

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BTH/HIS/THE 646 Theological Studies Seminar

Roger D. Cotton, Th.D.

Spring, 2002

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 be able to:

1. Present a product of effective graduate level research and writing in his or her area of concentration
2. 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
3. Engage in constructive analysis and criticism of peer research and writing.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

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

Recommended:

Mauch, James E. and Jack W.Birch. Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation, 3d . ed, revised and expanded. New York: Mercel Dekker, 1993.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman. Simon & Schuster: Handbook for Writers, 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation in all class sessions is required of each student because of the nature of the seminar and the reduced number of class sessions. The dates of class meetings will be negotiated by the class.
2. The consistent meeting of established due dates in the preparation and presentation of the paper is expected of each student.
3. All students are accountable for filling in any gaps in their knowledge about writing such a major, formal, research paper by consulting the recommended texts.
4. All students will provide a copy of the first draft of their seminar papers for each of their critics and professor, as well as one copy on 2 hour reserve in the library, due at least four days before the class session in which the paper is to be critiqued. (The schedule for critique dates for the papers will be made by the class). The expense of copying will be borne by the student.
5. Each student will participate in the evaluation of the first draft of peer papers as (1) a literary critic and as (2) a content critic. The assignments of these responsibilities will be made by Jan. 28.
6. The obvious focus of the course is the successful completion of a seminar paper in an area chosen by the student within the student's degree concentration, in which there has been foundational course work. It must be 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), the length of the paper should be 30-35 pages excluding bibliography and appendices.

METHODOLOGY

The course will consist of dialogue relative to the research and writing of seminar papers, individual research and writing (for most of the semester), private consultation with the professor, and peer review and critique.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. January

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

Jan. 21 – Each student will submit the topic for the seminar paper and a list with brief descriptions of the issues to be addressed. The professor will respond to each student, and grant approval to begin further work on the paper.

Jan. 28 – Each student will submit a preliminary proposal/project description for their paper and a working bibliography including the most important sources to be consulted. The professor will begin immediately to read them and respond in writing before Feb. 4. An appointment will be asked for if a consultation is necessary. Assignments for literary and content critics for each paper will be made at this session.

II. February

No formal class meetings. The students are expected to work independently on their papers. The professor will be available in his office for student appointments during the scheduled times for the class. Each student is expected to make an appointment and meet with the professor at least once during these weeks. At this appointment the student must bring a rough draft of the introduction, a working outline of the paper, and the working bibliography with the key sources, for review.

III. March

Class meetings resume. The first draft of the seminar paper is due. Each student will have about a half hour for interaction on his or her draft. They may make a summary statement about their research and conclusions and then receive and respond to critiques by a literary critic, a content critic who have read the draft ahead of time, as well as from the professor. Formal class meetings will end when each draft has been critiqued.

During these sessions the students will be asked questions and given suggestions by their peers and the professor. One should come with a learner's attitude and not look at it as a defense of the work, but a dialogue with colleagues about the work, with the intent to improve the final product. Immediately after the review of the draft the students should begin preparing the final draft

IV. April 12 -- Final Draft due

The student will turn in his/her final draft by 3:00 p.m. to the professor or the faculty secretary. The professor will begin to work through the final drafts immediately and students will be notified via campus mail if there is need for further revision.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Preliminary proposal/project description and working bibliography	2%
Class room content critique	9%
Class room literary critique	9%
Final draft of seminar paper	80%

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING: (1) For every day late on the proposal the grade will drop one point on a 12 point scale (12=A, 1=F). (2) Failure to be prepared on the assigned day to participate in the class as literary and/or content critic will drop the grade for this by three points and the comments then must be typed out for the author. (3) Failure to submit the first draft to the readers will reduce the course grade by one full letter grade. (4) For every day the final draft of the seminar paper is late the grade for the paper will drop one point on a 12 point scale.

The grade of Incomplete (I) will be granted only for extenuating circumstance upon 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 Roger D. Cotton, Th.D., December 2001.