theological issues, deriving conclusions that are well-founded on an appropriate biblical foundation.

Description of the Student's Personal Engagement with the Issue

The student will describe their personal engagement with the project in terms of both thinking and practice. Note that every project should describe some level of actual participation with the subject in the field, articulating clearly how such time has been invested in these practical forms of engagement.

Presentation of a Fresh Approach to the Issue

The project should build from observation and practice to offer a distinctive response to the issue, effectively argued and well-founded. This may involve an evaluative critique of past leading approaches, along with a proposal for a new approach or the application of an existing principle. The writing may require considerable effort to explain a particular application in a specific setting and describe its implications for the broader work of the Kingdom.

Bibliography

The student should consider a minimum bibliography of 20 sources, including books, periodical literature, credible websites, and other scholarly resources. Again, the degree to which the student fulfills these requirements depends on the level to which the student engages in the fieldwork relevant to the project. Students who engage more actively with the subject will present a paper that succinctly addresses these issues. (*Note:* In such cases, the student will need to account for and articulate clearly how he or she has utilized his or her time in the field.) In every case, the above elements must still be adequately presented in the final paper.

Students should be prepared to invest approximately 120 hours in completing this project. While these areas of study could benefit from much more attention than this timeframe allows, this course intends to create a product that can be achieved by the average student within this limited amount of time. Students will be wise to budget their time and expectations accordingly. Note that in the 120-hour calculation, we are assuming approximately 90 to 120 minutes per written page. The remainder of one's time would be spent in fieldwork that supports the writing of the paper.

Statement on Research Ethics

Students are prohibited from utilizing research or data-gathering methods involving human subjects, such as conducting formal interviews, surveys, or focus groups. Instead, students are encouraged to engage in ministry with people and to evaluate that *experience*. The focus, therefore, is on "the project" and not on "the people" participating. In no circumstance will the formal research and testing of people be permitted.

Grading Scale

The assigned project mentor will be responsible for assigning the student's final grade.

Evaluation will focus mainly on the student's faithfulness to the assignment's requirements, more than on the details of the student's findings. In general, projects will be evaluated according to the following grid:

A-Range Grades: The project is clear, and the paper is well written with little need for grammar or formatting edits. The issue is clearly described and relevant to the student's objectives, and is effectively addressed throughout the assignment. The project insightfully builds upon the student's previous work in their program of studies. The student has made outstanding use of the existing literature, drawing from diverse sources, both faith-based and secular, and has

reflected fairly upon a variety of viewpoints relevant to the theme. The student brings a unique and well-argued perspective to the subject, reflecting a distinct and discerning ministry vantage point. The student describes clear and achievable results for a particular ministry setting, raising further questions that can fuel the student's future engagement with the subject.

B-Range Grades: The project is clear and reasonably well-written, although it displays some grammatical or writing deficiencies. The paper offers a promising issue derived reasonably from the student's program of studies and ministry/work experience. While displaying a reasonable grasp of the standard existing literature, the paper lacks a full and compelling integration of current thinking into the student's assessment of the subject. The student presents a reasonable and satisfactory, though perhaps not distinctive, response to the issues, with some attempt to describe potential ministry implications and pose further questions.

C-Range Grades: The project is significantly challenged by issues of grammar, spelling, form, and style. The issue presented by the paper is vague and lacks focus, only marginally connected to the student's previous work in their program of studies. While there is some attempt at a review of current thinking on the subject, the paper overlooks key discussions, instead relying on personal opinion. There is a lack of integration of sources and unclear or unachievable ministry implications.

F Grade: The project presents grammar, spelling, form, and style unacceptable for graduate-level work. The paper lacks a defined and focused issue, exhibiting limited awareness of the concerns involved in the current discussion and offering little to no success in presenting meaningful responses to the issues in question. It is generally unsuitable for a graduate-level paper.

Late submissions without previous written approval by the project mentor will result in a 5% deduction per week.

Working with your Project Mentors

You are encouraged to work with your project mentors to help structure your project and provide a basis for the final deliverable of work. It is entirely appropriate to email and arrange meetings with your project mentor to discuss key aspects of your project. However, **students may not ask their project mentor to read their paper, in whole or in part, before submitting it formally**.

Academic Notes & Policies

Artificial Intelligence

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bing) to assist with research for assignments in this course, provided that any assistance or content provided or created by the AI tools is appropriately identified as a source and fully cited. This includes citing the exact prompts used. Citation is not needed for simple proof-reading and editing (eg, Grammarly); however, any use of AI tools may only support your work. AI may not be used to transform, translate, paraphrase, or increase the fluency of your original work in any way. Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material or the use of AI paraphrasing tools that alter syntax, originality and/or clarity will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material will be reported as academic misconduct.

Students should consult the Instructor if they have any questions about using generative AI tools.

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 are expected to adhere to the principles of sound academic scholarship at MB Seminary.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the Purdue Owl website for information or,

> Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations,* 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by writing their reasons for contesting the grade. The deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has received the grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Director of Student Development, briancooper@mbseminary.ca.

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 difficulty with your password or login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Church Equipping (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 class cancellations to your church host and contact.

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. To repeat: To ensure that instructors know how to accommodate a student with a learning access issue, the student must inform the Director of Student Development of their disability before the start of the class; after that is too late.

Appendix A: INT 610 – Project Proposal Template

Student Name & Email:

Proposed Title for the Project:

Brief Description of the Context for the Project:

Describe the intended deliverables for each project section:

1. Biblical/Theological Foundation:

2. Practical Component of the Project:

3. Application of the Project:

4. Reflection of the Application:

Describe the Intended Outcomes for the Project:

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Appendix B: INT 610 – Graduate Project Progress Report

Student Name & Email:

Project Title:

Progress Made…

Significant Preliminary Findings…

Remaining Challenges and/or Strategies…