

Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way, Birmingham, Alabama 35243
205-776-5650

Fall 2019

PT5527 Intro. to Theological Research

Professor: Dr. Josh Carmichael

Credit hours: 2

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Montgomery Campus

Thursdays, 5:30-7:30PM

Course Purpose

The basic principles of effective communication for the church and the Christian worker's overall task will be considered with special emphasis on written communication skills. The students will be involved in several writing projects during the course of the semester. Oral communication within the congregation and the broader community will be covered as well.

Course Objectives

1. The student will be able to do careful research.
2. The student will be able to organize, connect, and state the results of that research in theological papers and theses.
3. The student will be able to revise and edit papers and theses to produce papers that are effective and error free.
4. The student will be able to properly cite information and sources and apply the Turabian style to papers and theses.

Course Texts

Required texts

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. [The standard text for formatting all papers for BTS.] There is now a 9th edition. Either is acceptable for the course.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers, for Students of Religion and Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990. There is a slimmer 4th edition from 2010 the professor will work from (you can find it used for a good price). New subtitle: "The Basics of Clarity and Grace." Any edition of this book is acceptable.

Frame, John M. "How to Write a Theological Paper."
http://www.proginosko.com/frame_theol_paper.html

Logos Bible Software **(Required for Masters Students)**

Collateral texts:

An unabridged Dictionary (Webster's or Oxford) and a Thesaurus.

Smith, Kevin Gary. *Writing and Research: A Guide for Theological Students*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library / Langham Partnership, 2016.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1979.

Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well, A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2006.

Certificate students DO NOT have to read Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*, but DO need to read Vyhmeister as scheduled. See professor for handouts from Yaghjian.

- Read the assigned chapters *before* class as assigned.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Class Attendance and Participation – 10%
2. Completion of all assigned reading – 10%
3. Completion of weekly research and writing assignments – 30%
4. The mid-term will consist of demonstrating your handle of the material by using your resources to proofread, edit, footnote, create a bibliography, and format a research paper (provided). – 20%
5. The final exam will be a paper of at least ten pages but no more than fifteen pages, exclusive of footnotes, bibliography, table of contents, and title page, chosen from an approved list to be distributed. (Incorporate, on average, at least two footnotes per page and a bibliography of eight to twelve references and the required extracurricular research to support such a paper.) – 30%

BTS FORMAT AND STYLE STANDARDS

BTS uses the Turabian style of formatting for all papers. Also, all papers are to be double spaced, 12-point font and Times New Roman script. In this technological age, information is readily available; make sure that you understand about giving reference sources the proper recognition. Please refer to the BTS Student Handbook section on plagiarism for guidance.

Proper planning and timely completion of assignments is crucial.

Course Outline

- Sept. 5th – [1] *Communication* - referred to Prov. 1:1-7; Eccles.; 1 Thess. 1:2-5; Introduce the class, discuss the textbooks, define research, consider the search for sources.
Note: Turabian and Strunk will be used throughout the course as references
- Sept. 12th – [2] RESEARCH & RESEARCH THINKING READ Vyhmeister chs. 1, 11, Williams, 1
- Sept. 19th – [3] CHOOSING A TOPIC/PLANNING RESEARCH READ Vyhmeister chs. 12-13, 19, 22,
 Williams, ch. 2 Footnotes / Bibliographies
- Sept. 26th – [4] BIBLICAL EXEGESIS & ORGANIZING THE PAPER READ Vyhmeister chs. 2, 18
 Williams, ch. 3 Choosing a topic – brainstorming session due.
- Oct. 3rd – [5] Planning & Executing Research Vyhmeister chs. 14-16, 21
 Williams, ch. 4 5 sources – Due in Footnote & Bibliography format
- Oct. 10th – [6] LITERARY/THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH READ Vyhmeister chs. 3, 17
 Williams, ch. 5
- Oct. 17th – FALL BREAK
- Oct. 24th – [7] Theological Reflection READ Yaghjian ch. 2 (handout)
 Williams, ch. 6 Mid-term Project Due
- Oct. 31st – [8] Review READ Vyhmeister ch. 20
 Williams, ch. 7 Reflection: “Why I want to study and teach the Bible” due.
- Nov. 7th – [9] Misc. READ Vyhmeister chs. 22 Williams,
 ch. 8 Work on Final paper
- Nov. 14th – [10] BOOK REVIEWS/JOURNAL ARTICLES READ Vyhmeister ch. 8, Williams,
 ch. 9
- Nov. 21st – [11] Review READ Vyhmeister ch. 4-7 (survey),
 Williams, ch. 10
- Nov. 28th – Thanksgiving
- Dec. 6th – [12] Final Paper Due & Presentation of Final Paper

Turabian: A Quick Guide

Title Page

- The title page should include the paper title, your name, and your class information
- All the text on the title page should be standard 12pt. font, centered and double-spaced
- The paper's title should be about one-third of the way down the page
- Your name and class information should be about two-thirds of the way down the page

Margins

- The left margin of each page is 1.5 inches; all other margins are 1 inch.

Font and Typeface

- Use only a 12-point Times New Roman font for main text and 10-point Times New Roman font for footnotes. For biblical languages, use 12-point (or a similar size) font.
- Italicize book, magazine, and journal titles (do not underline).

Page Numbers

- Page numbers should begin on the first page of the paper's text, not on the title page.
- Place page numbers flush with the top right-hand margin.

Spacing/Indentation

- The entire paper should be double-spaced, apart from the following exceptions: [block quotes](#), [footnotes](#), bibliography, and [table titles](#) (all of which are single spaced).
- A terminal punctuation should be followed by single space.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs and entire block quotations 0.5 inch from the left margin.

