

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Center for Urban Ministerial Education

EM/MC 605 - Introduction to Theological Studies (formerly Research and Writing in Urban Theological Studies) Spring 2012

Professors:

Rudy Mitchell
Emmanuel Gospel Center
2 San Juan Street (P.O. Box 180245)
Boston, MA 02118
Hours: 10am-6pm daily
Phone: (617) 262-4567
Fax: (617) 437-9706
e-mail: rmitchell@egc.org

Sara Mitchell
Emmanuel Gospel Center
2 San Juan St. (P.O. 180245)
Boston, MA 02118
Hours: 9am- 5pm daily except Thurs. pm
Phone: (617) 262-4567
Fax: (617) 437-9706
e-mail: smitchell@egc.org

SYLLABUS

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

General: That class members will be able to do research and write academic papers of graduate level quality by:

- A. Improving Organizing and Thinking Skills: (Seminary goals: M.Div. 3,4,6; MAT,3)
 - 1. Improving notetaking abilities;
 - 2. Developing organizing and outlining abilities for writing and ministry
 - 3. Improving reasoning and critical thinking skills for writing
 - 4. Learning how to combine previous and new learning methods (M.A.R.,3)
 - 5. Acquiring a Christian worldview

- B. Discovering and applying practical research methods and sources: (MATS,3; MDiv,4)
 - 1. Learning how to find useful sources of information
 - 2. Applying research methods to understand the urban community
 - 3. Applying research methods to understand the urban church/ministry

- C. Developing the ability to use libraries and information sources effectively (Seminary goals -M.A. Bib., 3;M.A.O.T & M.A.N.T.- 4)
 - 1. Becoming familiar with local library resources
 - 2. Understanding library classification systems; use of card catalogs and on-line catalogs
 - 3. Understanding computer based information sources
 - 4. Becoming aware of useful reference tools, both general and theological

- D. Improving basic writing skills: (Seminary goals -M.A. Bib., 3;M.A.O.T & M.A.N.T.- 4; M.Div., 4)
 - 1. Being able to correctly cite sources in footnotes and bibliographies
 - 2. Being able to develop paragraphs effectively with unity and coherence
 - 3. Writing sentences with improved style and clarity and increased variety
 - 4. Sharpening present grammatical usage

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

General: The central assignment of this course is simply to research and write an academic paper. Various parts of this paper are submitted in rough draft form to allow feedback from professors for revision and improvement.

A. ATTENDANCE:

Class participation is an important aspect of the course; therefore, students are expected to attend each class session. In order to receive full credit for the course, no more than three (3) absences can be allowed. Half-class attendance and absences will be counted (as ½).

B. REQUIRED READING:

1. **Nancy J. Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2008. (assigned readings)**
2. **Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008. (assigned readings)**
3. **Rudy Mitchell, *Biblical Research Tools and Methods*. Boston: N.P., 2012.**
4. Read material in the **binder of photocopied articles and excerpts** for the course. Available at the CUME Library. **Or** read 100 pages on course topics and submit a report. See reading report forms for details

*** Hand in **Reading Reports** of what you have read. These will list all reading assignments by class. The dates they are due are as follows:

FIRST HALF REPORT – March 13, 2012

SECOND HALF REPORT – May 1, 2012

C. Worksheets & Quizzes – 3 take home exercises need to be completed.

1. **Library / Reference Tools Quiz - Due February 28, 2012**
2. **Footnote quiz / Worksheet - Due March 6, 2012**
3. **Grammatical Worksheets: Reference material and exercises – Due April 3, 2012**

(Will be accepted through May 1st)

A working knowledge of English grammar is an important component of writing. Though useful and desirable, it is not possible for this course to adequately provide a comprehensive review of grammar. We will cover the most common problem areas. However, since each person has his or her own individual strengths and weaknesses, to attempt to cover all aspects of grammar typically helps some, while it bores others. We are not so much concerned that you know all the particular names of the rules, but rather that your usage of standard English grammar improves, resulting in more effective writing. We will review your worksheets and make suggestions for further learning. See also the bibliography for recommended reading on grammar & writing.

