REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYSTEM

FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

RTS Orlando

Reverend Michael Osborne

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PT5900 FIELD EDUCATION INTERNSHIP

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Field Education is a valuable way that the student's classroom experience is tested and applied in the context of the church. The purposes are threefold:

1. To help Master of Divinity (M.Div.) students test, exercise, and improve their gifts and skills;
2. To equip them with diverse, first-hand experience in the ministry to which God has called them;
3. To encourage their theological reflection on the tasks of ministry

COURSE DETAILS

Seminary Partnerships with the Local Church

Ministry internships enable students to integrate classroom theory with practical hands-on experience through the pairing of experienced Christians with seminary students in ministry-based education. During the field education internship, students learn about themselves and the ministry under the guidance of a trained mentor. Mentoring provides the platform for students to receive candid feedback on personal development, spiritual growth, and ministry skills. Through this partnership with the local church, a triadic relationship of learning emerges in which student, mentor, and faculty together do theological reflection on the practice of ministry.

Denominational requirements

Many denominations require internships, and RTS desires to work within those parameters where possible to assist the student. Students are encouraged to communicate with denomination officials early in their seminary career to avoid unnecessary duplication or delays in meeting denominational standards.

The Field Education Internship is a prerequisite for you to take the Field Education Seminar- PT534!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *400 hours of ministry experience*

Many students have had very valuable ministry experiences before beginning their studies; nevertheless, the seminary expects students to have ministry internships under the oversight of both faculty and trained mentors as part of the seminary curriculum. This experiential education in the ministry context is an essential component of the seminarian's personal growth and preparation for ministry. The requirements may be met through a part-time internship, a summer intensive, or other arrangements negotiated with the Director of Field Education.

2. *Mentor*

Every student is required to have a mentor during their internship.

Qualifications for a Mentor:

- They have demonstrated Christian maturity and competence in ministry, possessing the necessary knowledge and giftedness for faithful ministry.
- They have the necessary supervisory skills and time to direct, shepherd, and evaluate a student.
- They are actively engaged in full-time church or specialized ministry with at least three years of experience.
- Ordinarily, they must have theological training (usually a seminary degree).

Mentor Responsibilities:

- Regularly meet with the student to provide encouragement, guidance, and feedback of the student's progress and recommendations for further growth.
- Provide a variety of real ministry opportunities for the student.
- Following a student's field education, mentors are asked to fill out and submit the Mentor Evaluation Form directly to the Director of Field Education.
- First-time mentors are required to complete RTS-approved mentor training prior to the internship. This training is available as an optional refresher for mentors who have served before. This presentation (see page 8 of manual) provides all the training necessary to begin being a mentor to our students.

3. *Locate a Field Education Ministry and Mentor*

The initiative for securing an appropriate ministry site is the responsibility of the student. They should network with seminary faculty, friends, denominational contacts, and others to assist them in locating a ministry site. The Director of Field Education must approve all internship sites and Mentors prior to the tracking of hours.

ASSIGNMENTS

Get Started!

1. Field Education Registration Form
2. Learning Contract

In order to begin the field education experience, students must submit both of these forms in Canvas. Upon approval of the Director of Field Education, the required 400 hours can start accumulating. RTS guidelines for Field Education must be adhered to closely in order to meet the M.Div. degree requirements.

Halfway There!

3. Meet with the Director of Field Education.

Each student is required to calculate an estimate of the midpoint of their internship and submit this in their learning contract. Each student should complete the 'Check-In Quiz' and 'Check-In with Mike' assignments in Canvas.

Use this calendly link to do so: https://calendly.com/deanmike

Finish Up!

4. Student Evaluation Form

Each student will review the internship in the light of the original learning contract and evaluate the mentor and the ministry using this form.

5. Mentoring Meeting Record

   Submit a record showing the date and length of each of your mentoring meetings, including a brief summary of what you and your mentor did or discussed in each meeting and one or two actions points. A template form for this purpose is uploaded on Canvas for your use, or you can use a form of your own creation. Begin documenting your mentoring meetings now!

Students are required to submit their meeting record via Canvas, **before the student can register for the Field Education Seminar**.

6. The mentor is required to submit an evaluation form directly to Mike Osborne. Students should send this link to his or her mentor after finishing both the 400 service hours. **When you forward this form to your mentor, please send the instructions from FAQ section Q9 along with it!**

7. Students will be added to PT534 - Field Education Seminar after the instructor has received and approved both the student's evaluation form and the mentor's evaluation form.

