90-904 PhD Research Seminar
Spring 2025 / Wednesdays 1:30-3:30pm
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Course purpose
The purpose of this seminar is to enable PhD students to refine their research skills as they develop a successful/defendable dissertation proposal and, in doing so, to contribute to their formation as scholars prepared to serve the academy, church, and world.

Student Learning Outcomes
1. Demonstrate skills for independent and collaborative research in an area or discipline, including:

- developing and clearly stating a research topic;
- identifying and developing appropriate evidence; and
- identifying, using, and citing appropriate resources.

2. Identify and describe potential methodologies appropriate to a research project.
3. Articulate a methodological framework appropriate to one's discipline and area of research.
4. Situate oneself and one's research in a community of inquiry and practice.

Required Texts
Wayne Booth, et al, *The Craft of Research*, 5th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024). 978-0226826677. Amazon $19 paperback

Chicago Manual of Style, 18th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2024) available online through Styberg Library: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

John W. Creswell and David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th edition (New York: SAGE Publications, 2022). 978-1071817940. Amazon $32.

Elaine Graham and Heather Walton, *Theological Reflection: Methods,* 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2019). 978-0334056133. Available as Kindle or paperback from Amazon $35; available as an ebook from Styberg Library: https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=3c87bf02-bf6a-32d1-9a5e-f6c7bb644556.

Christian Scharen, *Fieldwork in Theology: Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015). 978-0801049309. Amazon $14-26.

Linda Tuhiwal Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 3rd ed. (NY: Zed Books, 2021). 978-1350346086. Amazon Kindle $14.85, paperback $28. Available as an ebook from NU: https://www-bloomsburycollections-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/monograph?docid=b-9781350225282.]

Other required readings/resources
AI-U/1.0: A student guide to navigating college in the artificial intelligence era, Elon University / AAC&U 2024, www.studentguidetoAI.org.

John Creswell, "When should I choose a mixed methods approach," https://methods-sagepub-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/video/when-should-i-choose-a-mixed-methods-approach (accessed June 6, 2024)

Sandra Harding, "Is there a feminist method" in *Feminism and Methodology*, ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 1-14.

Tyrus Miller, "How I See It: The humanities and generative AI," https://www.humanities.uci.edu/news/how-i-see-it-humanities-and-generative-ai (accessed June 6, 2024).

Nadine Naber, "The 3 R's of Activist Research," https://nadinenaber.com/2022/02/the-3-rs-of-activist-research-responsible-relational-and-revolutionary-part-1/ (accessed June 6, 2024)

Arlene Stein and Jessie Daniels, *Going Public: A Guide for Social Scientists* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017). [Introduction and Ch. 1-2; available as ebook from NU: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/northwestern/detail.action?docID=4780602.]

Natalie Wigg-Stevenson, "What's Really Going on: Ethnographic Theology and the Production of Theological Knowledge," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 18.6 (2018): 423–429.

Course Topics and Assignments

Note that readings are to be completed prior to the class session for which they are scheduled.

Wks 1-3 What is research? What does it require? Who is it for?

1. **January 28**

   Come prepared to discuss who you are, the primary research question you intend to pursue in your dissertation, and why this question is important to you and to others.

   Read:
   Booth, et al, Prologue and ch. 1-2
   Naber, "The 3 R's of Activist Research"
   Smith, Introduction to 3rd edition and Introduction

2. February 4

   Read:
   Stein and Daniels, *Going Public: A Guide for Social Scientists*, Introduction and Ch. 1-2
   Graham and Walton, Introduction and Ch. 1

   Write a short (500 word) essay addressed to a non-specialized audience describing your research question/thesis. Think of it as an "elevator speech" (though 500 words is too long for that context). What are you planning to do? Why is it important? To whom is it important? Why might it interest someone other than your dissertation committee? Present this in class.

3. February 11

Read:
Graham and Walton, Ch. 2

Interview your faculty advisor to answer the following questions:

- What are you (the advisor) working on (and, perhaps, why)?
- What is your thesis?
- Who are your primary "conversation partners" in this project?
- What methods are you using and why?

Write a summary indicating what you learned about research (not about the faculty person) and what you need to give closer attention to in your own research. Report to class what you learned.

February 18 Ash Wednesday (No class)

4. February 25: Sources and evidence

Read:
Booth, et al, chs. 3-4, 7, 12
Creswell and Creswell, ch. 2-3
Chicago Manual of Style, chap. 13 (focus on note//bibliography format, which is required for Garrett dissertations)
Graham and Walton, Ch. 3

What is a literature review and what is its purpose?
Review "Writing a literature review," https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html (accessed February 19, 2025).

