

THE BRANCH
COLLEGE OF MINISTRY

Student Handbook

2017-2018

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Branch College of Ministry Student Handbook

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SECTION 1.1 – Message from The President

WELCOME

Welcome to The Branch College of Ministry. The faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees are fully committed to providing you the education and tools required to excel in church ministry and leadership. Regardless of your level of postsecondary education or experience in Christian ministry, our goal is to further develop, equip, and inspire you for faithful and effective service.

The following verse has been an ongoing encouragement to me, as a tremendous reminder that service to the Lord always has a purpose: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58 NKJV). The Branch College leadership and staff share the belief that your effort, discipline, and sacrifice will not be in vain, and are committed to supporting you as you remain steadfast in your calling.

J.D. Eldridge
President

SECTION 1.2 – Mission Statement

Mission Statement

The Branch College of Ministry exists to develop, equip, and inspire Christian leaders for excellence in ministry to the Church.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

It is the goal of The Branch College of Ministry that graduates will effectively:

- Teach sound biblical principles for effective Christian ministry
- Provide efficacious pastoral care and counsel
- Conduct competent academic research
- Utilize effective critical thinking skills
- Lead others contextually in authentic Christian ministry
- Exhibit Christ-like maturity for sustainable fruitful service

Philosophy of Education

The Lord Jesus Christ holds all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:19). We wholeheartedly recognize His command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:20), His goal to build up His followers until they all reach unity in the faith (Ephesians 4:11), and His process of equipping His people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11). The Branch College of Ministry exists as the Lord's instrument to develop, equip, and inspire Christian leaders for excellence in ministry to His Church. Whatever kind of leader in Christ's Church, The Branch College of Ministry serves to cultivate their gifting(s) that we may all attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11).

The Branch College of Ministry instructors function as the Lord's servants, through whom the Lord will develop, equip, and inspire (1 Cor. 3:5). We affirm that instructors are vessels through whom the Lord will teach, correct, rebuke, and refine, but it is ultimately God who shapes the students and makes them grow (1 Cor. 3:6). In order to properly and fully instruct students, we will do so through God's Holy Bible, consisting of thorough instruction, proper interpretation, and relevant application, as well as through Christian leadership principles, involving God's Holy Bible and modern leadership practices, and finally through general education, containing research, writing, science, and history. In recognizing the Lord's different gifting's for His leaders, we will offer along with core courses three fields of concentration courses: Biblical Studies, Organizational leadership, and Pastoral Ministry.

In order to assure effectiveness to our students we will instruct and assess. Instruction will take place mainly in the classroom using multiple learning techniques and modern technology, while seeking to engage the whole student's heart, soul, mind, and strength with the Lord. We will further assess our institution following our Institutional Assessment Plan, reviewing, but not limited to, our organization, faculty, curriculum, and student learning outcomes.

SECTION 1.3 – Accreditation

Accreditation

The Branch College of Ministry is currently not accredited, but will be pursuing national accreditation with a nationally approved accreditation body. Our institution is committed to pursuing and maintaining the highest levels of institutional and educational effectiveness in keeping with recognized best practices in Christian higher education. The steps to achieving this goal involve the institution in an on-going process leading to candidacy status on the way to full accreditation status.

SECTION 2.1 – Admissions

Admissions

Contact: Admissions Office, (858) 384-6679

The Admissions Office helps new students to enroll in and become familiar with The Branch College of Ministry.

Student Responsibilities for enrolling:

- Students register online at www.branchcollege.org filling out all application forms.
- Students pay a one-time application fee of \$10 to enroll in a degree program.
- Students must complete the application process before registering for classes.

SECTION 2.2 – Non-discrimination

Non-discrimination

The Branch College of Ministry admits students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the college. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

SECTION 2.3 – Advising

Contact: Academic Dean, (858) 384-6679

Upon enrollment at The Branch College of Ministry each student will meet with and be monitored by the Academic and Student Dean. The Deans will help students choose appropriate courses and course load according to their individual programs and life situations.

Student Responsibilities:

- Contact the Dean of Students before the start of each term should there be questions regarding appropriate courses.
- Contact the Dean of Students during the term should concerns arise such as 'Withdrawal' or 'Drop/Add' (see Academic and Social Standards section of this handbook).
- Request an 'Incomplete' in the event of unusual circumstances.

SECTION 2.4 – Registration

Registration

Contact: Registrar Office, (858) 384-6679

The Registrar Office handles both credit and non-credit registrations. In addition, the Registrar Office handles drop/add withdrawal from courses, and 'incomplete' status.

