

04PT6115 Theological Research and Writing – Fall 2023

Course description

I designed this course to take the intimidation out of research and writing for seminary studies. Students will develop competency in developing a topic into a focused argument, library research, paper formatting, avoiding plagiarism, and other critical skills for successful seminary studies. Class sessions will be highly interactive with a workshop feel. Students will be coached in the production of a high-quality research paper as a key outcome of the course.

Instructor

Jonathan D. Stuckert, Ed.D.

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Schedule

This course will meet on Thursdays from 1:45 pm until 3:45 pm beginning on August 27, 2023 and concluding on November 16, 2023. In addition to the classroom environment, students will be required to participate in a robust online learning community in Canvas. I will post activities, forums, resources, and assignments organized by weeks on the Canvas course homepage no later than August 1, 2023. There is a small assignment due before the first class, so check in early!

Required reading

Getzels, Jacob W. "The Problem of the Problem." In Hogarth, Robin M. *Question Framing and Response Consistency*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982, 37-49. [Made available on Canvas]

Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.

Pazmiño, Robert W. *Doing Theological Research: An Introductory Guide for Survival in Theological Education*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009. [Selected portion made available on Canvas]

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean, and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.

Select one of the two books below

Strunk Jr., William & E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Boston: Longman, 2000. (85 pgs.) [Buy 4th edition, free as a Kindle book] **This will be good for those that need basic instruction on grammar and style.**

OR

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. Boston: Longman, 2009. (160 pgs.) [Buy used 3rd. Edition. Newer editions are not worth the steep increase in price.] **This book will be best for those with a foundation of suitable grammar and style.**

I may add other selected, short readings to the weekly class meetings to enrich the discussion time. I will make these readings available on Canvas.

Assignments*

Online forum participation 10%

Students will participate in forum discussions on the Canvas course homepage. Full participation at a minimum is a 4 x 4 (four paragraphs of four sentences each) initial posting in answer to forum question and then at least two substantial interactions with peer postings. The required reading will be necessary for satisfactory participation in the discussion forums.

In class quizzes 10%

On selected weeks when there is no graded online discussion there will be a brief and concise quiz over the week's assigned reading.

Annotated bibliography 20%

Students will produce an annotated bibliography of foundational literature for their research. There should be a minimum of 8 sources, all academic. Students will include a page count total for reading for this assignment that should equal at least 300 pages, but preferably more. We will cover the format and approach for this assignment in class. Due by midnight on October 6, 2023.

Research paper drafts 15%

Students will post drafts of their research projects with increasing depth, detail, and length as the course progresses. See Canvas course homepage for specifics on the level of detail and due dates for individual drafts. Students will determine a research topic and refine it with the help of his or her peers and the instructor.

Presentation and peer review 15%

Throughout the course, students will present their ongoing and developing research paper in both online and in person environments. They will learn to receive and to give constructive critique. We will discuss the dates and details for presentations and peer review in the Canvas environment.

Final of research paper 30%

Students will submit a final version of their 2500-word research paper. Due by midnight on December 4, 2023.

*Syllabus due dates and assignments subject to in progress revision and negotiated changes.

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)