



Old Testament Leadership and Spiritual Formation

BIB 610 WC

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:	Mark D. Wessner, PhD
Email:	markwessner@mbseminary.ca
Credit Hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Course Term:	April 6 – Jun 6, 2026
Instruction:	Teaching Intensive at Willingdon Church: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 9, 2026 (6:30 pm – 9:00 pm)• April 10, 2026 (6:30 pm – 9:00 pm)• April 11, 2026 (8:30 am – 4:30 pm) Online Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 28, 2026 (7:00 pm – 8:30 pm)

Description

Often overlooked in the Old Testament, leadership and spiritual formation are portrayed and evaluated through the history, activities, beliefs, and teachings of God's first followers. Through explorations of the Seasons of the Soul, the Four Voices of a Leader, and the stories and structures, and significance of specific Old Testament leaders, a deep dive into spiritual formation and leadership will be experienced. Throughout the course, participants will engage the biblical texts together and explore theological and practical frameworks to evaluate and strengthen their own spiritual health and ministry leadership.

Objectives

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:

- Identify and describe key theological and practical elements of leadership within the Old Testament, and the essential elements of spiritual formation in the Old Testament,
- Articulate and apply specific principles from each of the Old Testament texts that describe a “face-to-face” encounter (five texts) or a “there has never been a prophet/king/____ like” evaluation (twelve texts), and
- Implement new (or renewed) practices of leadership development and spiritual formation in your life, leadership, and communities.

Transformative learning takes place as you carefully process information in community, through thoughtful reflection and application. Your performance and evaluation in this course will be based

on demonstrating your engagement and learning, not simply repeating basic facts. In all that you do in this class, you should always remember to use higher-order thinking skills, as described below:

- Comprehension: the ability to grasp meaning, explain, and restate ideas,
- Application: the ability to use learned material in life and ministry contexts,
- Analysis: the ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between the parts,
- Synthesis: the ability to put together the separate ideas to form a new whole, to establish new relationships, and
- Evaluation: the ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

Required Texts

- Averbeck, Richard. "Spirit, Community, and Mission: A Biblical Theology for Spiritual Formation." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008): 27-53.
- Brisben, David, and Amelia Klein. 2012. "Reading the Old Testament as Story: A Pedagogy for Spiritual Formation." *Christian Education Journal* 9, no. 2 (2012): 326-341.
- Fountain, Kay A. "An Investigation into Successful Leadership Transitions in the Old Testament." *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7, no. 2 (2004): 187-204.
- Stevens, Marty E. *Leadership Roles of the Old Testament: King, Prophet, Priest, Sage*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012.
- Wessner, Mark D. "No one like Josiah: Covenant Faithfulness as a Foundation for Ministry, Marketplace, and Social Leadership." *Direction Journal* 47, no. 2 (2018).
- Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Kings.
- Access to any theological library

Schedule and Assignments

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% of Grade	Cumulative
1		Course Intensives (schedule below)		
2	April 18	Reflection Paper #1	8%	8%
3	April 25	Discussion Group #1	2%	10%
4	May 2	Reflection Paper #2	8%	18%
5	May 9	Discussion Group #2	2%	20%
6	May 16	Research Paper	34%	54%
7	May 23	Reflection Paper #3	8%	62%
8	May 30	Discussion Group #3	2%	64%
9	June 6	Ministry Curriculum Project	36%	100%

Course Intensives	
Thursday, April 9, 2026	6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Four Voices of a Leader
Friday, April 10, 2026	6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasons of the Soul • Three C's
Saturday, April 11, 2026	8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-Face Encounters
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation 1 - Behavioural Epitaph
Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation 2 – Narrative Future • Evaluation 3 – Narrative Historical
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation 4 – Behavioural Judgment
Online Session	
Saturday, April 28, 2026	7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Transitions

Note: Attending all in-person and online course sessions is required for passing the course.

Assignments and Evaluation

Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups: There are three sets of Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups, with grading based on two components for each Paper/Group set. During three weeks of the course (Weeks 2, 4, 7), you will write a three-page reflection paper in response to the instructional content and the required readings. Your reflection paper should answer the questions assigned to each of the three weeks (see below). The week after your reflection paper is due, you will meet in church-based discussion groups to discuss your responses to the questions and explore other related topics. The maximum length for each reflection paper is three pages.

