



RD 703 Research for Leadership and Development Fall 2026

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Course Dates: **December 10-12 (9am-4pm) with follow up Learning Labs Tuesday Dec. 15th and Thursday Dec 17th from 6:30-9pm SK time.**

Course delivery Method: Hybrid (online or in person) 3-day long Residency, 1 Asynchronous Learning Lab and 2 Synchronous Learning Labs

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will gain an in-depth practical understanding of the emerging science of scholarly research in the field of leadership and management and will learn the skills necessary for doing reflective research as a leader. This course will provide excellent preparation for students to launch their research project and for a lifetime of using research to improve institutional function.

COURSE INTEGRATION

The course has students examine and prepare the foundational integrative work, including biblical/theological understandings, related to research as a leader. It is highly integrative both for preparing your MALTS Research Project, and for research as a leadership process/methodology in your career and calling. Leaders/managers are routinely expected to deal with issues, organizational change, and opportunities and this course is designed to give them a thoughtful and reflective approach to do so.

Throughout the course, you will refine the initial idea for your research project, develop a research process, and choose research tools (i.e., surveys, observational approach, interviews, focus groups, experimental approach, narrative research, ethnography, developmental evaluation, case study etc.). You will also give some thought to how to select the participant population.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS (Both available through Briercrest Library)

Coghlan, David. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*. 5th edition. Sage, 2019.
ISBN: 978-1526458827 (218 pages)

Whitney, Diana, & Amanda Trosten-Bloom. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. 2nd edition. Berrett-Koehler, 2010.

ISBN: 978-1459626720. (336 pages)

REQUIRED ARTICLES: Please read the articles in the order listed.

1. Weng Marc Lim. "What is Qualitative Research?" (60 pages. Available in Canvas or at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/14413582241264619>)
2. Coghlan, David. "Seeking God in All Things: Ignatian Spirituality as Action Research." *The Way* 43, no. 1 (January 2004): 97–108. (12 pages. Available in Canvas or at <https://theway.org.uk/Back/431Coghlan.pdf>)
3. Jain, Nick. "What is Qualitative Research Design?" (10 pages. Available in Canvas or at <https://ideascale.com/blog/qualitative-research-design/>)
4. Snyder, Timothy, "Theological Ethnography: Embodied," *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture*, 23, no. 5, May 2014. (6 pages Available in Canvas or at <https://theotherjournal.com/2014/05/27/theological-ethnography-embodied/>)
5. Hall, Tom. "Footwork: moving and knowing in local space(s)" (16 pages. Available in Canvas)
6. Ahmed, Sirwan Khalid, et al., "Using Thematic Analysis" (6 pages. Available in Canvas or at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2949916X25000222>)

REQUIRED ONLINE TRAINING: (4 hours long) *Please note that these hours count as instruction time for this course. Instead of the normal three learning labs we will have two.* (Course Outcome 2) <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

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.briercrestseminary.ca/currentstudents/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://textbooks.briercrest.ca/>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.

3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Students will

1. Embrace and articulate an ethical and Christ-centered approach to leadership that is culturally and contextually informed.
2. Demonstrate adaptive and facilitative management principles and practices.
3. Exhibit and articulate biblically informed self-awareness and humble confidence.
4. Exemplify theologically informed collaborative leadership principles and practices.
5. Understand and apply systems thinking and the principles of systems complexity, systems health, systems change, and social innovation.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Thoughtful students will:

1. Be introduced to diverse methods of qualitative research. In particular, they will gain a theoretical understanding of Action Research, Grounded Research, Ethnography and Appreciative Inquiry as helpful methodologies for finding answers to questions they have in their leadership roles and contexts.
2. Explore ethical issues related to research with human beings.
3. The student will develop criteria for selection of a research method and identify a potential research question.
4. The student will experiment with diverse research methods and will become more confident leading the research process.
5. The student will wrestle with the theological considerations of their research.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Learning Lab 1 <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome> (Noted above as required. Completed on own time before class)

Day 1 Intro to Research (Course Outcome 1)

Research Ethics and REB process (Course Outcome 2)

Thinking Theologically About Research (Course Outcome 5)

Day 2 Research Methods

Writing Literature Reviews

Topic Statements

Day 3 Research Design

Research Proposal Writing (Course Outcome 3)

Learning Lab 2 Effective Interviewing (Course Outcome 4)

Learning Lab 3 Thematic Analysis (Course Outcome 4)

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be uploaded to Canvas.

