

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Evangel University

RES 531 Theological Research and Writing
Hybrid Course

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the skills necessary for graduate-level research and explores a variety of methodologies that can be utilized in the fields of biblical studies, systematic and historical theology, and practical theology. Discussions will focus on developing engaging research questions, finding and critically engaging useful resources, developing cogent arguments, revising research, and presenting research in a variety of formats. Course assignments allow the student to apply the principles and methods learned and receiving constructive evaluation from both the instructor and the students throughout the process.

OBJECTIVES

Through required and optional reading, learning modules and course discussions, student papers and presentations, and the completion of assignments, the student should fulfill the following course objectives:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with general and discipline-specific methodologies used in research.
2. Evaluate sources written from a variety of perspectives (e.g., conservative, liberal, patriarchal, feminist, secular, etc.)
3. Formulate and defend arguments through guided debate with peers.
4. Compose papers within a theological field and present the material for discussion.
5. Revise work, based on additional feedback from instructor and peers.
6. Produce writing acceptable for peer-reviewed publication.

TEXTBOOKS

Required

Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. Revised and Updated Edition. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972. ISBN: 978-0671212094

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0226816388.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean, and Terry D. Robertson. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014. ISBN 978-0310514022.

Recommended

Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998. ISBN: 978-0805048919

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory C. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0226065663

Porter, Stanley E. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco: Baylor University, 2010. ISBN 978-1602582651

For information on textbook pricing, go to <http://www.bkstr.com/evangelstore/home>.

BASIC OUTLINE

The course will be divided into two primary sections: lecture/discussion and presentation of research. The lecture/discussion portion of the course will cover a variety of topics that will guide students through vital aspects of critical research and presentation of findings. The second portion of the course will provide students the opportunity both to demonstrate their mastery of the skills from the first portion of the course and to gain experience organizing and presenting the results of their findings, along with constructively critiquing their work and the work of others.

As part of the class there will be online component from the first week of class (Aug. 24-28), and there will be a 2 ½ day face-to-face component to the class at AGTS 225 on October 3 and 4, 8:00-5:00, and on October 5, 8:00-12:00. The following weeks to the end of the semester (last day of class is Dec. 11) will be subsequent assignments on research and writing.

METHODOLOGY

1. The course will utilize lectures, course discussion, reading and written assignments, as well as professor and peer critiques.
2. The first portion of the course will give attention to lectures and discussion regarding how to conduct and organize critical research for presentation of findings.
3. The remainder of the course will be devoted to student papers and presentations, which will be critiqued by the professor and the other students.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are expected to attend and participate in all course modules. Participation is constituted by engaging in discussions and raising questions significant to the topic at hand.

2. The student will read ***all*** assigned materials. In the last module, a statement must be submitted noting all assigned course material has been read.
3. Students will write a research essay, 5,000 words in length (excluding front matter, footnotes, and bibliography), that addresses an issue within the realm of biblical, systematic, historical, or practical theology.
4. All assignments are to be electronically submitted via Course Commons as a PDF no later than the due date. Any assignments received after that time, if not accompanied with an acceptable reason for tardiness, shall result in a reduction of the student's score on that assignment at a daily rate of 3%. Given the request for electronic submission, weekends count in that daily reduction. If the assignment has not been submitted after 10 days, the student shall receive a grade of F for the assignment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is assumed that students at AGTS will endeavor to be honest and of high integrity in all matters pertaining to Seminary life. A lack of respect and integrity is evidenced by cheating, fabricating, plagiarizing, misusing facilities, removing books and other property not one's own, and disrupting classes.

Cheating is defined as "intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise." It is assumed that whatever is submitted by a student is the work of that student and is new work for that course. Fabrication is "intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise or form." Plagiarism is "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." One who facilitates any of the above is equally responsible with the primary violator.

Penalties may include restitution, an "F" on an individual paper, exam, or course; loss of campus employment; disciplinary probation; removal from extracurricular activities; and suspension.—*AGTS Student Handbook*.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

Students should use non-discriminatory language in all written and spoken communication in this class. For specific guidelines, see the Student Handbook at: http://www.agts.edu/community/student_handbook/2010studenthandbook.pdf

DISABILITY ACCOMODATION

As defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary at Evangel University is committed to the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If AGTS students believe they qualify for accommodations, they should contact the AGTS Student Life Office, Room 218, telephone extension 8881.

COURSE COMMONS

This course will use Evangel's learning management system, Course Commons, powered by the Canvas Learning Management System. Login directly at: <https://courses.evangel.edu/> or go to the Student Portal/Course Commons

Use your Evangel username and password to login.

