

## MIDDLER REVIEW

Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program Milestone

#### **Overview**

The **Middler Review**, a meeting held at the <u>midpoint</u> in the M.Div. program—Congregational and Chaplaincy tracks—is a comprehensive review of your theological understanding of ministry, field education or CPE experience, academic record, and development of proficiencies in ministry in the light of your personal vocational objectives and, if you are in the process for ordination, your denomination's requirements for ordination.

## **Middler Review Objectives**

This Middler Review meeting is a time of support, assessment, review, and planning. The materials provided to the Middler panelists support their assessment of your academic progress and your ability to articulate your ministerial formation within the Master of Divinity program. The panelists use these materials to provide input to you about your strengths observed during praxis and classes, the "growing edges" in your theological/spiritual clarity and ministerial skills, and recommendations for further education through academic courses, workshops, and other resources.

As the central element of the Middler Review, your **Middler Vocational and Theological Essay** offers an opportunity for you to

- reflect theologically, critically, and practically on your formation to date in the M.Div. program,
- demonstrate your integration of scholarly theological and social analysis disciplines with your ministerial narrative, spiritual practices, and leadership praxis, and
- articulate a vision of your plans for transformative, spiritually rooted leadership.

# **Topics covered in this document**

- Middler Review <u>Panel Members: Roles & Responsibilities</u>
- Middler Review <u>Materials and Preparation</u>
- Middler Review Meeting Structure
- Middler Review <u>Essay</u>: <u>Prompts and Assessment Rubrics</u>
- Middler <u>Self-Assessment</u>
- Middler Final Report

## MIDDLER REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

The Middler Review Panel is normally comprised of 3 to 5 people selected for their expertise in one or more components of the review and for their experience with your formational journey. Based on the Middler materials provided, all panelists should come prepared with input and questions about your demonstrated growth and strengths, important growing edges, and plans for continued development of your growing edge skills. Panelists should also be prepared to complete an online final assessment of the student based upon their Middler observations.

# Panel Member Roles & Responsibilities

Each member of the panel has a specific responsibility for assessing the materials provided by you:

- Faculty Advisor (required): The faculty advisor
  - reviews your current transcript and discusses your Vocational Academic Plan,
     Spiritual Formation Plan, and degree worksheet;
  - o consults with you to review and revise the Vocational & Theological Essay;
  - o chairs the review meeting process.

## • Field Education Mentor or CPE Supervisor (required)

o This panel member is a minister, church leader, agency administrator, or certified CPE Supervisor who provided direct engagement with your work in a field setting for ministry praxis. The mentor/supervisor reviews all materials distributed to the panel from their observation of your practice of ministry.

## • **Student Peer** (required)

- o This peer should have engaged with the student in the academic environment and should be able to offer personal assessment of your formational journey. If requested, the peer may take notes to assist you with their post-review reflection.
- It is not necessary for the peer to be in the MDiv program. However, the peer should have taken several "1st tier" Stackable Curriculum foundational courses with you (e.g., Rhetorical Use of Text, Transformative Leadership, Empathy/Communication/Ritual Design, Spiritual Formation, Theological Thinking.)

- **Denominational Representative** (required if student is pursuing ordination)
  - This panel member is an ordained church leader who is familiar with the
    expectations and rules of your denomination. The denominational representative
    examines your materials from the perspective of these ordination requirements
    and the status and needs of your progress in meeting them.
- Second Faculty Member (optional)
  - In some cases, the Office of Academic Affairs appoints this panel member, in consultation with the faculty advisor and you. This member's primary role is as a second academic reader of the written essay and to provide additional academic response to the oral presentation.

# Middler Review Materials and Preparation

You are responsible for scheduling, planning, inviting, and gathering your Middler attendees (panelists.) Your primary faculty advisor chairs the meeting.