Student responsibilities:

Credit students

- Students should register for courses according to their quarterly recommendation letter from the Academic Dean.
- Students must register for courses each session prior to the registration deadline.
- Students will register for classes on Populi after they have been accepted and entered into the website database.

Non-credit students (Audit)

- Non-credit students must complete a registration form (available at www.branchcollege.org), along with appropriate non-credit tuition fees, prior to the registration deadline each term.
- Students taking classes in a non-credit status must remember that they will not receive credit for taking the course. A grade will not be issued, nor will a transcript be provided.

Add

Students may add a class no later than the second class meeting. To add a class, log onto Populi and under the current semester select the course(s) you wish to add.

Drop

Students may drop classes up to and including the fourth (4th) week of the course. To drop a class, a student must notify the professor and log onto Populi and drop the specific class in their account.

Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from a class after the fifth (5th) week and up through the ninth (9th) week of classes. To withdraw from a class a student must notify the professor, the Student Dean, the Academic Dean, and must log onto Populi to complete the action. A "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Student responsibilities for Withdrawing from the institution:

- Students must inform the Academic Dean of their decision to withdraw from the College. Upon doing so, the Academic Dean will remove them from the Populi database.
- If students desire to re-enter they must submit a new application and application fee.

Independent Study Option

Independent study is provided for the benefit of students to help them finish their degree in a timely manner. Often a student may need one or more classes to graduate but that class is not offered until the following year. The independent study option will provide the opportunity for the student to finish without having to wait.

1. The student and the faculty member under whom the student wishes to study should submit a written proposal to the Academic Dean. The "Independent Study Application," should be used and can be obtained from the office of the Registrar.
2. Students may only receive credit for a maximum of nine units of independent-type study to be applied to their undergraduate degree program.
3. There is a limit of five independent-study students per teacher, per registration period. This limit is monitored by the Academic Dean.
4. Students are assessed a fee of \$200 per course for independent-type study. The faculty member does not have the right to waive the fee for independent study.
5. Faculty are responsible to ensure that the learning objectives for each independent study course is met before assigning a grade.
6. Faculty are to place a copy of the students "Independent Study Application" with the office of the Registrar.

SECTION 2.5 – Financial Affairs

Financial Affairs

Contact: Admissions Office, (858) 384-6679 or contact Richard Cates: rcates@branchsd.org

The Admissions Office handles all matters pertaining to tuition, installment plans, and scholarships.

Student Responsibilities:

- Keeping in mind the biblical principles of stewardship, selflessness, integrity, and personal discipline, it is expected that students will meet financial obligations on their scheduled due date for each session that they attend The Branch College of Ministry.
- Must pay 50% of the tuition by the end of the first week of class and must pay the other 50% by the end of the fourth week of class. Students may also pay the full 100% by the first week of class.
- Information regarding financial assistance can be found in the college catalog.

SECTION 2.6 – Transfer Credit Policies

Transfer Credit Policies

The BCOM, at the discretion of the administration, may accept up to 90 units from another college or university providing the course descriptions and grades are comparable to BCOM standards. Typically, Community College and undergraduate course work will be considered in the transfer process.

- Please note that at least the last 30 units must be completed at the BCOM to receive the Bachelor's Degree.
- The maximum allowable transfer units for each program is 90 units.

Institutional Transfer Options

If a school is accredited by an agency approved by either the US Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), all courses that fit our curriculum will be transferred. If a school is accredited by an accrediting agency that is not approved by USDE or CHEA, no credits will be accepted (even if other criteria are met).

SECTION 2.7 – Student Government

The Purpose, Organization, and Function of Student Government

The Student Government is charged with the responsibility for overseeing student organizations and acting as a means for students to govern their non-academic lives and academic interests. The Student Government serves as a:

- proactive representative of The Branch College of Ministry organizations and the student body at large,
- liaison and facilitator to ensure that the administration is held responsible for meeting students' needs,
- body which honors the diversity and evolving concerns of our student body at large by working for their direct benefit, and an
- advocate for active cooperation in the work of self-governance.

Through the work of various elected and appointed offices, the Student Government represents the views of the student body to the board of trustees, the administration and various college committees. The Student Government will be comprised of at least three students and vary in size depending on the size and needs of the college while holding office for one year. Serving on the Student Government will be determined by and administrated through the faculty each spring semester.

SECTION 2.8 – Student Clubs and Organizations

Student Clubs and Organizations

Groups of students and student organizations are expected to comply with all college policies, including the social/behavioral standards and all additional policies pertaining to groups and organizations. A group or organization may be held responsible for the actions and behaviors of its members and guests. The decision to hold a group or organization responsible as a whole is ultimately determined by examining all the circumstances of a situation and by taking into account all appropriated and related factors.