Prepare a preliminary bibliography related to your research topic using resources published since 2000 (or make a case why an older resource is needed). The bibliography must include 15-20 entries and be formatted correctly following the *Chicago Manual of Style*. (Note that there is some inconsistency between Turabian and the CMS; Garrett has chosen to use to the CMS as the standard citation guideline.) Copy your advisor for review/comment. **Due March 4.**

Find and read the *introductions* to three recent dissertations in your field. *Outline* the primary structure(s) of these introductions. What do they share in common? What makes them distinctive? Who are they writing to/for? How do they prepare you (the reader) to engage the argument that follows? Present what you learned to the class. **Due April 15.**

5. March 4: Advanced Information Technologies and Research

Guest presentation on the use of AI in research.

Read:
Read/Review *AI-U/1.0: A student guide to navigating college in the artificial intelligence era*
Review Booth, et al, 3.3-3.4
Miller, "How I see it"
GETS plagiarism and AI policy

Watch Jessica Parker and Kimberley Becker, "How to use AI for your Dissertation/Thesis: A Guide for Graduate Students," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSHnjYI3dBA (accessed June 6, 2024).

Weeks 6-9: Methodologies

What do we mean by method? How do the questions we ask determine the kinds of answers we will develop? What does it mean to decolonize our methodologies?

6. March 11

Read:
Scharen, *Field Work in Theology*
Wigg-Stevenson, "What's Really Going on"
Graham and Walton, Ch. 4

Write: In his turn to Bourdieu, Scharen writes "we are shaped by a particular 'field'…the concrete social context of our life…. What is shaped in us via the formative practice within a field is a '*habitus*,' or mode of being in the world by which we practically navigate day-to-day life." (Scharen, 15) In our work, "fields" are both social contexts and academic disciplines. In 500-750 words (no more than that), describe the fields that shape your work and how they do so.

7. March 18

Read:
Creswell and Creswell, ch. 1, 5-10
Graham and Walton, Ch. 5
Harding, "Is there a feminist method?"
Watch/listen to Creswell video "When should I choose mixed methods"

8. March 25

Read:
Smith, ch. 1-5, 12-13. Be prepared to discuss her methodological concerns in relationship to your own work.

April 1 Spring Break (No class)

9. April 8

Guest presentation on the Human Subjects Review process at Garrett

Read:
Booth, et al., 17
Graham and Walton, Ch. 6
Garrett Human Subjects Review Policy and Human Subject Review Application
(downloadable from myGETS)

Prepare a methodology report (750-1000 words): *Describe* what you have read so far in your course work, especially your field, that addresses questions of method and what methods have been used. *Identify* the primary research methods employed in research in your field, including those of disciplines outside the field that the field regularly draws from. Given the readings of the previous weeks, describe what method or methods are most appropriate to your proposed project, why are they appropriate, and how will you use them. [See supplemental bibliography below]

Wks 10-13 Developing a dissertation proposal

10. April 15

Read:
Booth, et al, 5-6, 8-9, 14
Graham and Walton, Ch. 7

Present what you have discovered from your reading of three dissertation introductions (see Week 4 above) in class

11. April 22—No class

Begin writing a draft dissertation proposal and be prepared to discuss it with a small group in class on April 29. Share the draft with your advisor for review and comment prior to April 29.

The proposal *must* include the following components:

a. A clear research question and thesis statement.
b. An explanation of the significance and plausibility of the thesis (explaining why the topic is important and showing how the research would alter or supplement earlier studies).
c. The present state of scholarship on the question (literature review).
d. A discussion of the scholarly methods that are appropriate to the topic, what method(s) you will use, and why.
e. A detailed proposed outline of the dissertation.

f. A selected bibliography of primary and secondary works, possibly including annotations that demonstrate your critical judgment of the literature.

12. April 29

Review your draft proposal with a small group in class. You might plan to share comments your received from your advisor and how you have accounted for or will account for those comments in this draft.

13. May 6

Revise your proposal based on the comments you received from your peer group and advisor. *Submit* a final (final for now) version of your proposal in Canvas. Use the Dissertation Proposal Rubric provided on Canvas to review your own work before submitting it. Attend to things you have missed before submitting it.

Supplemental Bibliography on Qualitative Research Methods

Vera Caine, D. Jean Clandinin, and Lessard Sean, *Narrative Inquiry: Philosophical Roots* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022)

D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000).

John Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2018).

Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Newark: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). Available as ebook through NU.

Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2023).

Sharon Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Wiley, 2016).

Carl Olson, *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: A Selection of Critical Readings* (Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003).

Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013).

Christian Scharen and Anna Marie Vigen, eds. *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2011). Available as ebook through NU.

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,* 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2016). Available as ebook through Styberg Library.

Knut, Tveitereid and Pete Ward, eds. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Theology and Qualitative Research*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2022. Available as ebook through NU.