You need to provide all panelists with these materials for review <u>at least one week before</u> the scheduled meeting:

M	ATERIAL	PSR RESOURCE
*	Middler Review <b>Panelist Guidelines</b>	This document can be downloaded from Student Resources
*	Copy of current transcript, including grades	Registrar
*	Current Stackable Master of Divinity Program Worksheet	Registrar
*	CPE Supervisor or Field Education Mentor Final Evaluation	Check your field praxis records
*	Student Self-Assessment	Online form. Once you submit the form, a copy in pdf format will be provided to you by email. Instructions and example are in the Appendix of this document.
*	Vocational and Theological Essay	Final copy approved by Advisor. Instructions in next section.
*	Ordination Requirements	If applicable. See your denominational representative.
*	Confirmation of Middler Review date, time, location / Zoom link	Coordinate with your faculty advisor

As part of the opening of the Middler Review meeting, you will give a 10–15-minute oral presentation to supplement your essay. This oral presentation should be a statement of your understanding of your intersectional social location and your contextual understanding of the predominant issues in your community/ies of service and accountability. It should also address the ways in which these reflexive and analytical perspectives provide the framework for your ministerial vision and accountability, internal and external (e.g., practices of listening, cultural humility, compassion, contextual inquiry, reactivity checks, spiritual and psychological guidance, regular peer-group discussions, etc.)

This oral presentation is <u>not</u> distributed to the panel members in the materials packet.

## Forms to submit before meeting:

- Scheduling Confirmation: (<u>form printout</u>) <u>http://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7294318/MIDDLER-Scheduling-Confirmation</u>
- Self-Assessment Form: This must be included in the materials sent to your panel. https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7721954/STUDENT-MIDDLER-SELF-ASSESSMENT

# MIDDLER REVIEW MEETING STRUCTURE

- 1. Each panel member introduces themselves and their role in the Middler Review process.
- 2. You speak for 10-15 minutes about your formational journey, emphasizing aspects of your Vocational and Theological Essay.
- 3. You inform panel members of any areas about which you would like specific input.
- 4. You leave the meeting or are put into Zoom breakout room (for about 15 minutes.)
- 5. Advisor facilitates the panel members in producing discussion points: questions, need for clarification, observed growth over time, strengths, current growing edges, etc. Panel determines how to consolidate and organize the sequence of discussion, particular questioner, and examples of input for the discussion with you.
- 6. You return to the room. Panelists engage in presenting and discussing their input with you. This discussion should be warmly interactive; criticisms should be presented within the context of your strengths and growing edges.
- 7. You leave meeting or enters breakout room again.

- 8. Advisor provides panel members with final assessment link and their email address (see end of this document.) As each panelist submits their assessment, a pdf copy will be sent to the advisor, the panel member, and the PSR Registrar. Panelist assessments, especially summary statements, will be used by you and your advisor in a later meeting to create a summary document demonstrating your understanding of your Middler Review experience.
- 9. You return to the meeting for any final statements from panel members and the meeting closes, acknowledging the work of all participants in this significant milestone. Final statements do not need to be formal; often everything is covered during your discussions.

# **Middler Review Essay**

The **Middler Vocational and Theological Essay** offers an opportunity for you to reflect critically and theologically on your formation to date in the M.Div. program, demonstrate your integration of scholarly disciplines with community spiritual practices, and articulate a vision of your vocational goals of transformative and spiritually rooted leadership.

This **15–20-page essay** is a statement of deep reflection, integrating the personal and the academic. It is explicitly **not** an autobiography. It should explain how the classes that you have taken thus far, chapel leadership, and co-curricular activities you have engaged in have deepened your vocational call. It should articulate your engagement with the Learning Outcomes of the MDiv program in conversation with the teachings of your wisdom tradition and your vocational goals. It should cogently articulate the specific experiences (through course work and praxis) that have shaped your formation in/with/for the world during the MDiv program and how this journey has deepened and clarified your "ministerial identity" and your vocational plans. This essay should be a congruent narrative that demonstrates your intentional and comprehensive integration of:

- 1. Your awareness of the theological/spiritual perspectives and vocational goals you held at the program's start,
- 2. Your process of being changed in your understanding and perspectives (with direct references to insights from academic and praxis experiences,) and
- 3. How these changes are the foundation of your current theological/spiritual perspectives and your vocational plans.

