

Syllabus for
GTHE 756—Thesis Research and Proposal
(First Class: Jan. 11, 2016)
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2016

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Designed to provide a Master of Arts in Theological-Historical Studies student with guidelines, requirements, and procedures for researching and writing an advanced research M.A. Thesis. Emphasis is placed on extensive research and the completion of a written thesis proposal. Prerequisite: Admission to the Theological/Historical Studies program and the approval of the thesis candidate's thesis committee and the Associate Dean.

The Master of Arts thesis process encompasses two semesters; the first semester consists of research and writing a thesis proposal in preparation for writing a thesis and the second semester is writing the thesis.

The full M.A. Thesis course provides the opportunity for the student to utilize and integrate knowledge of theological and hermeneutical perspectives, methodological tools, languages, research skills, and socio-historical information in the chosen discipline in order to produce an academic study demonstrating competency in one specialized aspect and topic in the area of concentration.

The research part of the full thesis course provides an index of the students' ability to conduct research in a specific area and organize and present the results of the research in a systematic way in a written proposal. Each candidate has a faculty advisor to guide the student in the researching and writing of the thesis. The thesis does not necessarily require the student to contribute new or unique insights or positions concerning the topic, but to show mastery of existing resources and knowledge in one aspect of the discipline. The thesis topic needs to be meaningful to the student and provide evidence of familiarity with past and current research in the field.

II. COURSE GOALS

A. Research Section of Thesis

The purpose of the research section of the thesis is to enable the student to do the following:

1. Participate in in-depth research on a topic decided upon by the student and approved by the professor.
2. Gather and organize information for the bibliography and thesis proposal.
3. Develop a thesis proposal and a complete working bibliography.

B. Full Thesis Project

The purpose of the full thesis project is to enable the student to do the following:

1. Learn to conduct an independent study of the selected topic.
2. Learn to follow proper research methodology in the research and drafting of the thesis.
3. Develop methods of interaction with student colleagues and faculty members engaged in researching related areas of inquiry.
4. Develop a topical and bibliographical file on the thesis topic.
5. Learn to write in a scholarly, objective, and consistent style.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

A. Research Section of Thesis

As a result of successfully completing this part of the thesis course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate in writing the ability to do scholarly research.
2. Explain the significance of making effective and ethical use of sources, including Internet sources.
3. Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate (in writing) the research in ways appropriate to the academic discipline of Theological and Historical Studies.

B. Full Thesis Project

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Employ in-depth research methods in a self-designated area of scholarly interest to demonstrate competence in the major area of study.
2. Demonstrate in writing the ability to organize and imaginatively interpret material in the student's major area of study.
3. Demonstrate through research the will and tenacity to see a major scholarly research project through to completion.
4. Execute and present a complete and thorough research of material relating to a selected theme.
5. Present through research and writing an original and/or supportive contribution to the academic community of theological and biblical scholarship.
6. Demonstrate in writing mastery in stating and solving problems.
7. Demonstrate a clear, concise, and scholarly writing style in the writing of a thesis.

IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

A. Required Materials

1. Textbooks

Research and Writing Manual. Tulsa, OK: ORU, rev. 2015.

Pazmino, Robert W. *Doing Theological Research*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009. ISBN: 9781606089392

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Rev. by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ISBN: 9780226823379

Note: This manual, in conjunction with any additional supplements produced by the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry, constitutes the official writing form and style to be used in preparing the Master of Arts Thesis.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology: Your Indispensable Guide to Writing*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008. ISBN: 9780310274407

2. Other
None

B. Optional Materials

1. Textbooks

Alexander, Patrick H. et al., eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999. ISBN: 978-1565634879

Bauer, David R. *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. ISBN: 9781565637238

Glynn, John. *Commentary and Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*, 10th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2007. ISBN: 978-0825427374

Hudson, Robert, ed. *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. ISBN: 978-0310487715

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0226104201

Yaghjian, Lucretia, B., *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers* (paperback). London: Continuum, 2006. ISBN: 9780826418852

2. Other
None

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. University Policies and Procedures

1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
3. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments." Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - a. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
 - b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
 - c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
 - d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;