SECTION 2.9 – Cultural, Educational, and Religious Opportunities

Cultural, Educational, and Religious Opportunities are available to students through various community outreaches, ministry events, and student events as determined and organized by the office of student services.

SECTION 2.10 – Fire and Safety Drills

Fire or Emergencies

In case of a fire or an emergency proceed to the nearest exit as illustrated on the evacuation plan listed on the bulletin board inside the classrooms. If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out, do not go back inside for people and pets. If you have to escape through smoke get low and go under the smoke to your way out. Call the fire department from outside the facilities. For further emergencies and what to do, see The Branch College Emergency Action Plan (made available on-line at branchcollege.org).

Safety Drills

The Branch College of Ministry will practice a variety of safety drills biannually, once every Spring and Fall, including fire drills, earthquake drills, and shooter drills. As lead by the Academic Dean, students will proceed to know and practice the college escape plan as illustrated in each classroom on the bulletin board, as least two ways out of the facilities, and conjuring at an outside meeting place.

SECTION 3.1 – Student Records

Student Records

Contact: Registrar Office, (858) 384-6679

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

The Branch College of Ministry complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Buckley Amendment) which is designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 provides that information from student records will not be identified by nor conveyed to unauthorized parties. Exceptions are made for BCOM officials, teachers, authorized federal agencies, and in connection with the application for or receipt of financial aid. No other parties may obtain information unless you have provided BCOM with written consent. Students have access to their information on demand. Students 18 years of age and older must sign a consent form in order for parents to obtain academic or financial information. The appropriate Release of Information forms are available from the Admissions Office.

- **Course Work** - Any papers or tests that are not returned to the student prior to the end of the session will be available for pick-up by the student at the BCOM office.
- **Transcripts** - Students fill out the Transcript Request Form available at the Registrar Office. Students must either mail or drop off the form, including a fee of \$5 per transcript. Transcript requests will not be processed without fee payment.
- Mail to Address:
The Branch College of Ministry
8344 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92111
Attn: Transcript Request
- Drop Off Address: Same as above

SECTION 3.2 – Student Complaint Procedures

Student Complaint Procedures

Students are encouraged to help improve the college by sharing their observations. Various mechanisms are available. A Student Survey is distributed annually. The Dean of Students will welcome you if you make an appointment. If a problem is presented to the Dean of Students, he or she will keep records of any complaints as well as any action taken. A student is welcome to make another appointment to inquire of progress on the issue. If the student does not find the resolution to be acceptable, the student may write a formal description of the problem and a proposed solution. Upon the student's request, this written description and proposed solution will be presented at a duly appointed administrative council consisting of the Academic Dean, Dean of Students, and Director of Admissions. The decision of the administrative council will be final. Records of the decision of the administrative council are to be kept by the Dean of Students. If desired, the concerned student may make an appointment with the Dean of Students to read the decision.

If a student feels there is a problem with another student, faculty member, staff member, administrator, or other person associated with the school, the concerned student is encouraged to follow procedures outlined in Matthew 18 before engaging in the formal complaint process. First go to the person and humbly express the issue. If this does not prove adequate, take it to the Dean of Students. If the resolution of the Dean of Students and administrative council are not acceptable, the student has a further option. If he or she believes there is a *serious* issue, he or she may contact the State of California (BPPE) at the addresses below:

BPPE

Mailing Address:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
P.O. Box 980818
West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818

Physical Address:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95833

Phone: (916) 431-6959
Toll Free: (888) 370-7589
Main Fax: (916) 263-1897
Licensing Fax: (916) 263-1894
Enforcement/STRF/Closed Schools Fax: (916) 263-1896

Web site: www.bppe.ca.gov

Pastoral Care/Counseling

Contact: San Diego Branch Church (858) 384-6788

Counseling services are available by appointment for personal and spiritual matters.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students are to schedule counseling appointments as needed, via e-mail or phone request.

SECTION 3.3 – Library

Facilities

The Branch College of Ministry library is located inside The Branch College building (8344 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92111) at the end of the main hall adjacent to room D.

Users

The Branch College of Ministry Library welcomes faculty, staff, students and patrons from other churches to borrow books from the library. Any faculty, staff, student or patron who borrows books is held responsible for the timely and safe return, and will be held responsible for any late or lost books.

Services

Library materials are available for check-out by following check out procedures as listed in the library.

Internet Availability

Wireless internet access is also available in the building for those with laptops. The password is available in each room.