The following essay prompts are guidelines for this deep reflection. While the prompts provide areas of reflection to be presented, throughout the essay you should articulate awareness of your own intersectional social location and the relevance of contextual structures such as power, inequity, race, gender, gender identity, class, culture, disability, etc. to the theological and social issues you are addressing.

Prompts	Suggested coursework for reflection
How have sacred texts, cultural narratives, and forms of intellectual and artistic expression become part of your ministerial identity?	Contextual Thinking
<ul> <li>How has your formation in the MDiv program provided you with new or transformed ways of addressing the inequities and/or resistances to change in your religious/ spiritual communities?</li> </ul>	Rhetorical Use of Text
In what ways have you demonstrated an "exegesis" of information in order to provide inquiry, analysis, relevance, and insight	
How does your awareness of your intersectional social location provide necessary and relevant context for your work in the world?	Spiritual Formation
How have your academic, experiential, social, and praxis expanded your understanding of the complexities of social privilege and	Ethics
<ul><li>disenfranchisement?</li><li>How does your awareness and your understanding show up in how you speak/preach/teach about and address social issues?</li></ul>	Field Praxis ("Chaplaincy" or "Congregational")
<ul> <li>What are the core values that provide the infrastructure and congruence of your theology/spirituality?</li> </ul>	Transformational Leadership
<ul> <li>How do these values guide how you provide spiritual care and leadership to your community through issues of conflict and difference, change and insecurity, and fear and resistance?</li> </ul>	Empathy / Communication /
How do these values guide the rituals & practices that you develop in and through community engagement?	Ritual Design
<ul> <li>How do these values guide the ways that you work with communities to create a community identity that is collaboratively inclusive and radically open to living their values through action?</li> </ul>	Who Cares
What methods do you use, plan to use, or intend to explore which will launch your spiritual leadership into collaborations with the intersectionality of issues, communities, and styles of work for social institution?	Design Thinking for Social Change
<ul><li>justice?</li><li>What strategies will you use to identify, research, and critique the validity and impact of types of language and behavior to discern value and harm?</li></ul>	Field Praxis ("Chaplaincy" or "Congregational")
What are your strategies for accountability and restorative action?	

Prompts	Suggested coursework for reflection
Provide examples of how course readings, discussions, and assignments developed your ability to articulate the complexities of social justice issues	Contextual Thinking Theological Thinking
<ul> <li>How has the expanded awareness of the values and problems with information technology impacted the ways that you currently and intend to engage your vocational practices?</li> <li>What best practices will you use to manage ethical accountability for how you use information technology?</li> </ul>	Innovative Vibrant Ventures  Design Thinking for Social Change
<ul> <li>What are your current or planned practices for resilience, health, and spiritual groundedness?</li> <li>How are these practices essential to transformational leadership?</li> <li>What resources have you identified to develop/augment your practices for financial sustainability?</li> </ul>	Office of Community Life workshops (e.g., Self-Care/Soul Care.)

## **Middler Essay Assessment Rubric**

The Middler Review Panelists will be provided with this online form to submit feedback after reading your Vocational and Theological Essay. It is important that your panelists receive your essay with sufficient time to read it and provide their reflections.