- e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.
By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.
 4. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
 5. Students are to be in compliance with university, school, and departmental policies regarding Whole Person Assessment requirements. Students should consult the WPA handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' majors.
 - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting an ePortfolio artifact is a zero for that assignment.
 - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.
- B. Graduate School of Theology and Ministry Policies and Procedures
1. **Completion of Assignments**
Assignments are due on the dates established in the course calendar, which is published in the syllabus. **Any assignments turned in after the scheduled due date are penalized five percent (5%) of the original value per day including weekends, breaks, and holidays.** All work turned in two weeks after the assignment deadline is received but is granted a grade of zero for that assignment. **No work** is accepted after the final date of regular classes.
 2. **Incompletes**
 - a. An incomplete is given only after the student establishes with the academic committee by written petition that student's work is incomplete for good cause (i.e., lengthy illness, death in the family). **Incompletes are rarely granted.** Only those absences that are incurred within the time period of the extenuating circumstances prompting an incomplete are excused. The student is still accountable for any other absences and will be penalized for them according to the attendance policy.
 - b. A Petition for Incomplete Grade with all supporting documentation must be submitted for approval one week prior to the end of normal classes. **The submitting of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an incomplete.** The petition must be approved by the academic committee of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. Students are expected to continue all course work until an incomplete is granted.
 3. **Examinations**
 - a. Early examinations **are not** allowed. Late examinations without grade penalty are administered only when extenuating circumstances are present (such as a death in the family the week before exams or a sudden and major illness the week of exams that is documented by a physician).
 - b. A Petition for Late Examination must be submitted to the academic dean's office. A **\$15 fee**, plus proper documentation, must accompany the petition. The academic committee reviews each petition and grade penalties are assessed. (Late exam fee is not a grade penalty.)

- c. Students taking late exams should expect alternate versions of the original exams.
- d. **Not being present for the final examination automatically results in failure of the course.**

4. **Attendance**

The administration and faculty of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry believe that class attendance is crucial in order for students to receive impartation, spiritual formation, and a community experience. Therefore, the Official Attendance Policy for the GSTM is as follows:

- a. Students will receive one letter grade reduction after missing more than two weeks of classes.
- b. Students who miss more than one month of classes will fail the course.
- c. **The absences allowed prior to a grade reduction are designed to allow for emergencies and illnesses and are not designed for indiscriminate use.**
- d. Administrative excuses are granted only when a student is on official university business and has received approval in advance from the university administration.
- e. Students are expected to be prompt for classes.
- f. Students are expected to remain for the entire class session.
- e. Leaving early without permission constitutes an absence

- 5. The Disability Service Center, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, assures that no qualified individual with a disability will be denied reasonable accommodations based upon the individual's needs. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Disability Service Center and properly register for these services. For more information, call 918.495.7018 or go to www.studentresources.oru.edu.

C. Course Policies and Procedures

1. Evaluation Procedures	
Reading Response Paper	5%
<u>Thesis Proposal Sections:</u>	
Title Page	2%
Abstract	10%
Outline/Table of Contents	5%
Background/Statement of the Problem	5%
Thesis Statement	10%
Purpose	5%
Objectives & Significance	5%
Definition of Terms	5%
Delimitations	5%
Methodology	5%
Presuppositions	3%
Hypothesis (optional)	0%
Bibliography	15%
Form and Style	10%
Assignment Deadlines Met	10%

The Thesis Proposal is read and evaluated by an assigned Faculty Reader and the Thesis Supervisor. The grade is based upon content, form, style (including proper grammar, structure, neatness, etc.), and the meeting of required deadlines. All the

Thesis Proposal sections must be included. Students who need help with proofreading, editing or technical services are encouraged to speak with the Academic Dean for available services.

According to the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry's policy, students in the M.A. Academic Degrees are required to maintain a B (i.e., a 3.0 or above). Therefore, students in the M.A. Academic Degree Programs—Biblical Literature, Biblical Literature/Advanced Languages, Biblical Literature/Judaic Christian Studies, and Theological-Historical Studies—need to earn a B or better in Thesis Research and Proposal, and Thesis Writing. Students in these programs need to demonstrate their ability to do research and to write a Thesis Proposal and a Thesis with excellence.

