

Research and Writing in Theology

CS 3350—Course Syllabus

Spring 2010

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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 acquire 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).

Goals:

1. To provide foundational reading-comprehension skills.
2. To provide the tools necessary for effective research in theological studies.
3. To provide the skills necessary to write well-argued, logical, concise research papers.

Objectives:

1. By the end of the course the student will demonstrate an ability to critically read and analyze various texts.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to use various tools for research, including the library, internet, databases, etc.
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to think critically and write logically, well-argued papers.

Texts:

Gordon, T. David. *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Second Edition. New York: Norton & Company, 2009.

McEntyre, Marilyn Chandler. *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 2009.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance and timely submission of assignments are required.

Weekly Assignments: 55%

Quizzes: 20%

5 page Book Review on Gordon, Why Johnny Can't Preach: 25%

Schedule:

§ Reading and Writing effectively.

Week 1: Introduction to the course: Reading, research, and writing in theology.

Week 2: Aims of Reading, Research, and Writing in a "post-literate" world.

McEntyre, 1-17

Postman, ??

Week 3: Reading effectively.

Adler, 3-15.

McEntyre, 65-86

Week 4: Beyond blogging: Writing effectively.

Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*

McEntyre, 22-40

Week 5: More than a paragraph or two: writing a longer paper

Strunk and White, 1-38 (skim), 66-85 (read!).

§ Academic Research: Methods and Tools.

Week 6 Print Resources for Theological Study (library orientation); Plagiarism

Week 7: Digital Resources for Theological Study—ATLAS, databases

Week 8: Digital Resources for Theological Study—Google, source evaluation, search

strategies

Week 9: Research Strategy: first steps: from Topic to Question to Problem.

Graff, preface and introduction.

Week 10: The Research Process: Taking notes, planning, outlining

AGST Guide for Writing an Exegesis,

http://www.austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/Exegesis_Guide.pdf

§ Academic Writing

Week 11: Making an effective argument

Handouts

Graff, 1-47

Week 12: Academic writing: a conversation

Graff, 48-97

Week 13: Formatting your paper.

Graff, 101-132.

Experiment with MS Word a bit before coming to class

Week 14: Bibliographic Resources for Further development