FAQ

1. **Q: I changed churches. Do I have to start the whole process over?**
   A: No, the hours you have served in the first church can carry over. However, you must submit a new Registration Form and Learning Contract reflecting your new ministry location.

2. **Q: My Mentor left the church/moved away etc. What is the process of getting a new mentor?**
   A: Select a new mentor who meets the qualifications outlined above. If you have a question about a mentor's suitability, contact the Director of Field Education. Submit an updated Registration Form to include the new mentor's name, contact information, and educational/ministry experience.

3. **Q: Is Field Education Seminar required for MDiv students? What is the course like?**
   A: Yes, Field Education Seminar is a required course in the MDiv program. It is a full semester-long course that is taught on the RTS-Orlando campus for one hour each week (typically, Wednesdays at 4:00pm ET). The course is available during the fall and spring semesters each year. It is advisable to take the course during your final year of seminary. Hybrid students participate via Zoom. If a student cannot join the live class either in person or via Zoom, he or she can view the Zoom recording at a later time. However, in this case the student must post a comment or question about the class discussion to be counted as present for the class. Course assignments include writing a reflection paper and creating a résumé.

4. **Q: Can I count previous experience as Field Education hours?**
   A: No, you cannot count prior ministry experience toward the required 400 hours. Accumulating Field Ed hours begins after submitting your Registration Form and Learning Contract and receiving the approval of the Director of Field Education.

5. **Q: Are churches the only place students can get their Field Education?**
   A: No. Students may choose a parachurch organization or non-profit organization as their Field Education ministry site.

6. **Q: What do I do if my mentor is so busy he cannot meet with me?**
   A: Contact the Director of Field Education.

7. **Q: What kind of documentation do I need to use to track my ministry hours, and do I need to post this on Canvas?**
   A: To keep track of your hours of ministry, you may use a spreadsheet, journal, diary, computer program, etc. - whatever works for you. You do not have to submit this documentation to the Director of Field Education or post it on Canvas. However, you must upload your Mentoring Meeting Record to Canvas.

8. **Q: I emailed my documents to Rev. Mike Osborne, and he gave me an okay on them, but <u>I still cannot access certain forms</u> required on Canvas. It says I haven't fulfilled the prerequisites. Why?**
   A: Canvas is set up to require prerequisites so that you may have a better understanding of the order of completion. Even if you submitted your assignment on an alternative platform, there is no other way to waive the prerequisite on Canvas except if there is a document uploaded to the proper slot. Please upload a document so that Canvas can register that the assignment required was completed. Once you have completed your prerequisites, you will have access to the following forms and so on.

9. **Q: I filled out the Mentor Evaluation form online and got confirmation that it was sent. Where's it going? Am I done? Is the form submitted?**
   A: No, you are not done; the form is yet to be submitted!

Here are a few clarifying steps you can follow to submit your form.

1. Once you sign the form and add your email address, it should say that it was sent to your email address.
    a. If you don't see it pop up, make sure you check in your junk files as well, just in case
2. It may require you to confirm your email address before sending you the completed form. Once you open the confirmation email in blue, it should say "Confirm my email address" Click on that blue text to confirm.
3. An email will be sent to you with the completed form. It will have a button that says, "Open Agreement". Click on it!
4. Once you open it, you will be able to download the form.
5. Then you should be able to forward that form to Rev. Mike Osborne (at mosborne@rts.edu) as an attachment in your email.

Guidelines for Field Ed Mentors

Presented by
Mike Osborne, Dean of Students & Director of Field Education
Reformed Theological Seminary-Orlando

Introduction

- THANK YOU for mentoring one of our Field Education students!
- You are a vital partner in this student's preparation for ministry.
- In this presentation, I want to introduce you to the RTS-Orlando Field Ed program and explain your role and responsibilities as a mentor.
- I will share my contact information at the end in case you have questions I did not answer.

Module 1: The RTS-Orlando Field Education Program

- Field Education serves to complement, test, and apply the classroom education of our M.Div. students.
- Students can serve in a church, mission, campus ministry, parachurch organization, hospital, or other approved ministry site.
- Through Field Education, students exercise and develop their ministry gifts under the eye of an experienced practitioner.
- Students get exposure to a variety of ministry areas and learn by doing.
- Students also meet regularly with their mentor to reflect theologically and practically and to assess their progress.

