

Spring 2008

COURSE SYLLABUS

Department: Research & Writing

Course Title: Theo. Research and Writing Skills

Course Number: RW 701

Credit Hours: 3

Fridays: 9:20 a.m. -12:00 noon

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to theological research methods and writing skills. Students will learn in a part lecture and part seminar format, and with both hands on practicum and theoretical overview.

Description from the catalog: RW 701 Theological Research and Writing Skills

“Required course for any student writing a thesis

A weekly seminar offered in the spring semester preparing students to write their thesis the following year (799/by dept.). Students will learn research methods and skills and develop their writing ability. They will produce a thesis proposal, including a developed statement of the topic, an outline of the contents, a full bibliography for future research, and a written research agreement with a thesis supervisor.”

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A.** The student articulates a Biblical theology of theological research and writing;
- B.** The student understands principles of research in the theological discipline, including literacy of information;
- C.** The student fashions a research methodology tailored to the Master’s thesis project;
- D.** The student demonstrates ability to apply correct bibliographic forms in the MLA style;
- E.** The student learns the art and craft of theological bibliography.

3. COURSE TEXTS

A. Required texts (students should purchase these two books):

Booth, William E., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 2nd Edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. ISBN 9780226065687

Strunk, William and E.B. White *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 2000. ISBN 020530902X

B. Recommended texts (students need not purchase these items):

Essay/Sermons by Lewis, Orwell, Warfield described below.

Gibaldi, Joseph, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2d edition. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

Leedy, Paul, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, 2004

Vyhmeister, Nancy *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing, 2001. ISBN 0310239451

All texts will be on the reserve shelf in the library

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Preliminary to the course:

- Students should have begun research and reading in their thesis interest area, with a general goal of reading about 500 pages in the general topic area before the first day of class.
- Students should come to class with a working preliminary thesis statement in mind.

B. Students are expected to spend three hours outside of class in preparation for course assignments and class discussion for every three hours the class meets;

C. Students are expected to attend class and to comply with student academic policies (for instance, chapel attendance, intellectual honesty, and thesis process).

D. Readings during the course:

1. George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language";
2. C. S. Lewis's sermon "Learning in War-Time";
3. B. B. Warfield's sermon, "The Religious Life of Theological Students"
(all three articles will be available on reserve shelf);
4. Strunk and White, and Booth et al completely;
5. Leedy: chapters on Qualitative and Quantitative Research Design
6. Read in the student's thesis subject area.

E. Weekly Assignments

There will be weekly assignments to foster classroom discussion, and to help prepare the student for submitting the five course submission requirements listed below. These assignments will be distributed in class as they become available and may include but are not limited to: a library search-and-seize, subject heading investigation and drafts of the below requirements.

F. Course Submission Requirements

(items are turned in by emailing the instructor or by placing in the faculty mail box no later than 5:00 PM on May 2, 2008)

1. Thesis advisor meeting: students should schedule a time with their faculty advisor and their thesis supervising professor to discuss the student's thesis and provide a written statement signifying the date of this meeting.
2. Thesis statement.
3. Thesis project overview.
4. Working outline.
5. Working bibliography.

5. COURSE EVALUATION

Grading is determined on a pass/fail basis. Pass is awarded for turning in all completed assignments and attendance for the in-class session. No credit will be given unless all assignments are completed adequately.

6. COURSE STRUCTURE

(This is a draft outline and is subject to change)

- Introduction to the course
- Class description of projects
- Tour of Library
- Section 1: Biblical Theology of research and writing: Lewis, Warfield.
- Section 2: Preliminaries of Research: Booth et al.
 - Module 1: thesis statements
 - Module 2: plagiarism and copyright
 - Module 3: citing authorities
 - Module 4: bibliographic form: EndNote overview
- Section 3: Principles of Research
 - Module 1: Information sources
 - Module 2: Database essentials
 - Module 3: Advanced search theory
 - Module 4: Practical search techniques
 - Unit 1: Searching for Books: OPAC and *Ad Fontes* practicum
 - Unit 2: Searching for Articles: Indexes and Ebsco practicum
 - Unit 3: Searching the Web: Google practicum and “deep web” overview.
- Section 4: Judging Sources
- Section 5: Research Design: Leedy
 - Module 1: Qualitative Research methodology
 - Module 2: Quantitative Research methodology
- Section 6: Writing: Orwell, Strunk and White.
 - Module 1: Effective Writing principles
 - Module 2: Integrating Biblical languages: BibleWorks overview
 - Module 3: Style: MLA primer: Gibaldi.
- Section 7: Individual Thesis discussions and individual research
 - Module 1: Outlining on the board
 - Module 2: In the stacks

7. COURSE CONTACTS

I am usually in my office in the library from 9 am until 4:30 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (I'm around campus on Wednesdays, but often occupied with meetings). Please feel free to stop by my office any time. If you need more than a few minutes, it might be best to contact me first to set up a specific time for meeting. Email is also a good way to get in touch with me: shanson@tesm.edu

Please note that this syllabus may be modified according to class needs.

Last updated: 1/10/2008