

Research and Writing in Theology

CS 3350—Course Syllabus

Spring 2020

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Course Description:

The course is designed to provide an introduction to the knowledge, tools, and skills required for a disciplined study of Theology and preparation for ministry. The class will also work with strategies for developing effective study habits and test-taking skills. This will include developing reading-comprehension and writing skills through assignments and exercises throughout the semester. Additionally, students will acquire research skills necessary for theological study.

The course is an essential stepping-stone for taking up the disciplined study of Theology at Austin Grad. It is meant to assist students in acquiring skills for knowing and passing on the Christian faith. It will therefore assist students in three basic areas: 1) reading comprehension and rhetoric/argument analysis (knowing and understanding). 2) It will provide research methods, tools, and strategies for theological study (understanding and practicing). 3) Finally, the course will assist students in writing cogent, logical, analytical, and propositional academic papers, which is the foundation for communicating the Christian faith (practicing and passing on).

The course is designed to meet student needs and is thus subject to revision throughout the semester. As students express needs in specific areas of theological research, the course will adjust to those needs. Assignments will not change.

Objectives:

Research:

1. Describe several types of resources for theological research in the various disciplines of theological study and Identify several specific examples of these resources.
2. Understand and effectively use search strategies of OPAC and various databases as well as the World Wide Web to find, evaluate, and employ sources for research.
3. Develop an appropriate topic for research from the sources.

Writing:

4. Identify and demonstrate the specific style and purposes of scholarly writing.
5. Critically analyze scholarly argument and engage in the scholarly conversation through writing and engaging in careful citation.
6. Construct and support a thesis in clear, concise academic writing in the

traditional form of academic assessment, such as the research paper or essay examination.

Required Texts:

Badke, William, *Research Strategies: Finding Your Way through the Information Fog*, 6th ed. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2017.

Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.

Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2016.

Holland Jr., Richard A., and Forrest, Benjamin K. *Good Arguments: Making Your Case in Writing and Public Speaking*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance and timely submission of assignments are required.

Participation: 10%

Assignments/Quizzes: 20%

3-5 page Book Review on Kapic, due April 9, A Little Book for New Theologians: 20%

Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Final Paper/Project: 40%

The course will have regular assignments as well as in class research and writing work. These will culminate in a final paper. The weekly work will build toward this final paper.

Read the textbooks throughout the semester. The readings and page numbers below are subject to change/updating in class.

The final paper is a 6–8 page paper on a topic selected during class, or on a topic due for another course. You must cite at least 5 sources in your paper.

Plagiarism and citation of sources:

Plagiarism is the representation of another person's work as your own and is a form of theft. *This includes material composed by other students, purchased from an online paper service, or copied from published books and articles or from the Internet.* If in any assignment you employ material written by someone else, you

must give the author proper credit, *documenting the source with an appropriate citation and marking any words directly quoted with quotation marks (or with indentation if four or more lines are quoted)*. Failure to appropriately credit the sources you use will result in a reduction in your grade for the assignment in question and/or the requirement that you revise the assignment. *Intentionally representing another person's work as your own will be grounds for academic discipline, including your possible dismissal from the School.* For more information on how to acknowledge sources properly and avoid plagiarism, refer to the School's "Guide to Written Work" (http://www.austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/guide_for_written_work.htm).

Schedule:

Week 1 (Jan 23): Introduction to the course; English Proficiency Exam 1

*Week 2 (Jan 30): **Introduction to the scholarly conversation:** Reading, research, studying and writing in theology; Note-taking, studying, and test-taking strategies; Aims of Reading, Research, and Writing in a "post-literate" world.*

Kibbe, introduction & chap. 1

Quiz over Kibbe

For class discussion: Some people argue that formal writing, like the formal study of theology, takes away a person's vitality: in theology, of a person's faith, and in formal writing, from a person's ability to express themselves. Discuss why, like formal theology, formal writing is important for Christian thought and practice.

*Week 3 (Feb 6): **Listening to the scholarly conversation:** Continued from week 3; Reading effectively: Reading for comprehension (summary), reading for analysis (understanding the argument), and reading critically (evaluating the argument); Writing the academic book review;*

Holland Jr. & Forrest, chaps. 1-3

Quiz over Holland Jr. & Forrest

Badke, chapter 9

Be ready to discuss Holland Jr. & Forrest

*Week 4 (Feb 13): **Finding the scholarly conversation:** Print Resources for Biblical Studies: word studies; reference works; commentaries; serials.*

Kibbe, chapter 2, Appendix C

PRINT SEARCH STRATEGIES HANDOUT

Badke, chapters 4-6.2, pp. 69-126.

Assignment: Library Orientation Worksheet **in-class work**; beginning of annotated bibliography

*Week 5 (Feb 20): **Finding the scholarly conversation, cont'd.:** Digital Resources for Theological Study—ATLAS, databases; Google, source evaluation, search strategies;*

Digital Resources for Biblical Studies: Bible Search software.

Holland Jr. and Forrest, chapters 4–5, pp. 47–68.

Badke, chapters 6.3–7, pp. 127–183.

In class assignments, beginning paper research work (Starting annotated bib).

Week 6 (Feb 27): Constructing an annotated bibliography; In class work: collecting sources

Handouts

Holland Jr. and Forrest, chapters 6–7, pp. 69–90.

Class discussion on Holland Jr. & Forrest

*Week 7 (Mar 5): **Joining the scholarly conversation: Sources for Research: Understanding primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, print resources for theological study (moving from reference to discreet works); Starting the research process: From Topic → Question → Problem***

Kapic, part 1 (chaps. 1–3, pp. 15–30).

Badke, chapter 9 (pp. 214–241).

*Week 8 (Mar 12): **Engaging the scholarly conversation: Using sources (plagiarism, quoting, drawing from sources; notes/notecards).***

Holland Jr. and Forrest, chaps. 8–9 (pp. 91–118).

Assignment: In class work

*Week 9 (Mar 19): **Spring Break***

*Week 10 (Mar 26): **Engaging the scholarly conversation, cont'd.: Basics of scholarly writing: Style & Grammar, organization.***

Kibbe, chaps. 3–6 (pp. 65–87).

Kapic, chaps. 4–5 (pp. 41–63).

Annotated Bibliography Due

*Week 11 (Apr 2): **Citing the scholarly conversation: Basics of citation style; When to cite; etc.***

Kibbe, Appendix B

Turabian, chapter 4 (pp. 38–50).

Kapic, chaps. 6–8 (pp. 64–92).

*Week 12 (Apr 9): **Organizing your part in the scholarly conversation: Outlining; Notes; Formal writing → from outline to paper; Writing the Exegesis paper***

Kapic, chaps. 9–10 (pp. 93–121).

Kibbe, Appendices A (pp. 93–96), E (pp. 133–145), and F (pp. 147–148).

Book Review Due

*Week 13 (Apr 16): **Engaging the Academic Conversation: Using MS Word; Writing***

the exegesis paper, cont'd.; Analyzing argument; Critical engagement

Experiment with MS Word a bit before coming to class

Turabian, chaps. 6–7 (pp. 66–85).

Handouts

In class work

Week 14 (Apr 23): Revising/Editing/Submitting your paper.

Handouts

In class work

Final Paper Draft Due

Week 15 (Apr 30): Revising/Editing/Submitting your paper.

In class work

Week 16 (May 30): Final Class Debriefing

Draft