1. Reflection Papers (3 reflection papers x 8% = 24% of final grade): The following are the questions you should address in your three reflection papers (there are three questions for each week, so aim for one page per question):

- Reflection Paper #1 – Seasons of the Soul and the Four Voices of Leadership
 - Share a story that describes the Season of the Soul you are experiencing.

- How have you experienced the guidance of God in this season, particularly in your leadership?
- What challenges have you faced as you reflect on your primary leadership voice, and do you find it important to identify your particular leadership style? Why or why not?
- Reflection Paper #2 – Behavioural Epitaph
 - The legacy we leave behind is often deeply connected to the community we serve. What do you hope your ministry leadership legacy will be?
 - What values and actions would you want to be remembered for in your family, church, or community?
 - In what ways are you leading today that will ensure this legacy is realized in the future?
- Reflection Paper #3 – Leadership Transitions
 - Share a story that describes a “successful” leadership transition you have personally seen or experienced, and an “unsuccessful leadership transition you have personally seen or experienced.
 - From the course content and the required reading, what specific principles and strategies can you implement to increase the health and effectiveness of the next leadership transition that you will be involved in?

Discussion Groups (3 discussion groups x 2% = **6% of final grade**): For the three Discussion Groups, you will meet in a church-based or virtual discussion group to discuss the questions you addressed in your reflection paper, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. A designated leader from the church will facilitate the church-based discussion groups. 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	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	43-46/50	The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.
Good participation	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	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	<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.

Research Paper (34% of final grade)

A 15-18 page paper on either a specific leadership or spiritual formation passage in the Old Testament (it must be one of these two topics). You can choose any passage you would like to study, provided that Dr Wessner has approved both the passage and your draft bibliography before writing the paper. At a minimum, the paper will consist of:

- The correct identification of the passage (where the passage starts/stops, its placement within the book, its placement within the Bible, etc.), giving specific reasons for each of your conclusions (8 points),
- An analysis of the literary style and characteristics of both the book and the passage (citing specific references) (16 points),
- The cultural and historical background of the passage (16 points),
- A detailed and thoughtful analysis and application of the passage as it relates to both the Old Testament and your local and national contexts of Leadership or Spiritual Formation (56 points),
- Specific references from at least eight academic sources in addition to the course textbooks and articles (4 points).

Ministry Curriculum Project (36% of final grade)

Using the Research Paper as the foundation, you are to create either a small group study guide or a classroom curriculum based on the Research Paper passage. The study guide/curriculum must reflect the content and principles discussed in this course and include a section on life and ministry application for participants. You are to work through the study guide/curriculum with a small group (one meeting) of at least four people in your church or community.

- A thorough and detailed study guide/curriculum (48 points), and
- A 2,000 word summary of your small group/classroom experience (52 points).

Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is important to us, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Populi classroom in Week 8.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	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	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-	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+	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	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-	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+	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	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-	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision or references and resources not taken fully into account or examples are basic or not completely convincing or 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 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.

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 MB Seminary.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI, when properly cited, may support a student's work, but it may not be used to transform it. Therefore,

- Where students make use of generative artificial intelligence tools to research any course-related work, the generated material must be clearly and correctly indicated and cited using the Chicago/Turabian referencing style for generative AI. Additionally, students must also cite the exact prompts used.
- Citation is not required to document the use of simple proofreading. However, **generative AI tools may not be used to translate, paraphrase, or increase the fluency of a student's original work. Therefore, if the AI tool's results produce material changes to your wording, structure, phrasing, language, or style, you are in contravention of this policy.**

Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material or any use of AI paraphrasing tools that alter syntax, originality and/or clarity will be considered a violation of academic integrity and reported as academic fraud.

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

Late Assignments

Manage your time well. Review the required assignments for the course and write out a realistic schedule for completing each assignment's research and writing.

- Assignments can be submitted before their due dates (and it is better time management to do so).
- Late assignments will be deducted by 10% per day, up to a maximum of 5 days. Any assignment submitted more than five days late will not be accepted.
- Please note that any assignment submitted after the last day of class will not be counted toward your final grade – there will be no exceptions. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. If you have requested and been approved for a formal course extension, it is your responsibility to submit all assignments before the expiry of the extension.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the Turabian Citation Quick Guide 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.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. The deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has received their 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 MB Seminary will receive an 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 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 the cancellation of classes 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 who has a learning access issue, the student must inform the Director of Student Development of a disability before the beginning of the class. After that, it is too late.