

**Note:**

**Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.**

## ***COURSE SYLLABUS***

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**SCHOOL OF DIVINITY**

**RTCH 680**  
**RESEARCH METHODS**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Bibliography and thesis research. Emphasis will be given to the formulation of the topic and thesis proposal.

**II. RATIONALE**

This course should be taken after the student has enough background to decide on an appropriate thesis topic. Usually it is taken in the spring (second) semester of the student's first year in the program. The course introduces the student to databases and catalogs of print and electronic resources that will be helpful in the research required for their other courses. It also provides assistance in scholarly writing and the scholarly apparatus of formal writing, footnotes, and bibliography.

**I. PREREQUISITE**

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

**II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE**

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

**III. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Through involvement in this course it is expected that the student will be able to:

- A. Formulate a research topic that is suitable for a thesis.
- B. Identify traditional and digital information sources relevant to your research topic.
- C. Construct bibliographies in a style appropriate to the discipline
- D. Evaluate sources critically.

- E. Design a thesis proposal for eventual presentation to a faculty committee.

*(Note: Such a thesis proposal should identify your topic clearly, demonstrate your understanding of the topic, forecast the structure of your argument, make effective use of language, and cite an appropriate number of scholarly sources.)*

#### **IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

- A. Course Requirements Checklist: As the first activity in this course, please read the syllabus and As the first activity in this course, please read the syllabus and Student Expectations. After reading the syllabus and Student Expectations, the student will then complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.
- B. Research Topic: A 1-paragraph statement of your proposed thesis topic. Include the reasons you consider this to be a successful topic. This will also be presented to the class on the Discussion Board for input. (MLO A)
- C. Discussion Boards (3): Students will participate in the Discussion Board with classmates and the instructor. For each forum, students must first read assigned portions of the course texts and materials. Then they must thoroughly answer questions on these sources in a thread of 400 words that demonstrates a grasp of the content and stands up to scrutiny from others. The thread is due by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Thursday of the relevant modules/weeks. Also, students must reply to at least two of their classmate's threads in 200 words by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Sunday of the relevant modules/weeks. (MLO's D)
- D. Bibliography: A Turabian-style bibliography of a minimum of 20 works relevant to your probable thesis topic. The listed works should include reference materials, books, and journal articles. Citations should be arranged in alphabetical order. (MLO's B, C)
- E. Outline & Works Cited: Initial detailed outline of your thesis proposal, including a bibliography of at least 30 entries. Follow closely the guidelines contained in the course materials, with a tentative outline of the thesis and chapter divisions. (MLO B, C, D, E)
- F. First Draft of Thesis Proposal: A fifteen-page first draft of your thesis proposal, following Turabian style, including a bibliography of no less than 40 entries. Follow the guidelines of the Graduate Studies Handbook and use Vyhmeister chapters 5 and 20 as a general model. (MLO E)
- G. Final Draft of Thesis Proposal: Final draft of the thesis proposal, including a bibliography of at least 50 entries. Follow all guidelines carefully. (MLO E)

#### **V. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES**

**A. Points**

Course Check In	10
Research Topic	75
Discussion Boards (3 x 75 points)	225
Bibliography	100
Outline & Works Cited	150
First Draft of Thesis Proposal	200
Final Draft of Thesis Proposal	250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1010</b>

**B. Scale**

A = 940–1010   A- = 920–939   B+ = 900–919   B = 860–899   B- = 840–859  
 C+ = 820–839   C = 780–819   C- = 760–779   D+ = 740–759   D = 700–739  
 D- = 680–699   F = 0–679

**C. Style Guidelines**

All assignments for this course are to be formatted in accordance with the [SoD Writing Guide](#) and the latest edition of the Turabian style manual (*A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*). Discussion assignments and essay examinations may use the parenthetical citation style. All other written assignments should use the footnote citation style. Supplemental writing aids are available via the [Online Writing Center](#).

**Extra Credit**

No additional “for credit” assignments will be permitted beyond those given in the course requirements stated above.

**D. Course Changes**

Course requirements are subject to change by the administration of the University at any time with appropriate notice.

**E. Disability Assistance**

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online’s Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at [LUOODAS@liberty.edu](mailto:LUOODAS@liberty.edu) to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at [www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport](http://www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport)

**VI. CALENDAR**

See reading and assignment calendars above.

**VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY****Research Methods and Ethnography**

Barney, G. Linwood. “The Challenge of Anthropology to Current Missiology.”  
*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 5:4 (1981): 172-177.

- Castaneda, Quetzil E. "The Invisible Theatre of Ethnography: Performative Principles of Fieldwork." *Anthropological Quarterly* 79:1 (2006): 75-104.
- Cone, John D., & Foster, Sharon L. *Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006.
- Haleblian, Krikor. "The Problem of Contextualization." *Missiology* 11:1 (1983): 95-111.
- Jackson, Sherri L. *Research Methods and Statistics: A Critical Thinking Approach*. Belmont, CA: Thomas Wadsworth, 2006.
- Murchison, Julian M. *Ethnography Essentials Designing, Conducting, and Presenting your Research*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 2010.
- Nabhan-Warren, Kristy. "Embodied Research and Writing: A Case for Phenomenologically Oriented Religious Studies Ethnographies." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79:2 (2011): 378-407.
- Pan, M. Ling. *Preparing Literature Reviews: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing, 2004.
- Segaard, Viggo. *Research in Church and Mission*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996.
- Sugden, Chris. "Mission Leadership and Christian Theological Research." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 28:3 (2004): 232-246.
- Taber Charles R. *To Understand the World, To Save the World: The Interface between Missiology and the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2000.
- Walker, Paul. "Perspectives from Ethnography: Applications in Mission and Urban Theology." *British Journal of Theological Education* 14:1 (2004): 153-167.

### **Foundations of Religious & Theological Research**

- Boice, James Montgomery. "The Preacher and Scholarship." In *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century*, 91-104. Edited by Samuel T. Logan, Jr. Phillipsburg, NY: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986.
- Custance, Arthur C. "Christian Scholarship: A Protest . . ." Part VIII of *The Flood: Local or Global?*, by Arthur C. Custance, 287-306. The Doorway Papers, vol. 9. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1979. Available from <[http://www.custance.org/Library/Volume9/Part\\_VIII/Prologue.html](http://www.custance.org/Library/Volume9/Part_VIII/Prologue.html)>; accessed 21 May 2003.
- Ellison, Christopher G. "Is Sociology the Core Discipline for the Scientific Study of Religion?" *Social Forces* 73:4 (1995): 1255-1267.

Geisler, Norman L. "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (March 1999): 3-19.

Hamilton, Barry W. *Introduction to Theological Research*. Available from <[http://acc.roberts.edu/NEmployees/Hamilton\\_Barry/INTRODUCTION%20TO%20THEOLOGICAL%20RESEARCH.htm](http://acc.roberts.edu/NEmployees/Hamilton_Barry/INTRODUCTION%20TO%20THEOLOGICAL%20RESEARCH.htm)>; accessed 21 May 2003.

Heimbrock, Hans-Gunter. "From Data to Theory: Elements of Methodology in Empirical Phenomenological Research in Practical Theology." *International Journal of Practical Theology*. 9:2 (2005): 273-299.

Henry, Carl F. H. "The Christian Worldview Imperative." *Faculty Dialogue*, no. 11 (1989): 23-32.

Lance, H. Darrell. "What Is Theological Research?" *Theological Education* 16 (spring 1980): 465-71.

Mittwede, Steven K. "Research Paradigms and Their Use and Importance in Theological Inquiry and Education." *Journal of Education & Christian Belief* 16:1 (2012): 23-40.

Moore, Zoe Bennett. "The Place of Research in Theological Education." *British Journal of Theological Education*. 13:1 (2002): 5-9.

Myers, William R. "Keeping the Faith While Doing Research in Ministry." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 50 (summer 1996): 201-04. Available from ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials [on-line database].

Reapsome, Jim. "Research and the Ginger Ale Syndrome." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, January 1998, 6-7.

Rowatt, G. Wade, Jr. "What Is Pastoral Research?" *Review and Expositor* 79 (summer 1982): 503-11. Available from ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials [on-line database].

Savage, Sara B. "Doing Pastoral Theology through Empirical Research." *British Journal of Theological Education*. 13:1 (2002): 51-57.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. "Why Johnny Can't Produce Christian Scholarship." *Crux: A Quarterly Journal of Christian Thought and Opinion* 32 (March 1996): 13-23.

