

ORIENTATION AND RESEARCH METHODS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to guide students in the use of library materials, computerized databases, and bibliographic resources. It provides instruction in research strategies, thesis topic selection, and the proper form and style for papers and theses. In addition, this course provides an orientation to the educational philosophy of biblical, theological, and ministry-related studies at Dallas Seminary.

1 hour

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. Cognitive.** Upon successful completion of this course, the student should:
- Know the elements of a properly researched and well-written paper.
 - Understand the use of bibliographic resources in researching a topic.
 - Know the required form for research papers at DTS and understand how to use computer resources to simplify adherence to the form.
 - Know the elements and processes involved in writing a master's-level research paper.
- B. Conative.** Upon successful completion of this course, the student should:
- Develop skills in selecting and narrowing a topic for research and establishing a thesis statement for that topic.
 - Develop skills in research and writing techniques suited to church, parachurch, and scholarly contexts.
- C. Affective.** Upon successful completion of this course, the student should:
- Adopt the value of asking good questions and researching convincing answers at the boundaries of any given field of study.
 - Desire to glorify God through efficient and effective research and writing.

III. TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

1. Dallas Theological Seminary Thesis Style Committee. "Supplement to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*." 9th ed. Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary. Available for download at <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/Write>.

MS Word Turabian templates for research papers and theses and associated files are available at <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/Write>.

2. Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
3. Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.

4. Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

B. Supplementary Bibliography

1. Alexander, Patrick H., and Society of Biblical Literature. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
2. Barber, Cyril J., and Robert M. Krauss, Jr. *An Introduction to Theological Research: A Guide for College and Seminary Students*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000.
3. Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Part I of the Turabian manual (8th ed.) is an adaptation of this book.
4. Mauch, James E., and Jack W. Birch. *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: A Handbook for Students and Faculty*. 4th ed. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1998.
5. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Part II and III of the Turabian manual (8th ed.) is a condensation of this manual for academic settings.
6. Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.
7. Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

Students are required to read assigned portions from Graff, Kibbe, Turabian, and the DTS Turabian Supplement. Students must report their completed reading on each reading assignment.

B. Video Sessions

Attend each modules lecture video sessions as you would attend live class sessions.

C. Interaction

Participate in the online discussion, which means engage in active, meaningful, helpful discourse with others in each interaction. Reasoned dialogue between learners under the guidance of the instructor or learning in community contributes a key instructional element in this course.

D. Written Assignments

1. Topic to Thesis Assignment. The student will write 2 thesis statements chosen from the 5 topics given in the assignment. Each thesis statement needs to narrow the topic and state a claim that can be argued in a research paper. The student will also list 3-5 sources used in the narrowing the selected topics and developing the of each of the 2 topics selected. Choose 2 of the following topics: Trinity, Kingdom of God in the New Testament, Image of God in the Old Testament, Practice of the Lord’s Supper, Christianity and Social Justice.

2. Library Assignments.

The two library assignments (<http://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/SS/assignments.shtml>) are to be completed using the WorldCat and ATLA systems at the library website (<http://library.dts.edu>). Each assignment should be completed the due date provided in the assignment schedule. The Library Assignments will be reviewed in the library module lecture videos.

3. Paper Formatting Assignment. Each student is required to complete the Turabian formatting assignment (in the course files) with 5 footnotes and 5 bibliography entries corresponding to the sample sources provided in the course files. Footnotes and bibliography entries must be in proper Turabian notes/bibliography format (Turabian Chapters 15-17). The title page should also be completed in the appropriate format.

E. Quizzes and/or Exams

One open-book quiz will be given to cover the student’s knowledge of basic Turabian concepts and formatting from the Turabian reading. The quiz will be available on Canvas and must be taken by the due date listed in the quiz assignment. Students will have 15 minutes to complete the quiz. While Turabian may be consulted during the quiz, the student should be familiar enough with the concepts to find the information quickly.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| A+ 99–100 | B+ 91–93 | C+ 83–85 | D+ 75–77 | F 0–69 |
| A 96–98 | B 88–90 | C 80–82 | D 72–74 | |
| A- 94–95 | B- 86–87 | C- 78–79 | D- 70–71 | |

B. Weighing of Course Requirements for Grading

- Topic to Thesis Assignment 15%
- Library Assignments 15%
- Paper Formatting Assignment 15%
- Turabian Quiz 10%
- Readings..... 35%
- Interaction..... 10%

C. Class Participation

Active participation in the class discussion is essential. It is expected that the student will have completed all assigned reading and watched all necessary videos and will be ready to interact with the material at a meaningful level both by asking and answering questions pertinent to the session's topic.

D. Late Assignments

Assignments are due according to the module assignment schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted except in the case of an emergency or unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Please notify the professor as soon as you realize there may be a problem in completing an assignment on time. No assignment can be reworked and submitted for a higher grade.

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

A. Communication Competency Criteria

The faculty has established criteria for measuring desired student competency in the area of communication as reflected in the chart below. In light of this, we have set forth specific competencies that the student should develop and demonstrate as a result of completing RS101. This course helps the student develop and demonstrate proficiency in written communication competency at **Level 1** (correct form), **Level 2** (using computer tools to prepare for writing an evaluative essay on a topic), and **Level 3** (appropriate research and documentation).

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| Communication | <i>The student is able to persuade others effectively with respect to biblical and theological truth through oral, written, and electronic media.</i> |
| Level 5 —to be attained by all Th.M. students before graduating. | The student is able to write an acceptable summative research thesis or paper (RS102) and preach a sermon that is audience-focused in its structure, proofs, and application, with a delivery (voice and body) that is natural for the speaker. |
| Level 4 | The student is able to write a paper that reflects sound exegesis and theological reflection and preach a sermon with a clear central proposition, structure, and application that reflects sound exegesis of and theological reflection on a biblical text. |
| Level 3 —to be attained by all master's-level students before graduating. | The student is able to write an appropriately researched and documented paper on a biblical and/or theological topic and deliver an oral presentation designed to influence listeners toward change, using audience-focused learning objectives and appropriate methods. |
| Level 2 | The student is able to write an evaluative essay on a biblical and/or theological topic reflecting vocabulary appropriate to the subject and deliver an interesting oral presentation on a biblical and/or theological topic with congruent nonverbal expression. |
| Level 1 —to be attained by all students by the end of their first semester, if not at matriculation. | The student is able to write a cogent essay using correct form, grammar, and spelling and deliver a cogent oral presentation reflecting basic oral communication skills. |

B. Disability Accommodation Policy

Dallas Seminary does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination, the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

| Module | Topic of Study | Reading Due | Assignment Due |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Orientation to Research (Panel) Class Preview/Introduction (Todd) | | |
| 2 | Research Intro/ Topic to Thesis (Svigel) Research to Writing (Svigel) | Read Kibbe | Topic to Thesis Assignment Interaction Assignment |
| 3 | Library Research: Searching in ATLA and WorldCat (Hunn) | | ATLA Assignment WorldCat Assignment |
| 4 | Using Electronic Tools (Burer) | | |
| 5 | Citation and Plagiarism (Todd) | Read Turabian Ch. 7 Scan Turabian 15-17 Scan Turabian Supplement | |
| 6 | Writing (Glahn) | Read Graff | Turabian Quiz Paper Formatting Assignment Submit Reading Report |