

PATH517 Topics in Ministry

Summer 2026

Ricardo Norton (DMin, PhD)

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location:	Forest Lake Church—515 Harley Lester Lane—Apopka, FL
Class meeting dates:	August 16-20, 2026
Class meeting times:	Sun—6-9:30 pm; Mon-Thur—8am to 6pm (lunch-12-1:30pm).
Course Website:	learninghub.andrews.edu
Instructor Tel.:	(269) 471-8318
Instructor Email:	ricardo@andrews.edu
Office location:	Seminary 233
Office hours:	By appointment

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

“This course introduces students to selected church ministry areas such as finances, church planting, teaching, Christian education, chaplaincy, urban ministry and health evangelism.”

PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This degree program seeks to help you achieve the **Program Learning Outcomes** basic to your chosen profession. The Learning Outcome primarily addressed in MAPM Program are:

1. Deliver effective biblically-based sermons.
2. Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills.
3. Understand the historical-theological development of the Adventist Church.
4. Capable of training church members for evangelism.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership.
6. Capable of reaching specific social groups.

The following **Course Learning Outcomes** contribute to the overall Program Learning Outcomes by identifying the key learnings to be achieved by diligent work in **this course**:

- 4—Capable of training church members for evangelism.
- 6—Capable of reaching specific social groups.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating these Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
08/14/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading report due today 	30 hours from the required books below—Prior to the intensive (30 points of the final grade). Six-point deduction for late submission of reading assignments.	CLO 4 & 6
08/16/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing each other Syllabus review Course introduction Formation of small groups for collective learning sessions Selection of topics for small group presentations 	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students	CLO 4
08/17/26	<p>Metaphysics and knowledge construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How humans construct knowledge Worldviews and the SDA faith Philosophies affecting worldviews <p>Personal and church finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible and finances EGW and personal finances Practical insight on successful finances 	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class	CLO 6
08/18/26	<p>Music in the church and church planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theological reflection on music Guiding principles associated with music in the church Church planting principles and practice 	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class	CLO 4
08/19/26	<p>Theological foundation on diets and foods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bible and diet EGW on diet and foods 	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class	CLO 4 & 6

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toward a biblical theology on diet and foods 		
08/20/26	<p>Group presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning from each other. Small groups formed during the first day of class will have 30-minute presentations today Topic presentations will focus on: 1) Theological foundations, 2) literature on the topic, 3) practical insights for ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions and questions will be fostered after each group presentation Professor will grade presentations based on content, investigation, and quality of the PP slides (10 points of the final grade). 	CLO 4 & 6
10/20/26		<p>Final project is due today (October 26, 2026). By midnight, this day, students should post in the <i>LearningHub</i> a 20-page electronic MSW document with the final project. Project will be graded according to the rubric included in this syllabus (60 points of the final grade). Assignment submitted after this date will receive an F.</p>	

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Reading –Read 30 hours from the from at least two of the following documents and books:

- Documents**—The documents can be downloaded from the Biblical Research Institute (<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/>).
 - Burt, Merlin. *EGW and Sola Scriptura*.

- Coon, Roger. *The Wedding Band, Ellen G. White, and the SDA Church*.
 - Donkor, Kwabena. *Hermeneutics Today*.
 - Fortin, Denis. *Ellen G. White Ministry in the SDA Church*.
 - Hasel, Gerhard. *The Unity of the Bible*.
 - Mueller, Ekkehardt. *Hermeneutical Guidelines for Dealing with Theological Questions*.
 - Pfandl, Gerhard. *Information of the SDA Reform Movement*.
 - Pfandl, Gerhard. *The Authority of the EGW Writings*.
 - Pfandl, Gerhard. *The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Adventists*.
 - Reid, George. *Is the Bible Our Final Authority?*
 - Reid, George. *The Branch Davidians*.
 - Rodríguez, Ángel. *Kneeling in Prayer*.
 - Rodríguez, Ángel. *Should Adventist Celebrate Christmas?*
 - Rodríguez, Ángel. *The Pastor and Theology*.
 - White, Ellen. *The observance of Christmas*.
- **Books**
 - Doukhan, Lilianne. *In Tune with God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010.
 - Perera, Adriana (Ed.). *En espíritu y en verdad*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2013.
 - Quispe, Glúder (Ed.). *La música cristiana y la adoración*. Ñaña, Lima-Perú: Universidad Peruana Unión.

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- **Courses for academic masters' (e.g. MAPM) degree** include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities per credit.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

		Professional Masters' Programs	
		2 Credits	3 Credits
Instructor Contact Hours	Face to Face Instructional Time		45 hrs

Independent Learning Activities	Pre-Intensive Reading (30 points)		30 hrs
	Small group presentation (10 points)		
	20-page project/paper (60 points)		60 hrs
Total Hours:			135

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are based on the independent learning activities below which provide practice toward, and assessment of, the learning outcomes of this course. The grade weighting for each assignment is provided in the right-hand column. Specific due dates are given in the Course Overview above.

