

# Doctor of Ministry

An Advanced Professional Degree in Christian Ministry

Robert E Cooley Theological Seminary

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## Introduction

The mission of *Robert E. Cooley Theological Seminary* (RECTS) is to prepare and equip gifted, called, and passionate leaders to serve God and the worldwide church. RECTS offers a Doctor of Ministry with a focus n Pastoral Theology to fulfill this mission.

## Robert E. Cooley Theological Seminary (RECTS)

### Educational Philosophy

The vision and mission statements of the seminary, both focused on spiritual formation and pastoral ministry, drive our educational philosophy. Our focus is to prepare God’s people for the service of Jesus Christ. The seminary achieves this goal with a two-pronged strategy: Competency-Based Theological Education (CBTE) and Mentored Teamwork.

CBTE complements the broad heading of Outcome-Based Education (OBE). The OBE movement began in the 1970s and grew out of a desire to build educational programs that equipped students practically and pragmatically to achieve measurable learning outcomes described in the degree program. This was an important development in the history of educational design for it signaled the birth of an entire area of research and study focused on assessing the outcomes of learning. Rather than assuming that learning occurred by default through courses, CBTE requires the professor and student to think critically about what the educational program is attempting to accomplish. CBTE has the potential to develop a form of education that values the role relationships and mentoring, both with God and with each other, that accomplishes true ministry training. At its core, CBTE is a philosophy of education that

invites participants to re-evaluate current assumptions about learning and to embrace the development of learners as a truly organic, spirit-filled process of discipleship.

Mentored teamwork is one of the most important CBTE principles. RECTS requires each learner be embedded in a mentor team comprised of the student, a faculty mentor, a vocational mentor, and a personal mentor. Mentor teams are a key component of the educational experience at RECTS. Each mentor team shapes and evaluates the learner's experience in their educational journey of discipleship, informed and structured by the context and vocation of the student. Mentored teamwork requires a collaborative commitment to mission and ministry, where each member of the team is engaged in a journey of discipleship while learning together.

## Description

The Doctor of Ministry is a 36 credit hours degree that consists of the following phases and learning experiences:

### I. Program Entry Phase

Students will begin the program with the preliminary *Starting Well* and the required *Foundations Seminar*.

- **Starting Well (3 credit hours)**
- **Foundation Seminar- Effective Project Design (6 credit hours)**

The mentor team will help students finalize their Project Proposal. *Effective Project Design* is complete once the *Foundations Seminar* has been taken and the *Project Proposal* is approved.

### II. Integration and Directed Learning Phase

After completing the *Foundations Seminar* and receiving approval of the *Project Proposal*, students will move on to the *Integration Seminars* and *Directed Learning Experiences*.

The program requires four *Integration Seminars*. Before each seminar, students will do extensive background reading and then prepare a 30 to 40 minutes lecture (in consultation with their mentor team) that will be presented to and evaluated by peers.

*Directed Learning Experiences* allow for concentration in a particular area of ministry, contributing to the successful implementation of the final project. Planning for these experiences takes place within the *Foundations Seminar* and as part of the Project Proposal.

- **Sociological and Cultural Understanding Seminar (3 credit hours)**
- **Biblical Theology Seminar (3 credit hours)**
- **Systematic Theology Seminar (3 credit hours)**
- **Pastoral Theology Seminar (3 credit hours)**
- **Integration in Ministry Context (6)**
  - *Directed Learning Experience I (3 credit hours)*
  - *Directed Learning Experience II (3 credit hours)*

### **III. Program Completion Phase**

The program ends with the successful completion of a final project and participation in the capstone titled *Continuing Well*.

- **Final Project (6)**
- **Continuing Well (3)**

## **Program Overview**

While engaged in this program, students will walk with their mentor teams through the following:

### **Program Outcomes**

With a focus on formation, biblical study, vocational discernment, theological reflection, and integrated practice, the Doctor of Ministry leads students to connect their journey of discipleship with what God is doing in the world. Through the program, students will develop and demonstrate proficiency in its seven integrated outcomes: Starting Well, Effective Project Design, Bible and Theology, Integration in Ministry, Sociology, and Culture, Final Project Completion, and Continuing Well.

### **Peer Reflection Seminars**

The *Peer Reflection Seminars* are a distinctive trait of this program. Over the course of their time in the program, students will participate in four *Peer Reflection Seminars* – twice as an observer and twice as a presenter. In these seminars, students present a lecture on some aspect of their doctoral project and then engage in a facilitated dialogue with their peers.

### **Customized Learning Experiences**

These learning experiences invite students to explore some aspect of their vocation, Christian thought and practice, or the human experience. Students will have the opportunity to progress through these learning experiences in the most helpful way in their context and according to their vocation. Students will also work with faculty members to create entirely new or customized learning experiences that help them develop vocational excellence and expertise. In the Doctor of Ministry program, each student will develop and complete two customized learning experiences in collaboration with their mentor team.

### **Mentorship in Research**

Researching a theological topic and writing a dissertation is a challenging endeavor. The Doctor of Ministry program will procure mentors that will assist doctoral candidates to hone their academic skills in the areas of theological research, redaction of academic papers, and writing doctoral dissertations. These topics will be particularly addressed in the following learning experiences: Starting Well, Effective Project Design, and Final Project Completion

### **Final Project**

Students will be invited to complete a final project in which they must integrate their learning, theology, and practice. The project is intended to help students take the next best step in their vocational context by planning, conducting, and reflecting on a project they completed while engaged in the program. Students will work with their mentor team to customize or concentrate on any area related to Pastoral Theology, such as worship, mission, evangelism, preaching, discipleship, spiritual formation, leadership, stewardship, counseling, chaplaincy, family ministry, ministry with youth, ministry with children, ministry with the elderly, and community service, among many others.

### **Contextual Learning**

Throughout the program, students can work with their mentor team to design learning experiences that are entirely shaped by what they are doing or will do in their current or desired vocational context. Are they planting a church? Are they building a youth ministry program? Are they developing curriculum? They may use any experience or project connected to what it means to flourish their vocation and ministry!

## **Requirements**

Applicants to the Doctor of Ministry must fulfill the following requirements:

- Having earned a Master of Divinity degree (or equivalent)
- Having, at least, 6 years of ministerial experience

- Endorsement from their local church
- Endorsement from their judicatory.