To access this course, hover over or click Courses at the top of the page after logging in.

- a. **Before the class starts:** Students will have access to Course Commons and this course seven (7) days before the official beginning of the semester. This does not mean all course content will be ready. Release of course content will be the prerogative of the professor. Students have until seven (7) days after the semester begins to complete financial registration. If financial registration is not completed by the seventh day, course access will be revoked and all submitted work will be lost.
- b. **Course Content:** All course content (syllabus, modules, course materials, assignments, quizzes, exams, discussions, grades, etc.) will be located on the navigation pane on the left hand side of our course. At the end of a semester, students will have limited access to the course through Course Commons. Only access to already submitted work and grades will be available.
- c. **Personal Settings:** After logging into Course Commons, be sure to go to Settings and adjust your personal profile settings. *Add in a profile picture of yourself (Smile!).*
 - I. Set your notifications: set how you'll be notified (EU email, personal email, text, Twitter, etc.) and how often.
- d. **Help:** *Click the Help button in the top right hand corner after you login. By clicking Help, you'll be able to...*
 - i. Submit a question directly to your instructor
 - ii. Access Canvas Help Guides
 - iii. Submit a Course Commons Helpdesk Ticket
- e. **Course Commons Student Orientation:** All EU students are automatically enrolled in the [Course Commons Student Orientation site](#). What's available? [Getting Started](#) help, what to do [During Your Course](#), [Help and FAQ](#), the [Student Quick Start Guide](#), and much more.
- f. **Course Commons Troubleshooting:** Question about a quiz or course content? *Contact your instructor, first!* Technical question about the Course Commons? Click Help and submit a ticket through Report a Problem. *Can't access Course Commons?* Contact the EU IT Helpdesk: 417-865-2815 x8368 (phone) or helpdesk@evangel.edu (email) or help.evangel.edu (web).

GRADING PROCEDURE

Details regarding the contribution of each assignment to the course grade, appear in Appendix B. Details regarding assignments appear in Appendix C.

Any assignments received after the due date, if not accompanied with an acceptable reason for tardiness, shall result in a reduction of the student's score on that assignment at a daily rate of 3% of the total possible grade. Given the request for electronic submission, weekends count in that daily reduction. If the assignment has not been submitted after 10 days, the student shall receive a grade of F for the assignment.

Students should retain a copy of all work submitted, until they have received a grade for this work.

Students are expected to complete all course work in a timely fashion as specified in this syllabus. A grade of IP (In Process) will be issued if the course ends after the AGTS semester ends. A grade of I (Incomplete) may be granted at the discretion of the professor for extenuating circumstances upon the presentation of the Incomplete Grade Request form: <http://www.agts.edu/academics/forms.html>. The approved Incomplete request will extend the due date for up to ninety days, may include a grade reduction, and will be assessed a grade change fee. Students may not register for courses in a new term if carrying more than two IP or I grades.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Daniel I. Morrison, August 2016, with input by Paul W. Lewis, James H. Railey, Jr., and Randy Walls.

APPENDIX A—COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Module
08/21 – 08/23	This time in class will provide students with the tools they need to successfully engage in research and writing on the graduate and post-graduate levels. The classroom interaction will provide you with resources and skills while the remainder of the course modules will provide opportunities for implementation of tools and utilization of skills for research and writing.
Module 01	Developing the Research Question <i>Research Questions Due by 09/03; Interactive Comments Due by 09/05</i> <i>Complete reading Adler and Van Doren.</i>
Module 02	Finding Resources for Your Research <i>Preliminary Bibliography Due by 09/10</i> <i>Vhymeister (chapters 1–7)</i>
Module 03	Evaluating Resources for Your Research <i>Annotated Bibliography Due by 09/17</i> <i>Vhymeister (chapter 15)</i>
Module 04	Developing a Thesis Statement <i>Thesis Statement Due by 09/24</i> <i>Complete reading Turabian (Part I); Vhymeister (chapters 16–17)</i>
Module 05	Methodology—Explaining What Counts as Evidence <i>Methodology Summary Due by 10/08;</i>
Module 06	Developing a Logical Argument <i>Essay Outline Due by 10/15</i>
Module 07	Writing Well—Documentation, Plagiarism, and Ethics
Module 08	Study Week <i>No Assignments Due</i>
Module 09	Interacting with Those Who Agree and Disagree <i>Develop Responses to Alternative Views (Submission not Required, but should appear in your paper.)</i>
Module 10	Preparing Your Research for Presentation <i>Papers Due by 11/05</i>
Module 11	Critiquing the Work of Others <i>Peer Critiques Due by 11/19</i>
Module 12	Thanksgiving Week <i>Course Surveys Due by 11/26</i>
Module 13	Revising Your Writing <i>Final Papers Due by 12/03</i>