Policies

Library User Rules

- Patrons are welcome to research, study, and fellowship in the library, keeping in mind the needs of other visiting patrons and modify sound level appropriately.
- Please place all materials taken from shelves to the designated book return area rather than returning them to their shelves. This will enable the College to track the extent to which the library is being used by its patrons.
- Please be mindful of the intended use of the library as a research and study resource for students and staff. The Branch College of Ministry reserves the right to ask visitors to leave if their behavior is not in keeping with this intent.
- Do not remove books from the library without checking them out via a college faculty or staff member using the computer.

Lending Policy

1. Lending policies, duration, and procedures shall be posted and available through the library.
2. Lost or damaged library materials will be charged to borrowers for the replacement cost as determined by administration.
3. Books may be checked out by a faculty member for three months. Faculty members are not charged overdue fines, but will be charged for lost or damaged materials.

SECTION 3.4 – Lost and Found

Lost and Found

Contact: Administration, (858) 384-6679

The Branch College of Ministry is not responsible for any student's personal items. However, in the event that personal items are found on the property, BCOM will keep those items at the Admissions Office for the duration of the term in which the items were found. Once the term is completed, the Admissions Office will dispose of the items as they see fit.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students will contact the Admissions Office to inquire about lost items as needed.
- Students may bring found items to the Admissions Office.

SECTION 3.5 – Safety and Emergency Equipment

Safety and Emergency Equipment

Contact: In case of emergency, dial 911

The most effective security system at BCOM is the community itself - students, faculty, staff, administration, and guests. The BCOM community must assume the chief responsibility for his or her own personal safety and personal belongings. This can be accomplished by taking simple, common-sense precautions. All community members should report any suspicious-looking individuals, or uncommon incidents.

Student responsibilities:

- Avoid walking alone at night and stay in well-lit areas.
- Walk with a friend. It is less likely that something would happen if there are two of you.
- Always lock automobiles when they are unoccupied.
- Have your key ready to open your car door, especially at night. Your keys can be used as a defensive weapon.
- Look inside your car before entering; also check vehicle for possible break-ins. Assailants sometimes hide in the back seat of a vehicle.
- Do not give your name, address, or other personal information (e.g., Social Security Number, credit card numbers, driver's license numbers) to strangers, either online, on the phone, or in person.
- Keep money and other valuables locked in a secure place. Money should never be left unattended.
- Record the numbers of all credit cards and bank accounts. Also keep the phone numbers of these companies or banks, so that they can be notified if cards are lost or stolen.
- In emergency situations, always activate the local emergency response system by dialing 911.

SECTION 3.6 – Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities

Contact: Please contact appropriate faculty or staff as designated by department or nature of issue

Faculty will make every effort to accommodate the specialized learning and participation needs of students with disabilities.

Student responsibilities:

- All students, faculty, and staff must treat students with disabilities in a godly manner, displaying dignity and respect.
- Areas designated for access by individuals with disabilities must not be blocked for any reason at any time.
- Students with disabilities must voice questions or concerns to appropriate staff or faculty (according to the nature of the issue) in a timely manner.

SECTION 3.7 – Scholarships

The Branch College of Ministry established donor opportunities for people who believe in the mission of the college to contribute into the lives of our students, specifically to help financially scholarship students in need. The amount of scholarships given will range between a max of three (3) per semester and a minimum of zero (0). Each scholarship will currently be worth \$210 and cover one (1) class or three (3) units.

The specific criteria used to select recipients of a scholarship will be:

- a. Overall and current GPA (at least a 2.5 GPA), financial need, and integrity.
- b. The number of grants made annually are determined by the college's three (3) concentrations found in their one (1) degree. Scholarships will be offered according these concentrations: Biblical Studies, Organizational Leadership, and Pastoral Ministry.
- c. The amount of each grant is given according to the cost of current courses and current donations coming in.
- d. To qualify for additional scholarships students must meet the following eligibility requirements: at least a 2.5 GPA, attend and serve faithfully in a local Church body, and have good standing with the college (i.e. no overdue payments or library books).

To supervise scholarships a selection committee of at least three people not directly working with The Branch College of Ministry will prayerfully consider student applications for scholarships and grade transcripts provided by the Academic Dean. They will report their decisions to the President, Academic Dean, CFO, and board of trustees. The CFO will then notify each recipient and award each scholarship to the registered students upcoming semester. If a student fails to pass the course being scholarshiped, they must wait one year before re-applying for another scholarship and meet eligibility requirements.

To apply for a scholarship a student must obtain a scholarship application form from the Academic Dean and return it filled out to the Academic Dean at least six weeks before the beginning of the following semester.

SECTION 4.1 – GPA Standard and Grade Points

GPA Standard

Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to remain in good academic standing, and to be eligible for graduation. Student grades will be posted on the student web portal Populi within 3-weeks after the end of the term.