Assignment Description	Weighting
<i>Pre-Intensive reading report. 30 hours</i> from the required books above—Report due August 14, 2026 before sundown—two days prior to the beginning of the intensive. The report consists of one page with the following information: 1) Name of the student, 2) number of hours read, and 3) Author and titles of books from which the student invested her/his 30 reading hours—two books minimum. <i>Six points deduction</i> to all reading-reports submitted late.	30 points
<i>Small-Group presentation</i> —Each of the small groups formed during the first day of class will have a 30-minute presentation, on an assigned topic during the last day of class. The professor will grade the presentation based on 1) content, 2) investigation, organization, and 3) quality of the PP slides.	10 points
<i>Final paper/project—20 pages.</i> The topic for the project must deal with issues associated to the contents of the course and must be approved by the professor. Student must select and submit to the professor an outline of the project during the intensive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper/project will need the following sections: 1) Title page. 2) Table of Contents. 3) Introduction. 4) <i>Chapter 1—Biblical and theological foundations for the selected topic</i>—include EGW writings. 5) <i>Chapter 2—Literature review on the selected topic</i>—minimum of 20 authors—EGW counts as one author. 6) <i>Chapter 3—Practical insights on how to instruct local church members on the selected topic.</i> 7) Conclusion. 8) Bibliography—Only sources used for the research. • This report should follow <i>AU Standards for Written work</i>: (http://www.andrews.edu/GRAD/style.html). • This project must be submitted by October 20, 2026 and will be graded according to the rubric that appears at the end of this syllabus. • Late submission will be penalized based on the stipulations indicated in the previous table. 	60 points

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: The final report must be submitted through our Learning Hub in ONE MSW file. 	
Total points	100 points

Note. In order to make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned on the basis of the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on Learning Hub before the dates indicated in the Course Overview-- Above.

Late Submissions

Because student assignments are an essential part of class activities, assignments turned in after the time they are due will be worth a maximum of 50 of possible points%--for this course, see penalties posted on the **Course Overview Table**. Any requests for extra time on an assignment must be made in advance with the professor. Such requests should be a rarity and should be accompanied by a valid reason why the work could not be done by the date due.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Ricardo Norton (DMin, PhD) has taught at the Seventh-day Theological Seminary since 1996 and is the founder of a worldwide lay training program (SAL—Lay Adventist Seminary), with more than 20,000 students in 18 countries. He currently directs a MAPM Hispanic Track Program and coordinates three DMin cohorts. His lectures and writings carry the weight of serious investigation and the practical knowledge that 44 years of teaching and ministerial experience confer. He travels extensively in the U.S. and abroad, teaching pastors and lay leaders how to make their churches grow.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:

- Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual’s research and/or ideas; and
- Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another’s work as one’s own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments);
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program;
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials;
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz;
- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

LearningHub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with Learning Hub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu.

APPENDIX 1: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

95-100%	A	80-84%	B	65-69%	C
90-94%	A-	75-79%	B-	60-64%	C-
85-89%	B+	70-74%	C+	55-59%	D
				58-Below	F

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of the knowledge, insight, critical competence and professional presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed or when the final assignment is not submitted within the dates indicated in the Course Overview Table.

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Rubric for Assessing Project Plans

Student _____

Criteria	(5) Exceptional	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Emerging	(1) Unsatisfactory	Score
Title Page	Includes: 1) institution's name, 2) title, 3) name of the course, 4) course period, 5) name of the student, 6) date submitted, 7) follows AU Standards for Written work (AUSWW). Has no errors	Misses 1 of the 7 components	Misses 2 of the 7 components	Misses 3 components	Misses more than 3 components	
Introduction	The introduction is engaging, states the main topic and purpose of the paper, and previews the structure of the paper	Introduction states the main topic and purpose of the paper and previews its structure	States the main topic and purpose of the paper, but does not adequately preview its structure	The introduction states the main topic but lacks a purpose and a preview of its structure	There is no clear introduction or main topic and the structure of the paper is missing	
Project Description	Project is described in detail. Protocols to be followed are presented. Specific aspects of the organization, implementation, and evaluation are offered. Meets paper length requirements	Project is well described. Some details regarding protocols, organization, implementation, and evaluation of the project are missing. Meets length	Project is satisfactorily described and meets paper length	Project is poorly described and does not meet number of pages.	The report misses entire sections of the project description. Does not meet paper length.	
Organization	Report provides a table of contents, and is organized using different subhead levels, following AUSWW. Subheadings are exceptionally well-worded and reflect upon the main subject. Exceeds all organizational specifications stated in the syllabus	Table of contents and subheading levels follow AUSWW Standards. Subtitles reflects upon the subject, but wording can be improved.	Paper provides a table of contents and is organized using different subheading level. However, does not follow AU standards of written work	Paper provides first level headings, but headings do not clearly reflect upon the subject. No table of contents. Does not follow all specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	Does not provide a table of contents and is not divided under headings and subheadings. Does not follow organizational specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	
Format/Style	All texts and references follow specifications from AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are outstanding. Models language and	Consistently follows AUSWW with minor flaws. Syntax and semantics are very good. No major errors in style	Consistently follows all AUSWW format. Syntax and semantics are good. Few errors in style	Inconsistently follows some AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are poor	Does not follow AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are deficient	

	style. No errors in punctuation, spelling, and sentence formation					
Conclusion	Conclusion is engaging and provides an outstanding overview of the project and personal reflections on projected implementation. Exceeds expectations	Conclusion restates the purpose, gives a good summary, and provides personal opinions about the outcome	Conclusion restates the purpose and satisfactorily summarizes results Lacks personal reflection on projected implementation	Conclusion attempts to summarize the thrust of the project, but is ambiguous. Lacks personal reflection	Conclusion fails to summarize and to express personal reflection on the project	

