

Advanced Theological Research

BMIN-5990-01

Bob Turner

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Summer 2017

Harding School of Theology

Course Objectives

1. Introduce the basic theological research tools.
2. Teach the technique of using reference books.
3. Acquaint you with the methodology of research.
4. Help improve writing skills.
5. Deal with mechanical details (footnotes, bibliography, etc.) of paper writing.

Date	Readings	Assignment Due	Skills
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitani, "Reflection Papers," • Lewis, "The Ministry of Study," • Prothero, <i>Religious Literacy</i>, • Huey, "Churches of Christ" • Beck, "Four Reasons," • Thielicke, <i>A Little Exercise</i> 	Thielicke Response	FOUNDATIONS *Syllabus *Orientation *Canvas
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley, <i>Church History</i>, 33-52 • Hughes, "How Do We Account" • King, <i>How We Know</i> • Olbricht, "Biblical Interpretation" • Stuart, <i>A Guide to Selecting</i> 		CONTENT *Online Catalog *World Cat *NT/OT Abstracts Subject Biblical Studies ANE/Classic
Wednesday		Kibbe	METHOD

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badke, <i>Research Strategies</i> • Kibbe, <i>From Topic to Thesis</i> 	Response	*ATLA *EBSCO *Infotrac BE: Zotero
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wallace, Commencement Address. • Friedersdorf, “The New Intolerance” • Heller, “The Big Uneasy” • Turner, “If These Walls Could Talk,” 	Projects	FORMATION Church History Theology Ministry Counseling BE: Turabian
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen, “Prologue” • Vyhmeister, <i>Your Guide to Writing</i> • Strunk and White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> 	Allen Response	COMPOSITION Writing Lab
Saturday		Midterm Exam	

Textbooks

Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. IVP. 2016.

978-0830851317

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. 4th edition. 1999.

Longman. 978-0205309023

Helmut Thielicke, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. Eerdmans. 1962.

978-0802811981

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and*

Dissertations. 8th edition. Chicago. 2013. 978-0226816388

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Purchase and Read 1 of the Following Titles

Stanley Fish, *How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One*. Harper. 2011.

978-0-06-184054-8

Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. Scribner. 2010. 978-1439156810

Mary Norris, *Between You & Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*. W.W. Norton. 2016.

978-0393352146

Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots, & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*.

Avery. 2006. 978-1592402038

Readings (available through Canvas)

Allen, Leonard, "Prologue to Good Christian Writing,"

Badke, William B. *Research Strategies*, ed. New York: iUniverse, 2014, 48-66, 71-9.

Beck, Richard, "[Four Reasons Why I'm Church of Christ.](http://experimentaltheology.blogspot.com/2011/10/four-reasons-why-im-church-of-christ.html)"

<http://experimentaltheology.blogspot.com/2011/10/four-reasons-why-im-church-of-christ.html>

Bradley, James E., and Richard A. Muller. *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, 33-52.

Capitani, Diane, *Research and Writing in the Seminary*, ch. 4.

Friedersdorf, Conor, "[The New Intolerance of Student Activism](#)," *The Atlantic* (November 2015).

Heller, Nathan, "[The Big Uneasy: What's Roiling the Liberal-Arts Campus?](#)" *New Yorker* (May 2016):

Hughes, Richard, "How Can We Account for the Extraordinary Culture of Biblical and Religious Scholarship in Churches of Christ?" Paper Read at Christian Scholars' Conference, 2014.

Huey, Keith. "Churches of Christ," In *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, edited by Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, 1:460-66. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010.

King, William J. *How We Know About Antiquity*. Oxford, OH: American Classical League, Miami University, 1978, pp. 1-16.

Lewis, Jack P. "The Ministry of Study." In *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church*, 101-6. Nashville: Christian Communications, 1985.

Olbricht, Thomas. "Biblical Interpretation in North America in the Twentieth

- Century,” in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim, 88-102. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007.
- Prothero, Stephen. *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know--And Doesn't*. San Francisco: Harper, 2008, 21-38.
- Stuart, Douglas. *A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries*. Dallas: Word, 1990, pp. 7-34.
- Turner, Bob. “[If These Walls Could Talk](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2014/03/12/if-these-walls-could-talk-by-bob-turner/)” Jesus Creed Blog: Scot McKnight, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2014/03/12/if-these-walls-could-talk-by-bob-turner/>
- Wallace, David Foster. [Commencement Address, Kenyon College 2005](http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf), <http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf>
- Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean, and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers*, 3rd ed. Zondervan, 99-110, 168-78.

Bibliographic Essay

Assignment

Choose a section of Scripture for which there are differing positions of interpretation. Write a 6-8 page bibliographic essay on it. Do not choose something that has a parallel account, such as a story in the Synoptic Gospels or Kings/Chronicles. Be cautious about texts where the interpretation relies heavily on material that you are less familiar with, such as original languages, non-canonical literature, or material culture backgrounds.

Objective

The goal of this project is for you to interact with critical scholarship on a text in hopes of appreciating the diversity of biblical scholarship and the necessity of engaging experts in a field of study. Your primary objective is *not* to determine the meaning of the passage, but to find as much quality material written on that passage as possible, and categorize the various positions held. Give the positions, the proponents, and their reasons or evidence for holding a particular position. Be sure you grasp the authors' intent and their arguments. This is not a sermon or a theological position paper. Your task is to demonstrate that you have accessed and conversed with the scholars, not that you have mastered the subject.

Resources for Material

You will be responsible to consult indexes and works of content in your research. An index is a tool for discovering what exists (material) and where it exists (location). We will typically use it to discover articles and essays that are located in books and periodicals. Some examples of indexes for this class are ATLA Religion Database, Old Testament Abstracts, New Testament Abstracts, and our collection of bibliographies (located mainly in R.R. 016 and around that area

in the Reference Room).