The panelists will use this rubric as a guideline for assessment of your essay. This process is meant to guide panelists to reflect on their questions and input to you. It is <u>not</u> a grading of your paper. Your Advisor/Review Chair will receive a copy of this feedback and incorporate it into your Review meeting. You can always request copies of this feedback.

https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7716845/MIDDLER-ESSAY-ASSESSMENT

	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Content/Clarity of Vision  Excellent Acceptable Needs improvement  Comments:	Clear flow of a narrative from where the student began upon entering seminary, to what they learned, to how they see themselves leading going forward.	Information provided but no explicit flow of narrative describing the theological and vocational journey the student began at the beginning of their seminary experience, how their experience has been impacted, and where they see themselves going forward.	No clear narrative and/or reads more like a biography rather than a reflection of what the student has learned in their theological education and how that has impacted their vocational journey.
Integration/Clarity of Formation  Excellent Acceptable Needs improvement  Comments:	Uses specific authors, articles/books, lectures, sacred texts, and other class content to showcase what has impacted the student in their theological and vocational formation.	Cites some elements learned from courses at PSR/GTU, but better integration is needed to show the impact on student's theological and vocational formation.	Little to no citing from specific course content is used to show how PSR/GTU classes have impacted the student's theological and vocational formation.

	Excellent Acc		Needs Improvement
Leadership/Clarity of Vocational Identity  Excellent Acceptable Needs improvement  Comments:	Presents a more nuanced and mature understanding of vocation and deepening of ministerial call in the student's self-description	Is lacking detail and/or vague about growth and understanding of vocational call and its deepening	Reveals no change or deepening of vocational call and identity
Style Excellent Acceptable Needs improvement  Comments:	Content flow is well- written and organized in a logical manner. Grammar, spelling, and citations are properly done. Paper was edited and presented to the standard of graduate-level academic writing.	Content flow is confusing, but the ideas are still communicated well enough to understand. Or grammar, spelling, and citations became hindrances to reading the essay easily.	Essay was difficult to read because content flow was not organized enough to make sense. And/or grammar, spelling, and citations were poorly done or not edited enough to the standard of graduate-level academic writing.

## STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

#### **Self-Assessment Instructions:**

- Use the online Middler Self-Assessment form -<a href="https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7721954/STUDENT-MIDDLER-SELF-ASSESSMENT">https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7721954/STUDENT-MIDDLER-SELF-ASSESSMENT</a>
- Respond to each statement as "I am able to...."
- You only need to assess the main statement. Use the list of qualities to interpret each statement.
- Use the Comments section to expand on your assessment. While not required, it is useful to provide comments in order to assist nuanced discussions at your Middler Review Meeting.
- Once you submit your responses, you will receive an email with an attached pdf copy of this assessment. Include this pdf document in your materials sent to the panelists.

	1 = no ability to 5 = excellent ability to				
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1	2	3	4	5
Articulate an understanding of texts and traditions, apply them to particular situations, and critically engage with and communicate those texts and traditions.					

## SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Theologically ground ministerial and vocational arts, including preaching, worship leadership, pastoral care, and community organizing
- Communicate the theological, philosophical, or aesthetic traditions of your own religious community or communities.
- Engage in creating new theological discourses.
- Articulate an understanding of the constructed and contextual nature of the information.

#### **COMMENTS**

	1 = no ability to 5 = excellent ability to				
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1	2	3	4	5
2. Recognize all knowledge as contextual; demonstrate understanding of the forces that shape my own context and show awareness of others' context especially across race, sexuality, gender ethnicity, class, culture, nationality, and other differences.					

#### SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Articulate the significance of the various factors that shape my context.
- Understand the markers of authority recognized by disciplines, professions, and other communities of knowledge and practice.
- Debate the ways privilege influences the perception of authority.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the inequities perpetuated by the growing influence of AI and information technology.
- Demonstrate an awareness of other contexts, especially across differences with respect to race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, class, culture, nationality, religious affiliation, etc.
- Imagine how to translate across and among various contexts.
- Avoid inappropriate boundary crossing and misappropriation

#### **COMMENTS**

3. Articulate the connection between spiritual practice(s)			
and my development of a leadership style.			

#### SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Demonstrate personal integrity and character based on my spiritual values.
- Develop a spiritual leadership style to fit with contemporary hybrid models of worship and community gathering.
- Practice appropriate spiritual practices that engage the wider society.
- Develop a spiritual-rootedness to sustain world-changing work.
- Effectively link spirituality and leadership in a community of accountability
- Engage in life and work with cultural humility and respect for cross-cultural differences, including the reality of different time zones.