D. WRITE A 10 PAGE RESEARCH PAPER:

The preliminary assignments (#1-4) are designed to help build toward the end goal of completing the 10 page research paper. It is important that you complete each preliminary assignment on time.

1. Submit the **TOPIC Report Form** for your paper. **DUE February 7, 2012**
(Select & describe a topic you will write your paper about)

Note: If you change your topic, submit in writing your new topic & obtain approval for it.

2. Submit a **PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY** of 10 to 25 works, that apply to your topic and could be of possible use to you. (**Hint: Try to look at the sources & select at least ten whose content is best for your topic.**)
DUE March 6, 2012

3. Submit a **PRELIMINARY OUTLINE** of your paper. This can be revised later and improved for inclusion in the rough draft and final paper.
DUE March 20, 2012

4. Submit a photocopy of your **FIRST DRAFT OF THE PAPER**. Include **footnotes, bibliography and outline page**. Be sure to make a backup copy of your paper. This will enable you to continue working on your final version while we correct your first draft. Double space your paper. **DUE April 10, 2012**

5. Submit the **FINAL DRAFT** of your ten page **Research Paper**. The paper must be typed. It should be approximately 2500 words, minimum. In typed form with double spacing and one inch margins, this should come to about 10 pages of written text. In summary, your paper :
 - *Should be typed with **double spacing**, one inch margins, 10-12 point font
 - *Should be 10 pages / 2500 words **(10 or more, but less than 25 pp.)**
 - *Should be a Research type paper (topic approved by us)
 - *Should include Title Page, Outline page, Footnotes or Endnotes, and Bibliography
 - *Pages should be numbered beginning with the first page of text.

DUE May 1, 2012

6. Give an **ORAL PRESENTATION** of the findings of your research paper
A short (five minute) presentation of your paper's thesis, summary of what you have researched (your findings/conclusions), and the implications / significance of your research.

DUE May 1, 2012

IV. GRADE COMPUTATION:

Although the grades are carefully detailed according to the breakdown below, there is considerable flexibility for those of different abilities and experience. Significant credit is given for improvement. Promptness in handing in papers is more important in this course than in some courses because we want to give you feedback early enough so that you can have a chance to improve and revise your work under our guidance. The preliminary bibliography and outline must be completed *before* the rough draft to receive credit. The course also seeks to help you in planning the steps in doing a paper according to a timely schedule. To receive an "A" you need to carefully fulfill the promptness, attendance, and report requirements and not merely submit a good final paper.

A.	Final Research Paper	50%
1.	Final Outline	6%
2.	Footnotes	6%
3.	Bibliography	5%
4.	Writing	(25%)
	a. Grammar/Punctuation	7.5%
	b. Paragraphs	10%
	c. Sentences	7.5%
5.	Use of Research & Own Thoughts	8%
B.	Improvement	8%
1.	First Draft to Final Draft	4%
2.	Outline Improvement	2%
3.	Bibliography Improvement	2%
C.	Reading - Reading Reports	5%
D.	Preliminary Assignments and Quiz	17%
1.	Paper Topic & Thesis	1%
2.	Outline	5%
3.	Bibliography	5%
4.	Quiz - Library & Ref. Books.	2%
5.	Take Home Quiz: Footnotes	2%
6.	Grammar Worksheets	2%
E.	First Draft	10%
F.	Promptness & Class Attendance / Participation	10%
1.	Class attendance, promptness, & participation	5%
2.	Outline, Bibliography & Reading reports on time	2%
3.	First Draft on Time	2%
4.	Final Paper Presentation	1%

