

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BNT/BOT/MHT/PCS 646 Theological Studies Seminar

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is required for completion of the Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree. It is designed to teach, guide and assist the student in the writing of a major seminar paper. The process of producing such a paper affords students an opportunity to demonstrate competencies within their chosen concentrations through research, interpretation and writing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course the student should:

1. Have completed the program requirement of producing a seminar paper;
2. Be able to engage in research and writing in a more proficient and efficient manner;
3. Be able to interact with the scholarship in his/her chosen field in a critical and reflective manner, assessing strengths and weakness and identifying operating presuppositions in both theological and hermeneutical method;
4. Be able to engage in constructive analysis and criticism of peer research and writing.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Mauch, James E. and Namgi Park. *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation*. 5th Edition. New York: MerceL Dekker, Inc. 1993.

Turabian, K.L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. (All papers are to follow the documentation method described in chapters 8 and 9)

Recommended:

Vymeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers for Students in Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation in all class sessions is *required* of each student. In that the number of classes will be abbreviated to allow for the preparation of the paper, the student *should not be absent* for class meetings. The dates of class meetings are presented in this syllabus. 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 any penalty for failing to meet them.
2. Each student is accountable for familiarity with what *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* by Mauch and Park the progress through their research and development of their seminar paper. Students need to immediately familiarize themselves with the content of Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers*, as they will need to use it and cite extensively in their peer evaluations.
3. All students will provide a copy of the first draft of his/her seminar paper for each of their peers in the class. The papers for each student are due at the class session *before* his/her paper is to be reviewed and evaluated by the class. (Student assignments for the evaluation and review on scheduled dates will be made after the course begins - by Jan. 27). The expense of copying will be borne by the student.
4. Each student will participate in the evaluation of the first draft of peer papers as a (1) format -style critic and as a (2) content critic. The assignment of these responsibilities will be made after the class has begun and enrollment is set (by Jan. 27).
5. The obvious goal of this course is the successful completion of a seminar paper in a chosen area of study based on the examination and interpretation of primary and secondary sources. The paper must be 25-30 pages double-spaced, exclusive of endnotes, bibliography and appendices. If footnotes are used (which is preferred and recommended), the length of the paper should be 30-35 pages excluding bibliography and appendices.

CHAPEL ATTENDANCE

Students are encouraged to attend chapel services whenever they are on campus and their schedules allow. This semester the community chapel service falls on Tuesday **March 24 at 1:30- 2:45 p.m.** Students should go directly to chapel and then to class at 2:55 p.m. for the remainder of the class period.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

There will be a limited number of lectures. The course will consist of dialogue relative to the research and writing of seminar papers, individual research and writing, private consultation with the professor and peer review and critique.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course will consist of the basic parts as outlined in the following manner:

I. January 6-Feb 3

Class meetings will focus on the following items: Explanation of the syllabus and course expectations; topic selection; preparation of the proposal/project description; research methodology; and highlighting important sections of the two required texts.

Jan. 13 Each student will submit (on a form provided) at the beginning of the class the topic for the seminar paper, a list and brief description of the issues to be addressed. The topics will be discussed on that day. The professor will respond to each student *in writing*, and grant approval to begin further work on the paper.

Feb. 3 Each student will submit a preliminary proposal/project description for their paper *and* a working bibliography. The professor will immediately begin to read them and respond *in writing* to before Feb. 10, OR ask you to make an appointment to see him in his office for consultation.

February 10-March 10

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 for consultation on Fridays from 1:30- 4:00 p.m. If you need another time slot, see me personally for an appointment. Each student is expected to meet with the professor at least once during this period. Sign up for a 30-45 minute (meeting) on the appointment board outside the professor's office.

NOTE: It is important to finish reading Guide to Successful Thesis and Dissertation during this portion of the course and before preparing your first draft.

March 17- (by 1:30 p.m.) The first draft of the seminar paper is due. Please give it to the Faculty

Secretary who will put it in my mailbox.

March 24 - Class meetings resume. Assignments for Format-Style and Content Critics for each of the papers and the schedule of presentations will be made.

March 31-April 14

The first drafts of the seminar papers will be critiqued by Format-Style and Content Critics and the professor. During these sessions you will be asked questions and given suggestions by your peers and the professor. *Come with a learner's attitude.* You are not being asked to defend your paper, but to enter into dialogue with your colleagues about your work with the intent to improve the final product. Immediately after the review and evaluation of your First Draft, begin preparing the Final Draft. Formal class meetings will end when each First Draft has been critiqued.

April 21 Final Draft due

The student will turn in his/her Final Draft by 4:30 p.m. The professor will begin to work through the Final Drafts immediately and you will be notified via campus mail if there is need for further revision.

COURSE GRADING

Grade Weights:

General class participation	5%
Format –style critique	5%
Content critique	5%
Seminar Paper.....	85%

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 scale (e.g., A to an A-) for each calendar day late. (2) Failure to be prepared on the assigned day to participate in the class as a Format-Style and/or Content Critic will reduce the grade for that assignment by two movements within a letter grade (e.g., A to a B+). (3) Failure to submit the Final Draft of the seminar paper on the due date will reduce the course grade by one movement within a letter grade scale grade for each day late.

The grade of Incomplete (I) will be granted *only for extenuating circumstances* and upon written request of the student. Except in the case of *extraordinary* 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 grade.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph. D., November 4, 2008