Grades and Grade Points

The Branch College of Ministry uses the 4-point grading system, subject to the teacher's requirements, homework, tests, class participation, attendance and any make-up work to be established by the teachers. These requirements will be clearly articulated in each course syllabus.

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical grade points:

Points = Grade		
4.0 = A	2.8 = B-	1.5 = D+
3.8 = A-	2.5 = C+	1.0 = D
3.5 = B+	2.0 = C	0.8 = D-
3.0 = B	1.8 = C-	0.0 = F

A grade of "C" or better must be earned in each course in order for it to be credited toward a degree. Courses may be repeated until a grade of "C" or better is attained.

SECTION 4.2 – Writing Standards

Quality of Writing: Written assignments should be undertaken as though you were preparing them for publication, even if only for publication in your church or denomination. This discipline should help to improve the quality of your writing. Emphasis in this class will always be placed on the quality rather than the quantity of your work. Good and lucid writing will be rewarded, and poor and obscure writing will be downgraded. It is an important matter of communication. Clarity and precision of language make communication easier and understanding more pleasurable.

Format and Writing Style: All assignments should be typed and written according to the Turabian (Chicago Style; CMS) guidelines (unless otherwise indicated by the course instructor) and demonstrate a professional academic writing style. Papers should include notations (footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notations), and a bibliography or works cited that follow the format for bibliographical references. A sample Turabian format paper is available through each course on Populi.

Recommended Writing Resources: Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Eighth Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2013); *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2003); Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Longman, 1999).

Plagiarism: Anyone who plagiarizes (i.e., presents as one's own work something which has been taken from someone else) may receive an automatic failure on that piece of work and a warning. (Plagiarism can involve the taking of an idea or structure of a written work as well as the actual copying of what is written.) A second like offense will result in failure ("F") for the final course grade. An "F" for cheating/plagiarism in a subsequent course may result in suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

SECTION 4.3 – Academic Probation and Dismissal Policies

Academic Probation and Dismissal Policies

Academic probation is a status designed to provide the student whose GPA has fallen below the College's minimum standard of 2.0, with a means to raise his or her GPA above 2.0.

A student is placed on academic probation if his or her GPA has fallen below 2.0. The following steps will be initiated at the end of the semester for which the student's GPA drops below 2.0:

1. The Dean of Students makes contact informing the student of his or her academic probation status and requests a face-to-face meeting prior to registering for any further courses.
2. At this meeting academic probation is explained to the student and a strategy is developed for improving the student's GPA.
3. The student may register for a maximum of nine units each semester while on academic probation. The limit on the number of classes for each semester is determined by the Dean of Students on a case-by-case basis.
4. The student's instructors will participate in the probationary process by providing progress reports to the Dean of Students on the third, seventh, and twelfth weeks of the semester to the Dean of Students.
5. The student will meet with the Dean of Students on the third, seventh, and twelfth weeks of the semester and discuss progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. The progress reports from the instructors will be included in these meetings.

While on academic probation students:

1. Are not eligible to apply for scholarship
2. Are not eligible for tuition installment plan

Once the student's GPA is 2.0 or greater he or she will be removed from academic probation and the above eligibilities will be reinstated. A student may remain on academic probation as long as the GPA improves. If there is no improvement in the GPA after two semesters the student will be ineligible to enroll for a period of one year (Students on academic probation may take classes for non-credit while on enrollment ineligibility status).

Forms will include:

1. Academic probation tracking form, which will include the cumulative GPA, statements of academic difficulty and a strategic plan to improve, and advisor notes and course recommendations.
2. Instructor's academic probation update form, which will include test scores, assignment grades, notes of any student/teacher consultations, and recommendations.

If the student's GPA does not reach 2.0 after two consecutive semesters, or if the student receives an instructor initiated drop resulting from poor academic performance while on Academic Probation status, the student will be dismissed from the college. This will be indicated on any transcripts issued from the college.

In order to be readmitted to the college, the student must wait one year, then petition for readmission by arranging a meeting with the Academic Dean. It is entirely the responsibility of the student to request this meeting.

Readmission to the college will be granted at the discretion of the Academic Dean, based on evidence of potential for student success as determined in a meeting with the Academic Dean. If desired, the student may still take non-credit courses at the college while readmission is pending.

Upon readmission, the student must repay the application fee.

