

Brethren in Christ U.S. Directed Study Program

Overview

The *Directed Study Program* (DSP) is a sequence of email/web delivered courses designed to meet the minimum educational requirement for Ordination in the Brethren in Christ. Courses are taught at a post-high school level and are a suitable education alternative for ministers who lack a completed Bible College, Ministry, or Seminary degree. Courses also satisfy lifelong learning requirements for Licensed and Ordained ministers.

Program Sequence

The DSP is designed to introduce participants to important content in the areas of Bible, history, ministry, and theology. The full DSP sequence involves the completion of eleven Required courses and one Elective course. DSP courses are offered during 14-week terms (Fall, Spring, and Summer) and require approximately 5-8 hours of reading/writing work per week. They are delivered via an online/email format and do not require classroom attendance or travel to meet the course requirements.

Each course carries a registration fee of \$150 (USD). Courses are limited to 15 participants each and scholarships are available based on need and available funding.

More information about the DSP can be found here:
<https://bicus.org/training/directed-study-program>

*The following pages contain a *DSP Course Sequence Checklist* (page 2) and *Course Descriptions* for the Required (pages 3-4) and Elective (page 5) DSP Courses.

DSP Course Sequence Checklist

The full DSP sequence involves the completion of eleven Required courses and one Elective course. This checklist is designed to assist you in tracking your progress through the program.

Required Courses [complete ALL]

| Course Name | Status | Completion Date |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| [B101r] <i>Bible Survey</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [B103r] <i>Biblical Interpretation</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [B201r] <i>Pentateuch*</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [B203r] <i>Synoptic Gospels*</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [H101r] <i>History of Christianity</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [M100r] <i>A Study of Brethren in Christ Core Values</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [M102r] <i>Evangelism</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [M103r] <i>Intentional Discipleship</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [M106r] <i>World Christian Movement</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [M202r] <i>Pastoral Care & Counseling</i> | <i>Required</i> | |
| [T101r] <i>Basic Christian Doctrines</i> | <i>Required</i> | |

Elective Courses [complete ONE]

| Course Name | Status | Completion Date |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| [B203] <i>Paul & His Letters*</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |
| [H302] <i>Life & Thought of John Wesley</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |
| [M105] <i>Discerning God's Call, My Identity</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |
| [M131] <i>Congregational Care of Older Adults</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |
| [M306] <i>Spiritual Formation</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |
| [T102] <i>Life in the Holy Spirit</i> | <i>Elective</i> | |

* Courses marked with an asterisk carry a prerequisite of [B101r] *Bible Survey* so it is advised to complete that course early in the DSP sequence.

Required Courses

[B101r] Bible Survey

Begin your study with this comprehensive look at the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, you will read significant passages of Scripture that represent major biblical themes and genres. Probing questions will help you focus on the meaning of each passage and its relevance to life today. *This wide-angle view of the Bible sets the context for further, more focused study and is a required course, as well as a prerequisite for subsequent Bible courses.*

[B103r] Biblical Interpretation

This required course will provide an introduction to biblical interpretation examining the historical, cultural, and literary contexts of the biblical documents and will consider the Brethren in Christ beliefs about the Bible and the Brethren in Christ approach to reading and interpreting the Bible. By the end of the course, you will learn to articulate your own perspective on biblical interpretation, the presuppositions that lie beneath it, and what it means for your own community.

[B201r] Pentateuch

Often neglected, the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) contains eternal theological truths that are still relevant today. Hone your inductive Bible study skills by carefully reading to discover those truths and then consider how they apply to our contemporary world. In completing this required course, you will not only gain a comprehensive knowledge of these biblical books but also develop usable lesson plans or sermon outlines.

Prerequisites: [B101r] Bible Survey

[B203r] Synoptic Gospels

Using the techniques of inductive Bible study, this required course focuses on discovering the uniqueness of each Synoptic Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke) and how it relates to the others. The textbook, which provides background readings and questions to guide your thinking, will become a personal resource containing your own observations. After carefully studying Jesus' teachings, you will consider their implications for contemporary living and prepare a sermon or lessons for your congregation.

Prerequisites: [B101r] Bible Survey

[H101r] History of Christianity

This required course provides a basic introduction to the history of the Church as it traces the growth and development of Christianity from a group of believers in the ancient Middle East to the worldwide Church of today. You will be introduced to significant individuals and important events as you read and write brief responses. Participation in this course will provide insight into how the Church has succeeded and failed in its mission and will help you to appreciate the wide variety of Christian expression found throughout the world today.