OVERVIEW OF CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

<i>CLASS DATE</i>	<i>TOPICS DISCUSSED/COVERED</i>	<i>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</i>
January 31	<u>INTRODUCTION, WRITING & CHOOSING A TOPIC</u> * Introduction of course & syllabus; * The first 3 steps in writing a research paper including Selecting a Topic * Writing Discovery I (Writing Exercise)	
February 7	<u>PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH PROCESS; INTERNET RESEARCH</u> * A planned Approach to Research * Selecting appropriate Research Methods * Finding what exists on a topic * Methods of Research: Personal Interview, observation, etc. * Methods of Internet Research & Computer-based search techniques * Interaction on choice of paper topic;	<i>READ: Required reading</i> <i>SUBMIT: - Paper Topic</i>
February 14	<u>LOCATING INFORMATION FOR YOUR RESEARCH</u> * Key Christian Reference Tools & How to Use Them * Using Reference Books for Bible study * Introduction to Library Research * How to use libraries effectively * How to use the card catalog, indexes, & periodical sources	<i>READ: Required reading</i> Class at CUME library
February 21	<u>READING WEEK #1 – NO CLASS</u>	
February 28	<u>DOCUMENTING THE RESEARCH PAPER</u> * The Bibliography * The Footnotes * Methods of Quotation	<i>READ: Required reading</i> <i>SUBMIT: Quiz: Library/Research</i>
March 6	<u>READING, LEARNING, AND NOTETAKING SKILLS</u> * Study and Learning Methods * The Four Levels of Reading, incl. Inspectional Reading * Notetaking Methods and Techniques * Summarizing & paraphrasing skills	<i>READ: Required reading</i> <i>SUBMIT: Preliminary Bibliography</i> <i>Take Home Quiz: Footnotes</i>
March 13	<u>OUTLINING & ORGANIZING</u> * Outlining Form and Mechanics * Ways of Organizing the Research Paper * Principles of Outlining for writing, teaching & preaching	<i>READ: Required reading</i> <i>SUBMIT: Reading Report I</i>
March 20	<u>WORLD VIEWS, EVALUATING SOURCES & CRITICAL THINKING</u> * The Role of careful thinking in research and writing * Understanding World Views & Underlying Assumptions * Evaluating Reasoning, Evidence, & Authority of Sources * Exercise in Evaluating Research Sources	<i>READ: Required Reading</i> <i>and Exodus article</i> <i>SUBMIT: Preliminary Outline</i> <i>(include SASE)</i>
March 27	<u>READING WEEK #2 - NO CLASS</u>	

April 3	<u>WRITING : THE PARAGRAPH & SENTENCE</u> * Paragraphing Principles and Structure * Integrating & using Sources in your paragraphs * Effective Methods of paragraph development * Writing Discovery II : Exercises in Paragraph writing	<i>READ: Required reading</i> SUBMIT: Grammar Worksheets
April 10	<u>WRITING IMPROVEMENT</u> * Writing Sentences with improved style and clarity * Eight keys to good writing * Avoiding the most common errors in writing * Avoiding grammar and punctuation pitfalls * Methods of revising and improving your writing	READ : Required Reading SUBMIT: First Draft of Paper
April 17	<u>RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY MINISTRY</u> * The 7 Steps of Community Research * Planning Process : How to plan a Christian ministry with research * Case Study Using Research in Ministry Planning * Connecting the Church to the Community * Community Assets Approach to Research & Community Change	READ: Required Reading
April 24	<u>RESEARCH APPLICATION TO CHURCH MINISTRY</u> * Research applied to understanding the urban church * Church growth , church life cycles and the community * Church growth & vitality in the urban community –interactive case study	READ: Required reading
May 1	<u>APPLICATION OF RESEARCH & WRITING TO LIFE & MINISTRY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</u> * Oral presentations of class members' research	SUBMIT : Final Draft of Paper Reading Report 2 Oral Presentation

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

February 7	PAPER TOPIC & PRELIMINARY THESIS
February 28	TAKE HOME QUIZ: LIBRARY/RESEARCH
March 6	PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY TAKE HOME QUIZ: FOOTNOTES
March 13	READING REPORT #1
March 20	PRELIMINARY OUTLINE WITH REVISED THESIS
April 3	GRAMMAR WORKSHEETS
April 10	FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER (with <u>OUTLINE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, & FOOTNOTES</u>)
May 1st	FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER (with <u>OUTLINE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, & FOOTNOTES</u>) ORAL PRESENTATION READING REPORT #2

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