The details

For the student…

- Find a ministry site & mentor
- Get approval from Director of Field Ed
- Submit Registration Form & Learning Contract
- Get at least 400 hours of direct ministry experience
- Meet regularly with on-site mentor (12 hours minimum)
- Submit Student's Evaluation Form
- Take Field Education Seminar

For the mentor…

- Collaborate with the student on developing a Learning Contract that is acceptable to both of you
- Sign the Learning Contract
- Provide a variety of ministry opportunities for the student
- Meet regularly with the student to encourage, guide, plan, pray, and give feedback (minimum 12 hours)
- Submit Mentor's Evaluation Form to Director of Field Ed

What the student needs from you

- Time and attention
- A variety of ministry experiences
- Mentoring
- Encouragement
- Honest feedback
- Instruction
- Stories of challenges you've faced and how God has been faithful
- Relationship



What you should expect from the student

- Commitment to your church or ministry
- Faithfulness
- Desire to learn, serve, and grow
- Timely communication
- A teachable, submissive spirit



Goals of the RTS Field Ed program



- To integrate the student's academic study and practice of ministry
- To clarify the call to ministry
- To develop a pastoral identity
- To learn appropriate pastoral authority and boundaries
- To develop and articulate a philosophy of ministry
- To grow in relationship & leadership skills
- To deepen the practice of spiritual disciplines
- To expand the vision for gospel advancement in the world

Module 2: Meeting with Your Student

- First meeting
  - Get to know each other
  - Ask, "What do you hope to gain from our relationship?"
  - Develop clear goals, expectations & ground rules
  - Review the Learning Contract
  - Set a schedule for meetings
  - Pray together
- Subsequent meetings
  - Build the relationship
  - Ask questions; listen
  - Comment on strengths & weaknesses
  - Discuss big picture ministry issues and questions
  - Discuss the Scriptures or a book
  - Speak from your personal experience
  - Pray together

Ask your student good questions

Relational questions

- (If married) Tell me about your spouse and kids. What do you love to do together?
- How would you rate your marital health?
- How are you leading your family?
- Any conflicts with your children?
- What's your neighborhood like?
- How do you create margin in your schedule?

Personal questions

- What's been your favorite place to live? Why?
- What do you excel at?
- What do you want more of in life? Less of?
- How are you doing personally?
- What are some ways God has blessed you lately?
- What have been a few defining moments in your past?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What things are hampering your growth as a person or testing your faith these days?
- When do you feel most free?
- What, for you, makes for a "great day"?
- What do you miss most from the past?
- How have you been sleeping?

Ask your student good questions *(cont'd)*

Ministry questions

- If you could do anything with your life, what would it be?
- What's your dream?
- What do you perceive to be your calling?
- Where are you prone to waste time in ministry?
- What brings you 80% or more of your joy?
- What brings you 80% or more of your stress?
- How have you been engaging the culture around you? How about your neighbors?
- What are your gifts and strengths?

Spiritual questions

- Where are you today? What's going on inside you?
- How would you rate your spiritual health?
- What are you doing to maintain your spiritual vibrancy?
- What's weighing you down the most?
- Is prayer better or worse than it used to be?
- Have you been preaching the gospel to yourself lately? Why or why not?
- What has God been teaching you from the Bible?
- Where are you most vulnerable to sin? What are you doing about it?

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

1. The emotional & spiritual health of the leader
   - ❑ Character
     - Abiding in Christ daily
     - Lordship and consecration
     - The what, why, and how of integrity in ministry
     - Accountability
   - ❑ Leadership
     - Earning and maintaining trust
     - Loving those you lead
     - Developing and communicating a clear, simple, sustainable vision
     - Identifying and building leaders

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

1. The emotional & spiritual health of the leader *(cont'd)*
   - ❑ Family life
     - Marriage and ministry: how both can thrive
     - Boundaries
     - Raising PKs who love the church
     - Spiritual leadership in the home
   - ❑ Gospel renewal
     - Living by faith rather than merely "trying harder"
     - The pastor as the chief repenter
     - Maintaining a vibrant life of prayer
     - Ministry for the long haul