Hopefully indexes and other sources will point you in the direction of the significant commentaries, articles, essays, monographs, microfilm, microfiche, and other resources on the topic.

For this paper, you will cite only the works of content. You will not cite a database, but you will cite a commentary or article. However, for this paper you are required to submit a separate list of the sources you consulted (indexes, databases, bibliographies).

Style

The paper must conform to the style of the Turabian Manual of Style (8th edition) and the HST Supplement to Turabian.

Examples

There is a Sample Paper on reserve and in Canvas that will give you an idea of what the paper should look like. You might also consider:

Moore, Michael S. "Ephesians 2:14-16: A History of Recent Interpretations."
Evangelical Quarterly 54, no. 3 (July-September 1982): 163-168.

Suggested Texts

You may write on the text of your choice, provided I think it is a wise choice for the assignment. Here are some texts that lend themselves to bibliographic essays.

Genesis 1:26; Exodus 4:24-26; Joshua 10:12-14; Judges 11:29-40; Hosea 1:2; Matthew 3:15; 16:19-19; Luke 16:1-13; John 3:5; Romans 1:17; 7:14-25; 8:28; 11:26; 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:14; 1 Timothy 2:12; 2:15; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 1 John 5:16.

Book Review Presentation

You will read a book and make a presentation for the class. You can do the project alone or with a partner. The presentation should be 7 minutes and will serve as a conversation about the book. The format of the presentation is totally up to you. The two words you need to remember are CRITICAL and CREATIVE. You are free to connect the presentation to an item of theological interest or not. Options include, but are not limited to:

- **A Critical Oral Review** (see: *New Yorker*, *New York Review of Books*, *Charlie Rose*, etc).
- **A Point-Counterpoint** where two students review the same book, but provide positives and negatives (see: *Siskel and Ebert*, *Pardon the Interruption*)
- **Multi-Media presentation.** Short film, animation, or musical production.

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- **Artistic Presentation.** Music, art, theatrical interpretation, spoken word, etc.

The grading will be open, but rigorous. I want to see you master the material and present it in a way that creatively interacts with the message in a way that represents your own voice, style, energy, and creativity.

Grading

90=A; 80=B; 70=C; 60=D

Bibliographic Essay	40%	Due by 11:59 on July 24
Midterm Exam	20%	Saturday, June 10
Final Exam	15%	Friday, June 23 (via Canvas)
Book Review Project	15%	Thursday, June 8
Response Papers	10%	

Philosophy of Grading

This course will incorporate both objective and subjective means of assessment. In some cases, there are right/wrong answers (Q: *Who wrote A Manual for Writers? A: Kate Turabian*) or right/wrong ways of doing something (Q: *How does A Manual for Writers suggest creating a title page? A: See p. 378*). But in many cases, there are not right/wrong answers, but instead a more subjective assessment of whether or not something accomplishes its purpose. This includes evaluation of whether or not a book is *scholarly*, or a that a sentence *flows*, or that an argument is *convincing*. For these items, there is not a rubric, per se. Instead, the course will hopefully provide resources by which you can identify what makes a work scholarly, or how to write a sentence that flows, and how to make arguments that are convincing. Each of these particular items (and many others) are developmental in nature and can be learned only through experience. The Bibliographic Essay is graded using a rubric that I will provide in class.

Late Assignments

Organization and punctuality are essential practices for sustained excellence in ministry. In hopes of cultivating these virtues, I strongly discourage turning assignments in late. The responses to Allen, Kibbe, and Thielicke will not be accepted after the due date. A zero will be given. A late Bibliographic Essay will be deducted 10%, and will not be accepted after July 24. Feel free to visit with me regarding exceptions due to family emergencies and personal health.

M.Div outcomes

By introducing students to the basic reference tools in biblical interpretation, theology, and church history, this course not only benefits students as they take courses in these areas, but also provides the resources for post-graduate learning and promotes Master of Divinity degree outcomes so that the graduate will (1) demonstrate advanced exegetical skills in the

interpretation of Scripture, (2) exhibit an understanding of the primary elements of Christian theology, and (3) exhibit an understanding of the general history of the church and of doctrine, including the Stone-Campbell Movement in particular. The introduction to research methodology and the composition & critique of written assignments should also help the graduate “be able to communicate effectively in written, oral, and multi-media forms” as indicated in another desired outcome for HST M.Div. graduates.

Accessibility

HST professors are accessible to local and distance students. Please use the following to arrange appointments with me (in person or by phone):

Email: rjturner@harding.edu

Office Phone Number: (901) 761-1354

Credit Hour Workload

For every course credit hour, the typical student should expect to spend at least three clock hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work, including but not limited to time attending class, as well as out-of-class time spent reading, reviewing, organizing notes, preparing for upcoming quizzes/exams, problem solving, developing and completing projects, and other activities that enhance learning. Thus, for a three-hour course, a typical student should expect to spend at least nine hours per week dedicated to the course.

Textbooks

Textbooks can now be ordered through a link on the [HST website](#). The Textbooks tab can be viewed on the navigation bar on any page of the website. Check the book list provided under the Textbooks tab (<http://hst.edu/students/textbook-services/>) for correct ISBN's and editions to insure correct ordering. A link provided there will take you to Amazon where you will only need to enter the ISBN to order your books. By going through our website, HST will receive some credit from the order. Thanks for your support.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Steve McLeod, the Associate Dean, at 901-761-1353.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice, and will result in penalties which could include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the course, and even dismissal from the school.

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