#### **COMMENTS**

	1 = no ability to 5 = excellent ability to				
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1	2	3	4	5
4. Form effective partnerships with various organizations and individuals with respect for those with different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.					

#### SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Work effectively with people of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.
- Incorporate insights from non-academic contexts.
- Evaluate the information produced by organizations and individuals to create alliances and solidarities in the digital world and to counter the effects of fake news, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia.

#### COMMENTS

5.	Integrate the various intellectual disciplines, fields,			
	topics, and themes of theological education in the			
	practices of ministry and public leadership in a variety			
	of contexts especially with regard to social justice			
	issues.			

#### SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Articulate a theologically grounded position on social justice issues.
- Articulate a theologically grounded position on the creation and circulation of information.
- Organize community efforts toward achieving social change and use the means at my disposal, including digital means.
- Develop a definition of social transformation in critical, constructive, theological, and historical modes relevant to the digital and physical worlds people occupy.

## **COMMENTS**

	1 = no ability to 5 = excellent ability to				
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1	2	3	4	5
<ol> <li>Understand that information creation, including religious and theological claims, is a process that unfolds in physical and digital worlds.</li> </ol>					

#### SKILL QUALITIES TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Distinguish between format and method of access, understanding that these are separate entities.
- Recognize that similar content may be presented in different formats, which may affect the interpretation of the content.
- Contribute to scholarly and public conversations by becoming a creator and critic of distributed information.
- Describe the way systems of information distribution privilege some perspectives and present barriers to others.

#### COMMENTS

7. Cultivate best practices for personal growth, service, and financial health:

### QUALITIES OF SKILL TO CONSIDER FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

- Develop an understanding of organizations and the limits of resources to serve myself and others.
- Develop sustaining habits of resilience and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Be open to being formed for the needs of others.
- Acquire knowledge of and learn habits and practices of living within my means while meeting personal financial responsibility.

#### **COMMENTS**

#### Panelist Assessment

Toward the end of the Middler Review meeting, the Chair will provide the panelists with a link to an online assessment form with these same 7 assessment statements. Each panelist will respond to each statement as "**The student is able to....**," based upon your discussions at your Middler meeting. Again, the panelists are not grading you on the accuracy of your self-assessment. They are providing you with input based upon what you demonstrated to them during your Middler Review.

# MIDDLER FINAL REPORT

After the Middler Review Meeting is completed, you and your faculty Advisor should schedule a meeting within the next 2 weeks to review the feedback provided by the panelists. At this meeting, you will complete the online form providing your understanding of your Middler Review, e.g., your strengths and growing edges and your plans to address these academically and vocationally.

Note: your Middler Review will not be flagged as Complete until you submit the final report.

https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7294320/MIDDLER-Review-Report-v042023

Form printout

# **ONLINE FORM: SCHEDULING CONFIRMATION**

(see next page)



Master of Divinity MIDDLER Scheduling Confirmation v042023

MIDDLER INFORMATION

This form is required as confirmation that you have:

- Identified a Middler Panel, to be chaired by your primary advisor, that consists of your Field Education or CPE mentor/supervisor, a PSR student peer, a Denominational representative (only if you are on the Ordination track), and a secondary advisor (only if assigned by the Assistant Dean),
- Confirmed that all on your panel have agreed to the date and time listed, to be either physically present or available via a Zoom video conference, and
- · Scheduled a Zoom link and/or a Conference Room.

Please submit this form as soon as you have completed the above. Not doing so may prevent you from registering for the next semester and continuing in the program due to an academic block. Once submitted, you and your primary advisor will receive a copy via the email addresses you provided. The Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs & Registrar will also receive a copy for tracking purposes.