Pre- Course Assignment

Assignment One: Reading Report (Course Outcome 1,3)

Read the assigned texts. Write a 1-page summary of each research methodology based on your reading (Action Research, Appreciative Inquiry, Ethnography and Grounded Research). Comment on the pros and cons of each approach as it relates to the research question or topics you are considering. Develop a list of criteria by which you will choose the approach that best suits your context and research question. Include an introduction, conclusion, and bibliography. Please note that most research projects should include an action research component to enable you to engage in participatory research in your context.

Length: 5 pages

Due Date: 8pm Monday Dec 7th, 2026

Proportion of Grade: 25%

During Course Assignments

Assignment Two: Research Topic Clarification (Course Outcome 4)

Discuss with your group then submit a 2-page summary that contains 3 potential topics/issues/research questions for your research project that includes a brief description of your context, potential outcomes, and your topic statement.

A topic statement should be a single sentence written according to the following format:

- i. I want to study: _____
- ii. Because I want to find out/solve/respond to:
_____ (what/why) and I
will do this by _____ (how and when).

Length: 2 pages

Due Date: 5pm Saturday December 12, 2026.

Proportion of Grade: 15%

Post Course Assignments

Assignment Three: Methodology Research and Literature Review Paper (Course Outcomes 1 and 4)

As well as an introduction and conclusion this assignment has three sections:

1. Begin a literature review of your chosen research methodology and of your area of research. The methodology review and literature review of your topic area should include a minimum of 3-5 sources (journal articles or books) each and be summarized in 3 pages each.
 - a Suggested Places to Begin Your Search: Briercrest Librarians, Google Scholar, SSRN.com, Sage Journals.
 - b Generative AI may also be used to assist you in finding sources but should not be used for any part of the writing process. Please be sure to note your use of AI in the body of your paper.
2. Experiment with two methodologies. For example, you might wish to invite family or friends to participate in an Appreciative Inquiry approach to evaluating a shared experience ("What went well about last Christmas that we would like to do again?") and a semi-structured interview with 3-5 questions related to the research question you are considering. Write a 2-page reflection on the process: what went well, what were the challenges, what would you do differently, what was unexpected? What did you learn that might help you in your 'actual' research project. (Note that this is a 'practice run'— you do not require Research Ethics Board approval).
3. Find and read a master's or DMin qualitative research paper that uses the research method you are considering and addresses something to do with the topic/research question that you are interested in studying. How does the researcher maximize the opportunity the methodology provides. What did you learn from this author's approach that might help you design, carry out and write your research project? What would you do differently?

Length: max. 9 pages

Due Date: 8pm Friday, January 29th, 2027

Proportion of final course grade: 30%

Assignment Four: Research (Reading) Project Proposal First Draft (Course Outcomes 2-5)

Craft a Research Proposal that includes:

- a. Intro: An introductory summary of the proposed project (max. 1 page)

- b. Research Question: A statement of the problem/issue/question. What is the pressing issue, question, need, or problem to solve and why is it important enough to research?
- c. Context: A one page summary of where the research will take place and why/how the issue/need/problem exists there. What is your relationship to this context (e.g., do you work, volunteer, or attend there)? How will you navigate the complexities of your relationship to the research participants?
- d. Plan: A 1 page summary of the methodology, tools, process, or approaches you will use and why. Include how will you choose and recruit participants.
- e. Literature Review: A 3-5-page initial literature review that includes a minimum of 500 pages of reading (books, journals etc.).
- f. Ethics: A 1 page reflection on potential ethical considerations for your project and how you will mitigate these.
- g. Intended Use: A 1 page summary of how the findings of this project will benefit the community it is researching as well as the broader community.
- h. Theological Reflection: a 1page reflection on the theological issues you will consider as part of your research and a 1-page reflection on how your theology shapes your approach to research.
- i. Bibliography: A 3–5-page bibliography of additional books, journals, and other sources that you will potentially use for this project.

These 10 pages (plus bibliography) draft of your research proposal should be submitted for insight and feedback to both the instructor and, if appropriate, the key stakeholders in the context where the research might be done. This feedback will then be incorporated into the final draft of the proposal to be presented to the research Ethics Board and your Research project supervisor.

Due Date: 8pm, Monday February 15th, 2027.

Proportion of final course grade: 30%

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](#).

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.

Modular 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 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 (Room 217 across from Academic Services), 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., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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