Quotations

- Block quotations are used only with a prose quotation of five or more lines.
- Single space a block quotation, and leave a blank line before and after it.

Citations/References

- Use superscript numbers both in the text and footnote numbers preceding the notes.
- Cited Bible passages should be in parentheses within the main text rather than in a footnote.
- Spell out book names of the Bible in the main text but use abbreviations in parenthetical or reference material. Example:
Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
The Bible states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).
- Use the "traditional" style for abbreviations of books of the Bible; do not italicize.
- Cite unpublished interviews in the footnotes.

Voice and Style

- Papers generally should be written in the 3rd person (he, she, it) with an active voice. 1st person pronouns (I, we, us) can be used where appropriate, but the 2nd person pronoun (you) should be avoided.
- Capitalize pronouns when referring to any Person of the Godhead to minimize ambiguity.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Grading Criteria and Assessment

A	A-	B	B-	C	C-	D	D-
<p>Thesis sentence/statement is clear/comprehensive.</p> <p>Punctuation, spelling, and grammar are accurate and correct. Writing is even, creative and guides the reader effectively through the paper.</p> <p>Paragraphs are well organized and coherent; paper flows smoothly.</p> <p>Person and format are appropriate for the assignment.</p> <p>Quotes, Scriptures, paraphrases and summaries are used & cited appropriately and with excellence.</p> <p>Research reveals sources (primary and secondary) which clearly support main arguments (Scholarly, Academic and Theological).</p> <p>Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i> is understood and adhered to.</p>	<p>Thesis sentence/statement lacks specificity and clarity. Opportunity for significant improvement exists.</p> <p>Minor misspellings and grammar/punctuation mistakes exist that disrupt flow but do not hinder understanding.</p> <p>Paragraph structure is acceptable but not as organized and coherent.</p> <p>Person and format do not work in this particular assignment.</p> <p>Sources adequately support main points, but using greater variety and depth of primary and secondary sources and more critical thinking would have made a more compelling argument.</p> <p>Some minor errors occur but paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>.</p>	<p>Thesis sentence/statement is unclear and vague.</p> <p>Numerous misspellings, punctuation and grammar mistakes, difficult to follow reasoning, and flow of reading is disrupted.</p> <p>Paragraph structure is often confusing and inconsistent.</p> <p>Person and format are inappropriate for this assignment.</p> <p>Sources are inadequate and shallow; do not reflect an understanding of the project. Serious research, study and preparation are not evidenced. Ideas presented do not reflect mastery or insight but more manipulation of terms and concepts.</p> <p>Paper does not reflect an adequate understanding or usage of Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>.</p>	<p>Thesis sentence/statement is non-existent.</p> <p>Spelling, punctuation and grammar make it nearly impossible to follow the line of reasoning from sentence to sentence.</p> <p>Paragraphs lack focus, clarity, and are incoherent and without structure or form.</p> <p>Person and format are confusing and totally inappropriate for this assignment.</p> <p>Insufficient numbers of quotes or quotes are overly used; paraphrases, quotes, summaries, Scripture and sources are improperly used and cited in error.</p> <p>Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>.</p>				

Birmingham Theological Seminary Grading Sheet

Student Name: _____
 Professors Name: _____

Course Number: _____
 Course Name: _____

Points	Grade	BTS Course Points Grade Value			
		A 96-100 (4.0)	B 85-89 (3.0)	C 75-79 (2.0)	D 65-69 (1.0)
		A- 90-95 (3.5)	B- 80-84 (2.5)	C- 70-74 (1.5)	D- 60-64 (.5)
		F Below 60 (0)			

Grading Evaluation Criteria: Please incorporate comments throughout the assignment that will enhance, correct, and/or guide the student's current and continued knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Then summarize those comments under each section below and assign point value. Add the points in each section and record in the points section above.

Content - Selection and Utilization of Resources Sources: Academic, Theological, Primary, Secondary – Understanding and Application	Earned	Possible
		40

Critical Thinking – Analysis and Development of Resources and Concepts Analyzing, Creativity, Thought Process, Organization, Conceptual Development, Critiquing	Earned	Possible
		40

Writing – Document Format and Language Structure Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, Syntax, Adherence to Turabian Style and Format	Earned	Possible
		20

 Faculty Signature

Further Reading

- Badke, William B. *The Survivor's Guide to Library Research: A Simple, Systematic Approach to Using the Library and Writing Research Papers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Fischer, David Hackett. *Historical Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1970.
- Graves, Richard L., ed. *Rhetoric and Composition: A Sourcebook for Teachers*. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, 1976.
- Hudson, Bob, and Shelley Townsend. *A Christian Writer's Manual of Style*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
- Isaac, Stephen, and William Michael. *Handbook in Research and Evaluation*. San Diego: EDITS, 1971.
- Laque, Carol and Phyllis Sherwood. *A Laboratory Approach to Writing*. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1977.
- Langan, John. *College Writing Skills*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2005.
- Lederer, Richard, and Richard Dowis. *The Write Way: The S.P.E.L.L. Guide to Real-life Writing*. New York: Pocket Books, 1995.
- Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. 9th ed. New York: Longman, 1999.
- Lindsell, Sherry L. *Proofreading and Editing for Word Processors*. New York: Arco Publishing Company, 1985.
- Murray, Donald A. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.
- Price, Jonathan. *Put That In Writing*. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
- Rico, Gabriele. *Writing the Natural Way*. Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc., 1983.
- Sabin, William A. *The Gregg Reference Manual*. New York: Gregg Division/McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977.
- Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. (30th Anniversary edition). New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

