

DRAFT

Ph.D. 90-904 Research SeminarX

Fall–Spring, 2020/21

Online via Zoom

instructor: Charles H. Cosgrove

charles.cosgrove@garrett.edu

office: Main 109

There will be seven class sessions in the fall. The tentative dates are subject to confirmation of a regular Wednesday time slot from 1:00 – 3:00 pm by the registrar:

Sept. 9, Sept. 16, Sept. 30

Oct. 7, Oct. 21

Nov. 4, Nov. 11

The dates for spring are not fixed but will be four or five dates chosen from the following (on these dates students present preliminary dissertation proposals with their advisors present, typically two students per date).

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

Articulate the basic principles of several distinctive research methodologies in religious and theological studies;

Demonstrate the ability to construct an initial dissertation proposal within his or her own field of study, and

Model interdisciplinary dialogue with scholars from a range of disciplines within the theological education curriculum.

Required Readings

1) Selected readings to be made available on Moodle

2) Field-specific research methods text suggested by advisor (See “Expectations, Evaluation, D,” below)

3) Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. 9th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. (ISBN-13: 978-0226430577, \$15.47 at Amazon.com.) By now, everyone should already be using Turabian.

4) Other readings as assigned: not to be purchased.

Class Schedule

September 9 Introduction to the course

Self-introductions. Bring copies for the class of a 1-page Research Statement outlining your current conception of your dissertation project. Include 1) the primary research question, 2) why the question matters to you and/or the church of academy, 3) the research methodology (if known), 4) a summary (a list, not a discussion) of research you have already done. It is recognized that some students will have clearer ideas of their research focus at this point than others.

September 16 Writing a Dissertation Proposal

For this class, you should send to the course professor and the class a statement of your primary research question, formulated as a full sentence in question form. This is **due by email to the class on Sunday evening, September 13**.

- A) Overview
- B) Discussion of research questions.
- C) Preparing a C.V.

September 30 Historical Methods

October 7 Social Science Methodologies: Qualitative and Ethnographic Research — Dr. Mai-Anh Le Tran, Associate Professor of Religious Education and Practical Theology

Read the material provided by Dr. Tran, and submit two questions to her no later than noon on Tuesday.

Bibliography and Interview Report Due (see assignment C below)

October 21 A Second Look at Writing a Dissertation Proposal
Report on Dissertations due. (See Item E below.)

November 4— Interdisciplinary Research

November 11 Advanced Information Technologies —

Dr. Jaeyeon (Lucy) Chung, Director of the Styberg Library, and Mary-Carol Riehs, Access and Public Services Librarian

Critical Book Review due (See Assignment D)

December 14 — Draft of a Dissertation Proposal due (no class)

Course Expectations, Evaluation

A. Attend all class sessions.

B. Complete all reading and written assignments. This includes the readings [provided by the guest presenters. For the class sessions with a guest presenter, you will receive a reading or readings, selected to demonstrate or describe research methodologies within the presenter's academic field. You are asked to send the presenter two questions, based on the reading, no later than noon on Tuesday prior to the class.

C. Bibliography and Advisor Interview. Prepare a bibliography and interview your academic advisor:

Bibliography. Send your advisor a list a short bibliography (ten to fifteen entries) reflecting the pertinent methods and current and forward-looking issues and concerns of research in the field/discipline. Ask your advisor to help you shape this bibliography to form a better representation of current methods in the field. These can include books on method or books that explain and exemplify method in the course of tackling a research question. After input from your advisor, you will revise your bibliography and submit it with the results of your interview.

Interview. Interview your advisor, using the following questions as topics:

- (1) What critical questions are currently being addressed in the field? Are there other issues that need to be addressed?
- (2) What are the primary research methods employed in research in the field, including those of disciplines outside the field that the field regularly draws from?
- (3) What are the advisor's own areas of research within the field and which research methods does the advisor use most regularly?
- (4) How does the advisor understand herself/himself vocationally?

The advisor is permitted to reframe any of these questions. They are only prompts.

Summarize the results of this interview in an 8-10 page paper, including your own reflection on its implications for your own anticipated research project.

This summary and bibliography are due **October 7**.

D. Critical Book Review. Write a critical review of one *brand new book* in your field. Feel free to ask your advisor to help you select this book.

In preparing this review, you should look at book reviews in one or more of the main journals in your field (journals that carry substantial critical reviews, not just book summaries). This will give you an idea of approach and tone. Note that the typical book-review format is (a) full title, page ranges, and price in the heading; (b) a summary of the book; (c) evaluative comments; (d) a recommendation about the value of the book to the field and/or a given readership. Do not exceed 1000 words. **Due November 11.**

Consider submitting your review to an appropriate journal that accepts unsolicited book-review submissions. Your advisor and the course professor can help you select a journal and can give you feedback for revising the review for submission.

E. Report on Recent Dissertations. Write a report on three Ph.D. dissertations (in your field) completed within the last ten years. Dissertations can be found through ProQuest Dissertations: Go to the Styberg Library webpage and proceed through the tabs as follows: Collections → Databases A-Z → P (scroll down to ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global). Note that the search boxes allow you to select a particular school and key words, and there is a Publication Date limiter, so that you can choose “last ten years.”

The report should include brief summaries of *two* dissertations (1-2 pages each) and a critical analysis of the *third* dissertation (4-5 pages). Make your selection of dissertations on the basis of (1) your own research interests and (2) schools with excellent reputations for research in your field. The purpose of this assignment is to help you get an idea of what Ph.D. dissertations look like and to give you exposure to recent research-currents in your field, as reflected in the work of recent graduate students. **Due October 21.**

F. Draft of a Dissertation Proposal. Each student is to develop, in consultation with his or her advisor, a draft of a dissertation proposal in their field of study. This is due **December 14.** (Note: The spring semester continuation of the Research Methods Course will feature student presentations of research proposals with the student’s advisor present (2 students per session). The student is encouraged to revise their proposal for the presentation.)

The draft should follow the guidelines for a dissertation proposal found in the Ph.D. Handbook (sect. 30). Feel free to order/organize your discussion of nos. 3 through 6 in your own way, so long as you cover the questions.

1. What is the topic, and what is the specific research question?
2. How did your own study of the subject lead you to this question? (be brief; more can be said about previous research, your own and that of others, under no. 4)
3. Why is the question important. How might answering it contribute to your field?
4. On what previous research will your work build and how will it extend that research?

5. How is the research to be done? What method(s) will you use? Is the work to be based on a particular theory?
6. What primary evidence is available or will be generated?
7. Preliminary bibliography

Select Bibliography (you do not need to purchase these for the course)

A classic *general* book on research: Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

The following are recommendations by Garrett grads of books that were helpful to them during research and writing their dissertations. These books treat various aspects of qualitative research methods:

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

John Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011)

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

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* (London: Continuum, 2011).