Process for Appeal

If a student disagrees with the final grade submitted by the instructor, the following are circumstances in which they may appeal:

- An error in calculating the grade
- Failure of instructor to notify students clearly and promptly of the criteria for grade determination
- Assignment of a grade based on reasons other than the announced criteria and standards
- Assignment of a grade based on factors other than student achievement, i.e. prejudice or discrimination
- Inconsistently or inequitably applied standards for evaluation of student academic performance

Contact Persons/Student Responsibilities:

- The student must appeal to the Instructor within four (4) weeks of the final grade posting.
- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the student/instructor meeting, they may appeal to the Academic Dean.
- The Academic Dean will consider both the student's appeal and the instructor's recommendation, and then make a final decision to either change the grade or leave the grade as posted.

Attendance: A student who misses 3 classes will be automatically dropped from the course unless arrangements have been made previously with the instructor due to emergency or extreme circumstances. A student who misses class is responsible for all class notes, assignments and any exams that occurred during their absence. It may or may not be possible to make up these assignments, at the discretion of the instructor.

Readings: Assigned readings are mandatory and should be completed in advance of the classes for which they are scheduled in the syllabus. Knowledge of the readings will be critical for understanding lectures and subsequent discussions, and for preparing for final examinations.

Late Papers: All papers are due at the prescribed dates specifically listed in this syllabus. Each paper is due prior to the start of the class period (Example, if it is an evening class, then the paper shall be due by 6pm). Each day the paper is late will be a 10% reduction in the overall grade. Extenuating circumstances will be the sole reason that a paper can be turned in late, but prior written approval or communication to the instructor is needed. With extenuating circumstances, the professor has the discretion to deduct as he/she sees fit.

Completion of Work: All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Extended due dates will be granted only in cases of hardship such as hospitalization or emergency absence from class. Unless such a situation arises immediately before a deadline, arrangements cannot be made after the fact without receiving a reduction in your grade. A similar policy applies with regard to course incompletes.

Incomplete: If the student finds they will be unable to complete the course within the allotted time period they may request an Incomplete from the instructor. To request an Incomplete, the student must obtain an Incomplete Form from the Branch College office. They are to complete this form and submit it to the instructor for approval by the last class session. Students are ineligible to request an Incomplete for a class after the last class session. The instructor will then file the Incomplete Form with the Administrations office. The student has a maximum of four (4) weeks from the last class to complete all course work. If the course work is not completed within the allotted time period, the student will receive the grade earned as a result of not completing the course work.

SECTION 5.1 – Social/Behavioral Standards

Alcohol/Drugs

The college expects its students to obey the law. It is a violation of the college's expectations for a student to drink, possess, or be impaired by drinking, alcoholic beverages, or to possess, use, or be under the influence of, illegal drugs, on campus or at any event sponsored by the college or by a college-approved student organization. If the college determines that a student has violated this policy, the college may disclose the violation to a student's parent or legal guardian if the student is less than 21 years of age at the time of the notification. Violation of this policy may result in any sanction deemed appropriate by the college, including, but not limited to, required participation in a drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation program, suspension or expulsion.

Attendance

A student who misses 3 classes will be automatically dropped from the course unless arrangements have been made previously with the instructor due to emergency or extreme circumstances. A student who misses class is responsible for all class notes, assignments and any exams that occurred during their absence. It may or may not be possible to make up these assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. Please consult individual syllabi for class requirements.

Attire

Students should be properly dressed at all times for the specific occasion. Any sexually suggestive clothing, including t-shirts with ungodly wording, slogans or cartoons, will not be tolerated anywhere on the campus. Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times by both men and women. Both men and women are asked to avoid wearing clothing that reveals their undergarments. Individual classroom attire regulations shall be at the discretion of instructors and/or administration.

Any student wearing inappropriate attire will be dismissed from class until that student can return wearing suitable clothing. It will then be the student's responsibility to obtain any lecture notes missed due to dismissal for inappropriate attire. Repeated violations of this policy may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Student Dean, Academic Dean, and President.

Cheating/Plagiarism/Forgery

Plagiarism is taking an idea or structure of a work that someone else has written, composed, etc., then presenting it as one's own idea, and neglecting to give credit to the original source of that work. Anyone who plagiarizes will receive an automatic failure on that piece of work, as well as a warning of a potential "F" for the course. A second occurrence of plagiarism within that course will result in failure ("F") for the final course grade. An "F" for cheating/plagiarism in a subsequent course may result in suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Student Dean, Academic Dean, and President.

Church Involvement

Students are expected to attend church regularly. They may attend the weekly service at The San Diego Branch Church, or, services at a Christian church of their choosing.

Financial Irregularities

Keeping in mind the biblical principles of stewardship, selflessness, integrity, and personal discipline, it is expected that students will meet financial obligations on their scheduled due date for each session that they attend The Branch College of Ministry.

If a student is late for two consecutive installments, that student will lose installment privileges for the following term. This means that the student would be required to make full payment for all classes at the start of the term.

Any payments that are returned to the college for non-sufficient funds will result in a charge of \$20.00 to the student. After two non-sufficient funds occurrences, the student will be required to pay by cash, certified check, credit card, or money order for the remainder of the academic year.

A student will not be permitted to register for any new courses, graduate, or obtain transcripts until all tuition debts from the prior term are paid in full.

Health Services and Student Insurance

Although precautions are taken to maintain adequate security, The Branch College of Ministry does not assume any legal obligation to pay for injury to persons (including death) or loss or damage to items of personal property which occur in its buildings or on its grounds, prior to, during, or subsequent to classes or events on the campus. Students, their parents, guardians, or guarantor are thereby strongly encouraged to purchase and maintain appropriate insurance to cover health, life and property.

Student Discipline

Students are required to maintain standards of behavior that are consistent with the calling to ministry, the teachings of the Bible, and the stated intentions (e.g. mission statement, goals, policies) of The Branch College of Ministry. Students who do not maintain such standards may be denied the opportunity to continue in this school or to graduate from it. The primary goals of discipline at The Branch College of Ministry is restorative (i.e., not punitive) and the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of the community.

Student Rights and Due Process

A student who believes that disciplinary procedures are unwarranted or unfair has the right to due process. The sequence of steps starts with a meeting with the Dean of Students to make sure the student understands the offence and to evaluate the student's attitude. At that meeting, the Dean of Students will provide the student a written statement concerning the suspect behavior. If the student does not evidence a change of behavior, the process will go forward through (1) probation, (2) suspension and (3) expulsion. At the point that the latter three steps begin, a student may notify the Dean of Students that he or she wants to appeal his or her case to a committee of disinterested faculty and students (i.e. those who are a part of

the college but not involved). A final appeal can be made to the administrative council. In regard to discipline and due process, the student has the following rights:

- The student has a right to know the charges against him or her and to receive them in writing.
- The student has a right to have a hearing consisting of a committee of disinterested faculty (two) and students (preferably two members of the student government) and the Dean of Students. This committee will make a recommendation to the administrative council, which will make the final decision. The final decision will be signed by the President and a copy will be given to the student.
- The student also has a right to confront his or her accusers (e.g. explain his or her side of the story, cross-examine witnesses, bring his or her own witnesses)
- A student may be represented or assisted (e.g. a character witness's testimony) by anyone he or she chooses
- The student has a right to the minutes of the proceedings and a written copy of the decision.
- The student may appeal this decision by requesting another hearing before the administrative council. The final decision will be signed by the President and a copy will be given to the student.

Campus safety and emergency procedures

In the interest of the safety and integrity of the BCOM community, the BCOM reserves the right to refer any violation to appropriate law enforcement. Students are expected to comply with civil law to keep the BCOM campus safe. Any witnessing of harmful activity is required to be reported to the proper authorities. Upon any emergency situation on campus, students and faculty alike are required to follow emergency procedures as outlines and posted on campus.

Rude/Obscene Language

Vulgar, foul, obscene, or profane language is not to be tolerated on campus at any time. Pornographic materials, obscene literature and pictures are also not to be tolerated. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Academic Dean. Repeated occurrences of rude or obscene language may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Student Dean, Academic Dean, and President.

Sexual Misconduct

Students engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior are destructive to an environment of purity and obedience to God. Sexual misconduct includes, but may not be limited to, the following: suggestive conversation, correspondence, or gestures; public displays of sexual intimacy; and extra- or pre-marital sexual relations, whether on or off campus. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Student Dean. Repeated occurrences of sexual misconduct may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Student Dean, Academic Dean, and President.

Smoking

The Branch College of Ministry is a smoke-free environment. No student may smoke either on or outside of the campus. Due to its destructive nature to the human body which God has created, smoking is strongly discouraged as a life-style choice, whether on or off campus. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Student Dean. Repeated occurrences of smoking on or outside of The Branch College of Ministry campus may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Student Dean, Academic Dean, and President.

Theft/Destruction

Bearing in mind the Biblical principles of honesty, integrity, and concern for neighbors, theft or destruction of property will not be tolerated at The Branch College of Ministry. Any student who practices breaking and entering, theft, embezzlement of funds, and/or related activities will be subject to suspension from the college with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, in addition to possible civil prosecution.

Unauthorized Use of Property & Equipment

Students are prohibited from any unauthorized use of The Branch College of Ministry property or equipment. This includes office equipment and supplies, kitchen and bathroom areas, any and all multi-media and computer equipment. No student may disconnect, interface with, relocate or tamper in any way with computer systems, hardware, printers, peripherals or accessories. No student may download or install any third party programs or software. Any unauthorized use or tampering that result in loss of functionality or damage will be considered as Theft/Destruction (see above).

Unauthorized Use of Premises

Students are prohibited to use The Branch College of Ministry campus for unauthorized events or activities. If a student wishes to hold an event or activity on the campus, the student must first obtain permission from the Registrar Office. Unauthorized use of premises may result in probation or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Violence

Threats or acts of violence will not be tolerated at The Branch College of Ministry. For the safety and well-being of the entire Branch College of Ministry community, any student who violates this policy must immediately leave the campus. Furthermore, that student will be subject to suspension from the college with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, in addition to possible civil prosecution.

Weather Policies

In the event of extreme weather conditions such as fire, flood, or earthquake warnings, it is likely that the campus will cancel classes. However, no student should assume that a class is cancelled without verifying the cancellation with The Branch College of Ministry faculty. In

addition, students should inquire about any changes to course requirements resulting from the closing.

Sexual Assault Policy

If you, as the victim, believe a sexual assault act has been committed, report the assault immediately to the nearest fellow faculty or staff member, who is to in turn notify the school's President or Academic Dean and the police. We desire to do everything possible to protect victim's safety, reputation and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, a sympathetic, same-sex companion will be made available to be with a victim of such a crisis. Any observer of a sexual assault crime should notify the school's President or Academic Dean immediately, rather than take the initiative to contact the police. It is critical that the rights of victims are protected so that they accurately report the crime to authorities. The police will be called to review the crime, take a description of the attacker, etc. and ensure that the victim and his or her escort are transported to a medical facility. Confidentiality is required in order to protect all parties involved with the assault. In order to protect the rights of both victim and alleged perpetrators, neither the names of victims nor alleged perpetrators will be released to the public without prior permission. Any inquiries from newspapers, employees, parents, or other students will be immediately forwarded to the school's President or Academic Dean to avoid misrepresentation of the facts and breach of confidentiality. Efforts will be made by a college staff or faculty member to help the victim deal with work-related difficulties resulting from the crime. Should a student, faculty member, or staff member be accused of the crime, appropriate disciplinary action will not occur until a formal investigation is completed. The victim will be informed of any disciplinary action that is taken or progress of appeals in connection with the sexual assault. Prevention is the best tool for elimination of sexual assault. All staff, faculty, and students should take all steps necessary to prevent sexual assault from occurring such as escorting females to parking areas, expressing strong disapproval, using self-defense techniques, and increasing awareness of what sexual assault means.

SECTION 6.1 – Non-Harassment Policy

The Branch College of Ministry does not tolerate harassment or intimidation of any kind. The college's policy and state and federal laws prohibit harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, uniform service member status, marital status, pregnancy, age, protected medical condition, disability or any other category protected by applicable state or federal law.

Harassment is defined as unwelcome physical, verbal or environmental conduct directed toward one team member by another team member. General harassment exists when the behavior interferes with an individual's academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment.

Harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment does refer to a pattern of behavior or a specific incident(s) which are unwelcome or are personally intimidating, hostile or offensive.

What Should You Do If You Feel You Are or Have Been Harassed

If you feel that you are being harassed, you should immediately contact the Dean of Students. If no change is realized after reporting the conduct to the Dean of Students, you may report it to the Academic Dean. In addition, if you observe harassment by another student, faculty, or staff member, please report the incident immediately to the Dean of Students. Appropriate action will also be taken in response to violation of this policy by any one not associated with the BCOM. If the harassment is of such a nature as to dissuade you from reporting it directly to the Dean of Students, you may report it directly to the Academic Dean.

Your notification of the problem is essential to us. We cannot help resolve a possible harassment problem unless we know about it. Therefore, it is your responsibility to bring your concerns and/or problems to our attention so that we can take whatever steps are necessary to address the situation. The Branch College of Ministry takes all complaints of unlawful harassment seriously and will not penalize you or retaliate against you in any way for reporting a harassment problem in good faith.

All complaints of unlawful harassment which are reported to management will be investigated as promptly as possible and corrective action will be taken where warranted. The BCOM prohibits students, faculty, or staff from hindering internal investigations and the internal complaint procedure. All complaints of unlawful harassment which are reported to the BCOM will be treated with as much confidentiality as possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

THE BRANCH

COLLEGE OF MINISTRY

Student Acknowledgment of Receipt of Student Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Student Handbook, have read its contents, and that I will comply with its requirements.

PRINT FULL NAME _____

SIGNED _____

DATE _____