Williams, Joel Stephen. "The Ministry and Scholarship." *Restoration Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1994): 173-81.

### **Sources of Religious & Theological Information**

Badke, William B. "Varieties of the Biblical Commentary: A Guide to Form and Function." *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]* 30 (February 1987): 31-35.

Available from

<[http://www.thepastorslibrary.com/recommendations/articles/buildinglibrary/trinity\\_badke.html](http://www.thepastorslibrary.com/recommendations/articles/buildinglibrary/trinity_badke.html)>; accessed 21 May 2003.

Barber, Cyril J., and Robert M. Krauss. *An Introduction to Theological Research: A Guide for College and Seminary Students*. 2d ed. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000.

Clarence, Judy. "Treasures Hid in the Sand: Finding Information for Religious Studies Research in Electronic Non-Theological Sources." *American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings* 59 (2005): 218-226.

Harbin, Duane. "Computer-Based Tools for Theological Research and Education Past, Present and Future." *American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings* 47 (1993): 123-140.

Smith, Gregory A. "Building Your Library Strategically." *The Baptist Preacher's Journal* 13 (spring 2003): 44-47.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Survey of Religious Book Publishing with Implications for Collection Development in Christian College Libraries*. Available from <[http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib\\_fac\\_pubs/7/](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/7/)>.

Tucker, Dennis C. *Research Techniques for Scholars and Students in Religion and Theology*. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2000.

### **Mechanics of Academic Writing**

Alexander, Patrick H. *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009.

Barnett, David L. "A Strategy for a Successful Doctor of Ministry Project." D.Min. diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992.

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2d ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

Goldbort, Robert. "Abstracts for Scientific Articles." *Journal of Environmental Health* 65 (November 2002): 26-27. Available from Academic Search Complete [on-line database].

Luey, Beth. *Handbook for Academic Authors*, 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Russell, Colin A. "On Book Reviews." *Science and Christian Belief* 9 (October 1997): 98-100.

Strunk, William, Jr. *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. Revised by and Bacon, 1999.



## ***COURSE SCHEDULE***

### **RTCH 680**

Textbooks: Badke, *Research Strategies* (2008)  
 Creswell, *Research Design* (2009)  
 Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style* (2007)  
 Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (2007).  
 Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers* (2008)

WEEK/ MODULE	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
<b>1 &amp; 2</b>	Badke: ch. 1 Creswell: chs. 1-3 Turabian: ch. 1 Vyhmeister: ch. 1	Course Requirements Checklist (Module/Week 1)	10
		Introduction DB (Module/Week 1)	0
<b>3 &amp; 4</b>	Badke: ch. 2 Turabian: ch. 2 Vyhmeister: chs. 2-4	Research Topic (Module/Week 3)	75
		DB 1 (Module/Week 4)	75
<b>5 &amp; 6</b>	Badke: chs. 3-7 Turabian: ch. 3 Vyhmeister: ch. 5	DB 2 (Module/Week 6)	75
<b>7 &amp; 8</b>	Badke: chs. 8-9 Turabian: ch. 4 Vyhmeister: chs. 6-10	Bibliography (Module/Week 8)	100
<b>9 &amp; 10</b>	Creswell: chs. 7-10 Vyhmeister: chs. 14-18	DB 3 (Module/Week 10)	75
<b>11 &amp; 12</b>	Badke: ch. 10 Creswell: chs. 4 Turabian: ch. 5 Vyhmeister: chs. 11	Outline & Works Cited (Module/Week 12)	150
<b>13 &amp; 14</b>	Creswell: chs. 5-6 Strunk & White: chs. 1-2 Turabian: chs. 6-8 Vyhmeister: chs. 12-13, 19	First Draft of Thesis Proposal (Module/Week 14)	200
<b>15 &amp; 6</b>	Strunk & White: chs. 3-6 Turabian: chs. 9-14 Vyhmeister: ch. 20	Final Draft of Thesis Proposal (Module/Week 16)	250
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1010</b>

DB = Discussion Board

RP = Research Paper



**NOTE:** Each course week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (EST) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (EST). The final week ends at 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Friday.