Grading scale:

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% and below

2. Whole Person Assessment Requirements

- a. All students entering the seminary are required to enroll in PRF 059—ePortfolio: Whole Person Assessment, which provides specific training to develop the skills needed to create an ePortfolio.
- b. WPA requirements for this course:
None

3. Other Policies and/or Procedures

Upon enrollment in this course the student may submit a request for a faculty supervisor for the thesis to the Academic Dean. (First and second choices should be submitted.)

Each student is expected to do the following:

- a. Write a reading response paper on *Doing Theological Research* by Robert W. Pazmino. Directions for this paper will be discussed in class.
- b. Consult extensively with the assigned faculty advisor in all stages of the thesis work.
- c. State the theme or purpose of the thesis. The student should include the following:
 - (1) A clear and concise statement of the problem being researched.
 - (2) A delineation of the scope of the work.
 - (3) A working thesis statement.
 - (4) A statement concerning the research methodology used.
- d. Prepare a complete working bibliography of 60-75 sources (15 of which shall be annotated and one-third of which shall be scholarly periodicals).
- e. Make a thorough and complete research of the scholarly data available on the thesis topic.
- f. Analyze and evaluate the data collected.
- g. Turabian is the approved style manual for all theses. The thesis is expected to reflect logical and analytical thinking, appropriate organization, the use of standard English and acceptable grammar and punctuation, proper documentation, and neat appearance. The qualities of unity, coherence, and clarity are paramount.
- h. The thesis proposal must be between 8 to 10 double-spaced pages of text (excluding bibliography) in Times New Roman 12-pt. font. It should

- have a title page, abstract, table of contents, thesis statement, and a complete working bibliography (as addressed above).
- i. Form and style: see *Master of Arts Thesis Manual* and *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Research Section of Thesis

Students work at an individual pace but are expected to meet with advisors every two weeks at a mutually agreeable time. A suggested calendar schedule for the semester is as follows:

Week	Assignment
1-4	Introduction to Thesis Research and Proposal. Narrow thesis topic. Library resources training with reference librarian in the Library Instruction Lab (LIL). Introduction to writing proposals. Tentative thesis statement and 15 preliminary sources due.
5-8	Request Reader (subject matter expert) for thesis. Form and style review. Cover all sections of the thesis proposal. Rough drafts of each section and 15 annotated bibliographic citations due.
9-12	Individual meetings with reference librarian to firm up sources, and with Reader to check progress on thesis proposal. Rough drafts of working bibliography and thesis proposal due.
13-16	Class presentations on thesis proposals. Final thesis proposal due. Take notes on sources. Review proposals and begin transition process from thesis proposal to Chapter 1 of thesis.

In extenuating circumstances, the student may petition for an incomplete grade to complete the thesis proposal. If granted, the student must complete the thesis proposal before registering for the thesis writing course.

**Inventory for Student Learning Outcomes
Graduate School of Theology and Ministry**

Master of Arts Theological/Historical Studies
GTHE 756—Thesis Research **Dr. Cheryl Iverson, Dr. David Hebert, Instructors**

Spring 2016

This course contributes to student learning outcomes for the Master of Arts in Theological/Historical Studies degree as indicated below:

Significant Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

Moderate Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

Minimal Contribution – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

No Contribution – Does not address the outcome.

Degree Program Outcomes		Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
1	Theological Perspective				
	Articulate the specifics of a Christian theological perspective within the contemporary social context.			X	
2	Reformation Traditions				
	Demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of Christian tradition during specific time periods.			X	
3	Development of Doctrine				
	Demonstrate basic knowledge of key theologians and the development of doctrine within the history of Christianity.		X		
4	Specialized Research				
	Research specialized topics in history and theology of the Christian Church in a manner that demonstrates critical thinking, historical integration, and theological reflection.		X		
5	French/German Language				
	Translate Scripture and historical documents in either French or German on an entry level.			X	
6	Pentecostal/Charismatic Foundation				
	Demonstrate awareness of Pentecostal/Charismatic distinctions and historical development.			X	
7	Academic Thesis				
	Critically utilize theological/historical study to produce an acceptable academic thesis.		X		