

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BTH/THE/PCS 646 Theological Studies Seminar

Benny C. Aker

Spring 2004

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the capstone academic experience for the degree of Master of Arts in Theological Studies, this course is designed to teach, guide, and assist the student in preparing a major seminar paper. The required research, interpretation, and writing provide the opportunity for demonstration of competencies within chosen concentrations of study.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the successful completion of this course, each student should be able:

1. To engage independently in research and writing in their area of theological studies.
2. To reflect critically on the available scholarship in a particular area of study, assessing strengths and weaknesses, and identify operating presuppositions in both theological and hermeneutical method.
3. To participate constructively in critical analysis of peer research and writing.
4. To serve the church more effectively through theological research and written reflection.

TEXTBOOK

Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 6th edition. Revised John Grossman and Alice Bennett. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996. (All papers are to follow the documentation method described in chapters 8 and 9, employing footnotes).

Vyhmeister, Nancy J. Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

5. Attendance and participation in all class sessions is required of each student. In that the number of class sessions will be abbreviated to allow maximum time for the preparation of the major paper for the course, the student should not be absent from the meetings of the class. Those meetings are announced in this syllabus.
6. The consistent meeting of established due dates in the preparation and presentation of the paper is expected of each student. Those dates are included in this syllabus, along with an explanation of the penalty for failing to meet them.

7. Each student will prepare and successfully complete a seminar paper in a chosen area of study based on the examination and interpretation of primary and secondary sources. The paper must be 30-35 double-spaced pages in length, exclusive of bibliography and appendices. The due date for the paper is included in this syllabus.

8. Each student will provide a copy of the first draft of his/her seminar paper for each of their peers in the class. These papers for each fellow student are due at the class session before his/her paper is to be reviewed by the class (the assignment of these dates, which will fall between February 18 and April 2, will be made by the end of the second week of the class). The expense of copying will be borne by the student.

9. Each student will participate in the evaluation of the first draft of the papers of his/her peers as a literary critic (to consider the conformity to the Turabian manual, grammatical and compositional concerns, etc.) and as a content critic (to consider the presentation of the material, the logic of the arguments, the usage of resource material, the cogency of presentation, etc.). The assignment of these responsibilities will be made after the class has begun and enrollment is set (by the end of the second week of the course).

COURSE METHODOLOGY

There will be a limited number of lectures, dialogue relative to the research and writing of seminar papers, individual research and writing, private consultations with the professor, and classroom critique and review of papers.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 7-16

Class meetings at which the following items will be covered: Explanation of the syllabus and course expectations; topic selection; proposal preparation; research methodology; and consideration of sections from the Turabian manual and the Vyhmeister text.

January 16

Each student will submit at the beginning of the class, on a form to be provided, the topic for the seminar paper. The individual topics will be discussed in class on that day. The professor will respond to each student, giving the okay to begin further work on the paper.

January 23 at 1:00 P.M.

Each student must submit his/her Proposal to the professor or to the faculty secretary. The Proposals will be reviewed by the professor and returned to the student via campus mail ASAP.

January 16 - February 18

No formal class meetings. Each student is expected to work independently on his/her paper. The professor will be available in his office for student appointments during the

scheduled times for the class to meet (Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:55 – 10:10 AM). Each student is expected to meet with the professor at least once during this time.

February 18

Class meetings resume. The first draft of the paper is due. Assignments for literary and content critics for each of the papers and the schedule of presentations will be reviewed.

February 18 – April 2

Class meetings at which two first drafts per session will be critiqued by the literary and content critics and the professor. During these sessions questions will be asked and suggestions given by peers and the professor. This is not a formal defense of the paper by the author; rather, it is a dialogue about the work with the intent to improve the final product. Immediately after the review of the first draft work on the revisions for the final draft should commence. Formal class meetings will end when each first draft has been critiqued.

April 16 - Final draft of the paper due at 1:00 P.M. to the professor or faculty secretary.

The professor will begin to work through the papers immediately and graded papers will be returned via campus mail.

COURSE GRADING

The grade for the course will be the grade assigned for the seminar paper. PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING: (1) Failure to meet the due dates for the presentation of the topic, the proposal, and the first draft will reduce the grade for the course by one movement within a letter grade for each calendar day late. (2) Failure to be prepared on the assigned day to participate in the class as literary critic and/or content critic will reduce the grade for the course by two movements within a letter grade. (3) Failure to submit the final draft of the seminar paper on the due date will reduce the grade for the course by one letter grade.

The grade of I (Incomplete) will be granted only for extenuating circumstance upon the written request of the student. Except in the case of severe extenuating circumstances the granting of the grade of I will mean that the course grade, assigned when the work is completed, will be reduced by one letter.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Benny C. Aker, October, 2003.

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