APPENDIX B—ASSIGNMENT WEIGHT

Course Surveys		5%
	Research Survey	2.5%
	Post-Modules Research Survey	2.5%
Paper Foundations		5%
	Research Questions	2.5%
	Thesis Statements	2.5%
Bibliographies		10%
	Annotated Bibliography	10%
Organizing Materials		10%
	Methodology Summary	5%
	Essay Outline	5%
Proper Interaction with Sources		25%
	Plagiarism Project	10%
	Book Review	15%
Essays		30%
	Original Essay	15%
	Revised Essay	15%
Research Findings Beyond the Paper		15%
	Presentations	10%
	Peer Critiques	5%
Total		100%

APPENDIX B—PAPER AND SERMON PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Anonymous Research Survey

The research survey allows students to familiarize themselves with Canvas, and provide information regarding their background in academic research. Completion of the assignment by the due date results in full credit for the assignment.

Research Questions

This assignment reinforces for students the process of developing research questions as they prepare to write a research paper. Students should post a list of 15 questions in the discussion forum and interact with the questions of at least 2 other students. Interaction should be in the form of questions/comments pertinent to the discussion.

Preliminary Bibliography

This assignment allows students to develop a preliminary bibliography of approximately fourteen resources they will use for their papers. This can include peer-reviewed journal articles, edited volumes, and monographs related to your topic. At least seven of your resources should be books, and at least five of them should be articles from peer-reviewed journals. This bibliography should conform to Turabian standards.

Annotated Bibliography

This assignment moves you to the next step in your research. Taking your preliminary bibliography, you will in 100-150 words explain the author's thesis and evidence used to support the thesis.

Thesis Statement

This assignment provides the student to focus their attention from the broader topic they have been researching to the focus of his or her paper. You are to present a one-sentence thesis statement, including at least two revisions of the thesis statement. After posting your thesis statement, you should also provide feedback to your colleagues regarding their statements.

Methodology Summary

This assignment allows you to discuss exactly what approach you will use when writing your paper. This will also serve as a portion of your entire paper. You will submit a summary of the methodology you will be using, as well as a procedure for how you will implement your methodology. This section of your paper will answer the question "What counts as evidence?" as you make your argument. After methodologies are submitted, you will be assigned a partner to critique your approach. This assignment should be at least 500 words in length and provide an example of you applying your methodology to a passage or concept beyond the scope of your paper.

Essay Outline

All good papers require a good structure. This assignment will aid you in developing a good structure for your paper. Outlines should be carried out to the third level of subordination (e.g. I. A. 1. a.). If you would like, you may also include resources you will be using in the fourth level of subordination or beyond.

Methodology Critique

This assignment will allow for peer critiques regarding methodology and procedure. You are to evaluate the method, procedure, and example of application. Please note that critiques are constructive and do not simply constitute negative criticism. Note the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology. Critiques will also be discussed in class.

Plagiarism Project

In an effort to avoid plagiarism, this assignment will guide you through the process of identifying plagiarism. After reading the document, please note at least 7 accounts of plagiarism and provide bibliographic entries for the sources from which the statements came. Sometimes, writers, even professional ones, plagiarize. Learn to recognize plagiarism. Avoid it. Avoid embarrassment.

Book Review

This assignment will allow you to review a publication pertinent to your research. You should obtain a new(er) publication related to your paper and review that work. Book reviews also serve as one of the best ways for students to begin submitting materials to academic journals. Your review should be approximately 800 words in length, following the guide provided in the course module.

Essay Draft

This assignment allows you bring together all of your previous work as you write your paper. Remember that your essay should be 5,000 words in length, demonstrate thorough research, and implementation of your methodology. It is strongly recommended that you also include an application section.

Peer Critique of Essay

After submitting your draft, students will once again be assigned a reviewer. That peer will critique all aspects of the paper and provide feedback regarding the draft. Students are to then take all comments and critiques into consideration as they write their final draft.

Anonymous Course Survey

This assignment provides you the opportunity to anonymously provide information regarding your thoughts and feelings about the course. The results of this survey will aid the instructor in making course improvements in the future.

Final Papers

This assignment allows for revision of the essay draft, incorporating feedback from the peer review and that of the instructor. This is also a great opportunity to review your work to make sure it conforms to Turabian standards.