

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THED 646 Theological Studies Seminar

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July 18, 25,
Aug. 1, 8, 15, 2006
6-10 p.m.

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As the capstone academic experience for the degree of Master of Arts in Theological Studies, this course is designed to 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 to:

1. sharpen critical and analytical skills for refining a topic and completing a major project;
2. engage independently in research and writing in their area of theological studies;
3. reflect critically on the available scholarship in a particular area of study, assessing strengths and weaknesses, and synthesizing appropriate implications for contemporary leadership;
4. participate constructively in critical analysis of peer research and writing;
5. demonstrate competency to complete an approved masters thesis in their area of study;
6. serve the church more effectively through the contribution of a substantial piece of theological research and written reflection with potential for ongoing application.

TEXTBOOK

Required reference:

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).

Recommended reading:

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation in all class sessions is required of each student.
2. 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 the outline below.
3. 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, with footnotes, exclusive of bibliography and appendices. The due date for the paper is the last class session.
4. Each student may be asked to provide a copy of the paper for every student in the class, both as it is being written (about one-third of the total paper each week) and in its complete form on the final week. The provision of copies of the paper for every student will allow for the entire class to profit from working through each other's work. The expense of copying will be borne by the student.
5. Each student will be expected to participate in the evaluation of the drafts of the papers of his/her peers in class on literary aspects (to consider the conformity to the Turabian manual, grammatical and compositional concerns, etc.) and on content (to consider the presentation of the material, the logic of the arguments, the usage of resource material, the cogency of presentation, etc.).

COURSE METHODOLOGY

There will be some teaching and dialogue relative to the research and writing of seminar papers. The student will do individual research and writing of their papers, and there will be some classroom critique and review of papers. The professor will be available by appointment for private consultations with the students during the process.

COURSE OUTLINE

Pre-Session: Topic Selection

Each student needs to make an appointment with the professor as soon as possible to discuss the topic for the paper. It should be based on the student's work in the MATS degree and be appropriate to the size of the paper.

Week 1: Introduction, outline, and working bibliography due

- Instead of a research proposal the student should produce an introduction for the paper covering the following topics: why this topic; what you want to accomplish; how you are approaching it and a very simple overview of the main points of the outline; and any important clarifications, definitions, or delimitations.
- Present a tentative outline of the whole paper or main points and subpoints.
- Provide a working bibliography of the major sources you know must be checked in your research.

Each of these will be discussed in class.

Week 2: First third of the paper after the Introduction due

After an opening time of dealing with any questions, each student will meet with the professor in his office for about 20 minutes to discuss what they have done so far.

Week 3: Second third of the paper due

Each student will meet with the professor in his office for about 30 minutes to discuss what they have done so far.

Week 4: Final third of the paper due

Each student should supply the other seminar members with a copy of their paper which then will each be discussed as a class, kindly but helpfully critiquing both form and content.

Week 5: Final draft of the paper due

Each student is to share concluding comments, summary of principles found, and applications for Christians today, and perhaps recommendations for further study.

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 submission of assigned work in the course will reduce the grade for the course by one movement within a letter grade for each calendar day late. (2) 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Roger Cotton, February 2006.

AGTS Degree Completion Program

Sample Project Outline

Approximate # pages

Proposal

(4-5 pages) Due Wk 1

- Overarching structure of project (most will follow the outline below)
 - This basically becomes the outline for the project.
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Front Matter

- Title Page
- Blank Page
- Contents
- Abstract (Summary Proposal)

Section 1: Introduction and Statement of Problem

(2-3 pages) Due Wk 2

- Introduction and description of problem/topic being addressed
- Data to prove problem/substantiate need for this study
- Definition of any key terms
- In light of problem, state the purpose of the project

Section 2: Biblical-Theological Foundations

(10-12 pgs) Due Wk 3

- What does the Bible have to say about the subject?
- Provide a summary of the biblical teaching pertinent to your topic
 - Demonstrate your ability to correctly identify and handle the key biblical passages or themes relevant to your topic
 - Demonstrate that your project is firmly grounded in biblical principles

Section 3: Research of General Literature

(10-12 pgs) Due

Wk 4

- What does the general literature have to say about the subject?
- Provide a summary/synthesis of the current resources pertinent to your topic
 - Demonstrate that you know how to gather appropriate resources, sift through the material, and glean helpful information relevant to your topic.
- Demonstrate that your project is firmly grounded in the latest research

Section 4: Summary Evaluation (Ramifications of this Study)

(5-7 pages) Due Wk 5

- Implications of the research for the student's ministry context, or the Church/Christian leaders generally
- Concluding comments/summary of principles, applications
- Recommendations for further study

Appendices

- Pertinent supporting data or supplementary material