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

2. Knowledge & skills for ministry
   - ❑ Management matters
     - Church organization & structures
     - Leadership styles
     - Recruiting & training volunteers; delegation
     - Time management
     - Setting goals
     - Mission, vision, & values of the local church
     - Conflict resolution
     - Leading change

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

2. Knowledge & skills for ministry *(cont'd)*
   - ❑ Pastoral care
     - Home & hospital visitation
     - Pastoral counseling
     - Baptisms, weddings & funerals
     - Equipping church members for mutual care
   - ❑ Programming
     - New member and other education classes
     - Officer training
     - Youth ministry
     - Evangelism training

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

2. Knowledge & skills for ministry *(cont'd)*
   - ❑ Understanding process and procedures
     - Sermon preparation
     - Baptism and the Lord's Supper
     - The worship service
     - Denominational polity
     - Local church finances
     - Staff reviews; HR policies
     - Church discipline
     - How to plan and lead an effective meeting
     - Assimilating new people

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

2. Knowledge & skills for ministry *(cont'd)*
   - ❑ Reflection on personal issues
     - The pastor's job description
     - Personal finances
     - Leisure time, vacations
     - The pastor's library
     - The pastor's schedule
     - Self-care
     - Friendship
     - The pastor's salary package
     - How to know when it's time to move on

Suggested topics to discuss with your student

2. Knowledge & skills for ministry *(cont'd)*
   - ❑ Reflection on social issues
     - The church's relationship to its city
     - Service projects, mission trips
     - Motivating people for outreach
     - Crossing racial & cultural barriers
     - Sexual ethics
     - Addressing poverty, hunger, and homelessness

Suggested Scriptures to discuss with your student

- 1 Timothy 3:1-16
- Titus 1:5-9
- 2 Timothy 4:1-8
- 1 Peter 5:1-5
- Acts 2:42-47
- Matthew 16:13-20
- Matthew 18:15-20
- Galatians 1:6-10
- Romans 12:1-8
- Ephesians 4:1-16



Suggested books & resources

To read & discuss with your student:

- Dangerous Calling (Paul David Tripp)
- Leading with a Limp (Dan Allender)
- Surviving Ministry (Michael Osborne)
- The Imperfect Pastor (Zack Eswine)
- The New Pastor's Handbook (Jason Helopoulos)
- Fail (J. R. Briggs)
- The Contemplative Pastor (Eugene Peterson)
- The Emotionally Healthy Church (Peter Scazzero)

To grow more capable as a mentor or coach:

- The COACH Model for Christian Leaders (Keith Webb)
- Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God (Scott Thomas, Tom Wood)
- Next Generation Leader (Andy Stanley)

For further help, contact:

Mike Osborne

Dean of Students and Director of Field Ed & Placement

- Email: mosborne@rts.edu
- Office phone: 407-278-8824
- Cell phone: 407-970-8847

02PT5905/01 - FIELD EDUCATION SEMINAR

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to apply what has been learned in the classroom to the daily and rugged challenges of pastoral leadership. Field Education Seminar will give students a broad understanding of issues faced in church ministry, practical tools for their first job in a ministry setting, greater self-awareness and confidence in God's calling, and interaction with peers about their Field Education experience.

COURSE DETAILS

During this course, students will process their field education experience in the following ways:

- *Biblically and theologically* with the goal of seeking to understand how God's Word, the Westminster Standards, and personal calling intersect with the realities of gospel ministry.
- *Corporately* through class interaction about the Field Education experience.*
- *Personally,* through self-reflection and evaluation.

** **Students in the Hybrid program** must take Field Education Seminar like residential students even though the class meets on campus.*

The requirements for Hybrid students are to:

(1) complete the assignments listed below by the deadlines specified,

(2) participate in the class live via Zoom or watch each week's Zoom recording, and

(3) if unable to participate live via Zoom, respond to each recording with a comment on Canvas.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

PT5900 - Field Education Internship

Students must complete at least 400 hours of approved field experience while they are attending RTS (previous ministry experience does not count). Evaluations of both the

student and the mentor must be received and approved by the Director of Field Education.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Create your résumé*

It should include concisely stated Objective, Experience, Education, Skills, and References (not to exceed two pages). Several model résumés are posted on Canvas for reference. (Note: If you are already employed by a church or ministry, you may omit this assignment.)