[M100r] *A Study of Brethren in Christ Core Values*

This required course is designed to help participants understand and appreciate the stated Core Values of the Brethren in Christ U.S. and explore ways to integrate these values into their life and ministry.

[M102r] *Evangelism*

This required course approaches the subject of evangelism from a broad perspective. Students will explore the prevailing cultural view of evangelism in the United States, evangelism in the context of the local church, and embracing evangelism as a lifestyle.

[M103r] *Intentional Discipleship*

Discipleship essentially centers around two things: The first is Jesus, into whose Spirit-filled life, death, and resurrection we are discipled. The second is the stories of our lives and the lives of all of those who respond to the invitation of Jesus to “come, follow me.” The concept of discipleship is the practice of bringing these two things together — discovering how the person of Jesus influences the stories and experiences of our lives as we live in response to the Holy Spirit, who guides us in the ways of Jesus.

[M106r] *World Christian Movement*

Christianity is a missionary religion. In this required course, you will look at the biblical basis for missions and then see the role of missions in Church history. You will meet the pioneering missionaries of the Brethren in Christ Church and trace the expansion of their vision to the current status of Brethren in Christ missions. Finally, you will consider the challenges facing Christianity in the 21st century and develop ways to be involved at a personal and congregational level.

[M202r] *Pastoral Care & Counseling*

The focus of this required course is to learn and practice the fundamental counseling skills necessary for effectively listening, communicating, and being pastorally present with people. This course will emphasize the basic skills, principles, and processes of pastoral counseling. We will also examine vital issues like helping someone who is suicidal, depressed, or in crisis; integrating theology naturally in people-helping encounters; knowing when and how to refer; discerning ethical and legal issues; and avoiding burnout.

[T101r] *Basic Christian Doctrines*

This required course deals with the classic understandings of Christian theology. Designed to assist students in thinking clearly about the implications and significance of their beliefs, this course lays the theological groundwork in developing and articulating one’s own faith.

Elective Courses

[B203] *Paul & His Letters*

In this course you will follow the Apostle Paul's travels and ministry in The Acts of the Apostles and then consider each of his letters to the early Church. Your weekly journal entries will address historical and social settings as well as theological and ethical emphases. After completing this comprehensive introduction, you will be well-grounded in Pauline literature.

Prerequisites: [B101r] *Bible Survey*

[H302] *Life & Thought of John Wesley*

John Wesley was the founder of Methodism, whose understanding of theology was influential in Brethren in Christ history. Since he was an evangelist and pastor, Wesley's concern was how theology helped the people to whom he ministered; he was not a systematic theologian. You will read from his sermons, letters, and journals, as well as biographical materials, and then will answer questions based on your readings. You will learn to know Wesley as an individual, as well as gain an understanding of his contribution to BIC theology.

[M105] *Discerning God's Call, My Identity*

What is God's call to me, and how do I respond to it? Participants in this course will complete a variety of assessment activities to aid in identifying God's call on their lives and to evaluate the gifts, skills, and experiences they bring to ministry. They will also meet regularly with a mentor they have chosen for feedback, modeling, and encouragement.

[M131] *Congregational Care of Older Adults*

This course equips students to enhance the quality of life and well-being for older people within the context of a local congregation. Through readings and other assignments, students gain insight into how older people may find meaning in later life and learn methods for working with older adults across the health-illness continuum. Attention is also given to the pastoral caregiver's role in relating to older people in the congregation.

[M306] *Spiritual Formation*

Do you need help to nourish your soul? You will do readings and complete exercises in a journal notebook based on your own spiritual experiences. You will read about and reflect on each of the inward (meditation, prayer, fasting) and outward (simplicity, solitude, submission, service) spiritual disciplines.

[T102] *Life in the Holy Spirit*

By exploring relevant Scriptures and readings in textbooks, this course examines how the Holy Spirit works in individuals to give new life, grant gifts, and develop character. You will also look at how the Holy Spirit shapes Christian community and ministers in worship with special emphasis on Brethren in Christ understandings. Your study will consist of assigned readings, written answers to specific questions, and two final integrative papers. After this study, you will have an enhanced understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit.