COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course begins with the question “Why am I a MEPP student at CUME?” Perhaps because you want to further clarify your understanding of the Christian ministry to which you are called and you want to further understand your ministry strategy and improve your abilities to carry out that ministry as effectively as possible in the days and years ahead. The clearer any of us can think about our ministries, the more effective our ministries are likely to be. Thus the objectives for this course include: 1) to further develop clarity of thinking and understanding, particularly about the Christian ministry that engages you or will engage you; 2) to further develop ministry plans stemming from that growing clarity, for the course assumes you now have or will now acquire a ministry and that you want to be as effective as possible in that ministry right now even as you prepare for future ministry; and 3) to implement those plans by engaging in new or altered actions, even during the weeks of this course. “Critical thinking: reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe and do” (Robert Ennis) - that definition underlies this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Prayerfully prepare for, attend and actively participate in each of the class sessions. Bring your Bible each week. Integral to the class for these weeks further define your strategic ministry plan(s), which may include speaking to specific issues, problems and decisions to be made relevant to your present and anticipated ministry life. Journal or log. Write a five to ten page paper that clearly sets forth your clarified or additional thinking about your ministry or project, and implement your new or altered course of action.

OUTLINE OF CLASS SESSIONS:
Sept. 27 Why am I a MEPP student at CUME? What is Christian ministry’s big picture? The context of critical thinking and decision-making. The Robert Ennis definition. Why should I write down what I am thinking about ministry and me? How do people write their thoughts down?
Assignment 1) Choose and memorize a Bible verse relative to your thinking. 2) Review Nehemiah. 3) Breeze through “Six Thinking Hats.” 4) During the week ponder what you are now doing ministry-wise. Take 20 minutes and write down your ponderings; your ministry ideas What do you see as special strengths in what you are doing? What do you think might make those strengths even stronger, even more fruitful? Write it down (what you write is confidential, unless at some point you choose to share it).
Oct. 4  *Nehemiah* and how Nehemiah fits my ministry. If you want to share it with the group, what is one thing you have done ministry-wise already because of a thought generated in the last seven days? Other examples of critical thinking in the Bible.

**Assignment**  1) Review *The Book of Acts*.  2) Read chapters 1 - 3 of *The Effective Executive*  
3) Get started on your 5 to 10 page paper, perhaps including your thoughts written down last week. 4) If you think it appropriate, share with one principal person in your present ministry your current thinking as to how the ministry you both are engaged in can be further strengthened, or enlarged, or reproduced.

Oct 11  *The Book of Acts.*  Parallels between *Nehemiah* and *The Book of Acts*. What does the book *The Effective Executive* say to me so far? In small groups share what you are thinking/writing/doing. How does your ministry thinking/hoping/doing relate to the organizational structures/leadership and leadership structures of your church or organization?  
**Assignment:**  1) Read chapters 4 - 7 of "The Effective Executive." 2) Memorize a Bible verse germane to your 5 to 10 page paper. 3) Keep writing the paper.

Oct. 18 What did you get from Drucker 4 - 7? Did Jesus have dreams for his ministry? Did the Apostles? Did they write them down? Do you have dreams for your ministry? What are they? Should you share them more than you have? With whom? How?  
**Assignment**  Finish your paper (or maybe continue to expand it in the months ahead)

Oct. 25 The history of the faith in Greater Boston and how it can energize me right now. Sharing our stories, our hopes, our papers. “What’s next for me for my ongoing learning?: Do I want to keep in touch with somebody or somebodies in this class for a while?” Some group prayer together.

**Assignment**  Keep on keeping on

**REQUIRED READING:**  
*Nehemiah* and *Acts of the Apostles*  
*Six Thinking Hats*, Edward De Bono, Little, Brown and Co. 1999 ISBN 0 316 17791 1

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**  

Be inspired by watching the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* with James Stewart and Donna Reed.

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING STUDENT’S PROGRESS**  
Reading and preparation, written work, class participation, implementation of ministry decisions, attendance: each 20%.