2. *Class Attendance and Participation*

In order to fully benefit from this course, you must attend all the classes in person or via Zoom (or view the Zoom recordings) and actively participate. Absences must be excused by the professor ahead of time.

3. *Reflective Paper*

Each student is required to submit a paper of 7-10 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. There are no formatting requirements for the paper. Bullet points may be used where deemed appropriate. This is a reflective paper, not a research paper.

The following information should be included in the paper:

- Student's Background
  Give a brief (1/2 page) review of your educational background, present denominational affiliation, employment history, and ministry opportunities prior to the field experience. Include future ministry aspirations.
- Field Ministry Situation
  Briefly (1/2 page) describe your Field Ed ministry setting, your supervisor, and your primary ministry assignments.
- Personal Assessment
  <u>This is the longest portion of the paper</u>**.** Summarize what you learned about yourself through your field experience, including an honest appraisal of your strengths, gifts, and weaknesses. Include how your story (including positive and negative aspects of your past) impacted your ministry effectiveness for good or

for ill. Give an honest appraisal of your emotional health and readiness for full-time gospel ministry.

- Challenging Personal Relationships

  Describe one or more relationships that brought strain or conflict into your field experience. Share what effect it had on your ministry and yourself. What did you learn from the situation? How will you handle similar conflicts in the future?

- Ministry Lessons Learned
  - Describe what you learned about gospel ministry, the pastoral office, and/or church leadership through your field experience. Did you grow spiritually? Did you grow in love for others and competency with your ministry skills?
- Field Education Assessment

  How effectively did your field experience contribute to your preparation for ministry? How well did your field supervisor mentor you? How could the Director of Field Education have been more helpful?

- A one-sentence statement to this effect

  "I completed 400 or more hours of ministry in the field and received 12 or more hours of mentoring from my mentor."

4. *Oral Presentation*

A randomly selected number of students will give an oral presentation of the substance of their reflective paper to the class during a session of the seminar. After the presentation, questions and observations from the class will be entertained. Those students not selected to give their oral presentation will video record their presentation of the substance of their reflective paper and post it on Canvas. In every case, the presentation should be no more than 20 minutes long. Students may read selections from their reflective paper and elaborate on the content as they wish. The nature of this assignment necessarily means that students will refer or allude to people, places, and churches. *Therefore, what is shared in the class must stay in the class.* Students should strive not to name specific people.

5. *Recommended (but <u>not required</u>) Reading*

One or more of the following books will enhance your preparation for future ministry.

- *15 Things Seminary Couldn't Teach Me,* ed. by Collin Hansen & Jeff Robinson
- *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* by Paul David Tripp
- *Leading with a Limp* by Dan Allender

- *Pastors and Their Critics* by Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson
- *Surviving Ministry: How to Weather the Storms of Church Leadership* by Michael Osborne
- *The Contemplative Pastor* by Eugene Peterson
- *The Heart of a Servant Leader: Letters from Jack Miller* by C. John Miller
- *The Imperfect Pastor* by Zach Eswine

COURSE GRADING

This seminar is Pass (P) or Fail (F).
A grade of Fail (F) will result from unexcused absences, failure to complete the assignments, or lack of participation in class discussion.

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

Date	**Details**
Wed., Feb 11, 2026 due by 4:00pm	Résumé
Wed., Apr 1, 2026 due by 11:59pm	Reflective Paper
Wed., Apr 22, 2026 due by 11:59pm	Video Presentation for students not selected to present orally

SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: *Field Ed Seminar 02PT5905* Professor: *Mike Osborne*

Campus: *Orlando* Date: Spring 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes *In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.* **As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*		**Rubric** ➢ Strong ➢ Moderate ➢ Minimal ➢ None	**Mini-Justification**
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes the ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Student prepares an oral presentation on Field Ed experience and interacts on required reading.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Minimal	Student does not engage with Scripture in the original languages but interacts with how Scripture intersects with ministry in the local church.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	Student evaluates how Reformed Theology worked itself out in his field education experience.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Through reading, class discussion and personal reflection student will assess his growth in the Gospel.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Student gains a deeper understanding of the mission of God as it works out in the local church.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	Through class discussion student will evaluate various theologies of ministry, showing the value of ecumenism.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	If student preached, led worship, or participated in worship planning in his field experience, those will be evaluated. Student evaluates his shepherding skills during field experience. Emphasis will be on how to be more effective in shepherding.