Further clarification regarding this form may be found in the Student Middler Review Guidelines, This document can be either downloaded from the Student Resources web page (MDiv

Resources and Forms), or emailed to you by contacting Grace Gilliam, Associate Director of Community Engaged Learning, ggilliam@psr.edu. Which type of Field Praxis have you completed Concurrent Field Education C Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) C Full Year Internship Other - Write In (Required) Academic year of your Concurrent Field Education or Internship (e.g., 2021-2022) • Semester & Year of your CPE program (e.g., FA21) PLEASE ENTER YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION: FIRST NAME \* LAST NAME \* STUDENT EMAIL \* CELL PHONE (for day-of-meeting texts)

CONFIRMED SCHEDULE *	
Date of Middler Review	
Time of Middler Review (include time zone)	
Location of Middler Review	
Zoom link for Middler Review	
MIDDLER PANEL MEMBERS INFORMATIO	N Company of the Comp
FACULTY ADVISOR FULL NAME *	
FACULTY ADVISOR EMAIL *	
MENTOD/OUDED//OOD ELIL NAME *	
MENTOR/SUPERVISOR FULL NAME *	
MENTOR/SUPERVISOR EMAIL *	
PEER FULL NAME *	
PEER EMAIL *	
DENOMINATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL REF	PRESENTATIVE FULL
(if applicable)	
DENOMINATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL REF	PRESENTATIVE EMAIL
DENOMINA HONAL/FROFESSIONAL KEN	TRESENTATIVE LIVIAIL

2nd FACULTY ADVISOR FULL NAME (if applicable)
2nd FACULTY ADVISOR EMAIL
hank You!

Thank you for completing your Middler Scheduling Confirmation Form. A copy has been sent to you and your advisor at the emails you provided on this form. Please include this confirmation form in the materials you send to other members of your panel.

A copy has also been received by the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar@psr.edu) and will be retained in your SONIS records.

# **ONLINE FORM: FINAL REPORT**

(see next page)



### **Master of Divinity Middler Review Final Report**

Please complete this form with your Advisor/Review Committee Chair within two weeks after your Middler Review.

Your Middler is not complete until you submit this form. Upon submission, a copy of this form will be emailed to both you and your advisor. A copy will also be received and retained in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Your First Name *			

Your Last Name *
Your Student Email Address *
Date of your Middler Review *
Names & Roles of your Review Panel *
Please provide your understanding of the input from your Middler Panel
1. YOUR STRENGTHS: *
2. AREAS NEEDING GROWTH & YOUR PLAN TO ADDRESS THESE AREAS:*

3. <b>ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR COMPLETION OF THE MDIV PROGRAM</b> (i.e., courses, volunteer work, workshops, mentoring, etc. Please identify which skills you are addressing with these objectives.) *
4. YOUR ASSESSMENT OF YOUR MIDDLER REVIEW - quality of the experience, usefulness of the input, alignment with your vocational aspirations, etc. *
Your Advisor Full Name *
Your Advisor Email Address *
CONFIRMATION *
☐ I confirm that I have met with my advisor after my Middler Review and both my advisor and I agree on the contents of this report form.
Please upload a copy of your Middler Theological and Vocational Essay.  Please Note these steps for completing this Upload
1. Click on "Browse"
<ol> <li>Select your essay document (only the formats .doc, .docx, or .pdf are acceptable)</li> <li>THEN DO NOT CLICK ON THE UPLOAD COMMAND provided by your device (e.g., "Open")</li> <li>INSTEAD double-click on the file. You will now see your file uploaded to the form.</li> <li>Press the SUBMIT button.</li> </ol>
If your essay includes other media beyond a document file, please send these files as attachments to <b>Registrar@psr.edu</b> . If you are are including a PowerPoint presentation, please save as a pdf document. Be sure to identify in the Subject line: Your Name, Additional Middler Essay materials.

Please follow the directions above \*

Browse

## Thank You!

Thank you for completing your Middler Review Report. A copy has been sent to you and your advisor at the emails you provided on this form.

A copy has also been sent to the Office of Academic Affairs and will be retained in your SONIS account.

The submission of this form marks the last step required for your MDiv Middler Review Milestone.

# Congratulations!