

**Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Theological Research and Writing – WRIT 502 A/B
Course Syllabus – Spring 2021**

Course: Theological Research and Writing – WRIT 502 A/B

Time: Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm (classes will be conducted via Zoom videoconferencing)

Instructor: Melanie Baffes, MDiv, PhD

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Course Description

This course is designed to help the beginning graduate student in the techniques of sound theological research and writing. It focuses on helping students: a) reinforce basic writing *abilities*; b) strengthen reading and notetaking *skills*; c) identify relevant research *sources* (library and Internet sources); and d) use *strategies* for developing various types of papers.

International students also have access to a resource, “Overview of North American Academic Writing” to familiarize them with North American conventions of academic writing and discover what constitutes effective theological writing in English. International students also can get help from the instructor on strategies for reading skillfully in English and common English verbal phrases, patterns, and vocabulary.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to use basic seminary library resources (both print and Internet).
2. Use strategies for reading carefully, engaging critically with sources, and taking notes.
3. Demonstrate how to use Turabian citation style properly.
4. Describe the most common plagiarism mistakes.
5. Give an overview of key strategies for structuring and clarifying their writing.
6. Demonstrate how to paraphrase and use direct quotations effectively.
7. Describe the steps for developing a strong thesis or argument.

Required Books

Capitani, Diane, and Melanie Baffes. *Research and Writing in the Seminary: Practical Strategies and Tools*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0786478644/ISBN 10: 0786478640. Available from Amazon.com, \$29.95 (paperback).

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *“They Say/I Say”: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0393631678/ISBN-10: 0393631672. Available from Amazon.com, \$20.44 (paperback); \$18.00 (Kindle).

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0226430577/ISBN-10: 022643057X. Available from Amazon.com, \$7.99 (paperback); \$7.59 (Kindle).

Schedule of Course Topics

In this class, students learn and practice a variety of essential research, reading, note-taking, organizing, and writing skills. They also become familiar with strategies for completing various types of writing assignments—including chapter reviews, book reviews, theological essays, discussion-forum posts, theological reflection papers, biblical exegesis, and theological research papers. The first half of each class focuses on skills and strategies; in the second half, students practice using new skills and strategies in brief writing exercises.

The following is a list of course meetings and topics. All readings and resources are on the Moodle course site.

Week 1 (February 2) – Overview of Theological Writing

Week 2 (February 9) – Theological Research

Week 3 (February 16) – Avoiding Plagiarism/Using Citations Properly

Week 4 (February 23) – Structure of Academic Writing

Week 5 (March 2) – Theological Reflection

Week 6 (March 9) – Strategies for Organization and Clarity

Week 7 (March 16) – Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Week 8 (March 23) – Engaging Your Sources

NO CLASS (March 30) – Spring Break

Week 9 (April 6) – Developing a Thesis or Argument

Week 10 (April 13) – Finding Your Voice

Week 11 (April 20) – Biblical Exegesis

Week 12 (April 27) – Research Papers: Prewriting, Writing, Revising

Week 13 (May 4) – Writing workshop

Expectations of Students

Other than weekly reading assignments, no outside work is required for this course. However, in order to receive a passing grade, students must:

- 1) Complete and submit all in-class activities (these are not graded).
- 3) Submit one completed paper to the instructor for critical evaluation and feedback.

Attendance/participation – This course will be completed entirely via Zoom videoconferencing, and regular participation is required in order to pass. Because this course is taught progressively, one week building on the next, active ongoing participation is absolutely essential for success.

Course accommodations – Garrett-Evangelical is committed to providing a quality theological education and will provide reasonable accommodations for documented conditions. Students requiring specific assistance such as classroom changes, alternative ways of notetaking, different classroom procedures, or alternative testing formats are urged to request the appropriate accommodations from the director of academic studies/registrar. The director of academic studies/registrar can advise students on other support services and resources, for example, diagnostic testing. Students must complete a request for accommodations using the form available from the director of academic studies/registrar or through myGETS documenting their condition(s) through appropriate verification methods.

English as a Second Language is not a reason for accommodation, and therefore assignment extensions cannot be given on the basis of language proficiency. It is assumed that all students admitted to Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary have sufficient ability with the English language to complete the work. Plan ahead for proofreading or grammar coaching since deadlines cannot be extended for editing.