Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston  
(Center for Urban Ministerial Education)  

EM/MC 605 - Introduction to Theological Studies: Research Methods & Practices  
(formerly Research and Writing in Urban Theological Studies)  
Fall 2012  

Professors:  
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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:
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 – October 23, 2012
SECOND HALF REPORT – December 11, 2012

C. Worksheets & Quizzes – 3 take home exercises need to be completed.
1. Library / Reference Tools Quiz - Due October 2, 2012
2. Footnote quiz / Worksheet - Due October 16, 2012
3. Grammatical Worksheets: Reference material and exercises – Due Nov. 6, 2012
(Will be accepted through Dec. 11)

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 September 18, 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 October 16, 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 October 30, 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 Nov. 20, 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 Dec.11, 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 Dec. 11, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Topics Discussed/Covered</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Introduction, Writing &amp; Choosing a Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Introduction of course &amp; syllabus;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The first 3 steps in writing a research paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>including Selecting a Topic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Writing Discovery I (Writing Exercise)</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
<td>Planning Your Research Process; Internet Research</td>
<td>READ: Required reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* A planned Approach to Research</td>
<td>SUBMIT: Paper Topic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Selecting appropriate Research Methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Finding what exists on a topic</td>
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<td>* Methods of Research: Personal Interview, observation, etc.</td>
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<td>* Methods of Internet Research &amp; Computer-based search techniques</td>
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<td>* Interaction on choice of paper topic</td>
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<td>September 25</td>
<td>Locating Information for Your Research</td>
<td>READ: Required reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Key Christian Reference Tools &amp; How to Use Them</td>
<td>Class at CUME library</td>
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<td>* Using Reference Books for Bible study</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Introduction to Library Research</td>
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<td>* How to use libraries effectively</td>
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<td>* How to use the card catalog, indexes, &amp; periodical sources</td>
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<td>October 2</td>
<td>Documenting the Research Paper</td>
<td>READ: Required reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The Bibliography</td>
<td>SUBMIT: Quiz: Library/Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The Footnotes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Methods of Quotation</td>
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<td>October 9</td>
<td>Reading Week #1 – No Class</td>
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<td>October 16</td>
<td>Reading, Learning, and Notetaking Skills</td>
<td>READ: Required reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Study and Learning Methods</td>
<td>SUBMIT: Preliminary Bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The Four Levels of Reading, incl. Inspectonal Reading</td>
<td>Take Home Quiz: Footnotes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Notetaking Methods and Techniques</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Summarizing &amp; paraphrasing skills</td>
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<td>October 23</td>
<td>Outlining &amp; Organizing</td>
<td>READ: Required reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Outlining Form and Mechanics</td>
<td>SUBMIT: Reading Report I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Ways of Organizing the Research Paper</td>
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<td>* Principles of Outlining for writing, teaching &amp; preaching</td>
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<td>October 30</td>
<td>World Views, Evaluating Sources &amp; Critical Thinking</td>
<td>READ: Required Reading and Exodus article</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* The Role of careful thinking in research and writing</td>
<td>SUBMIT: Preliminary Outline</td>
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<td>* Understanding World Views &amp; Underlying Assumptions</td>
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<td>* Evaluating Reasoning, Evidence, &amp; Authority of Sources</td>
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<td>* Exercise in Evaluating Research Sources</td>
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November 6  
**WRITING : THE PARAGRAPH & SENTENCE**  
* Paragraphing Principles and Structure  
* Integrating & using Sources in your paragraphs  
* Effective Methods of paragraph development  
* Writing Discovery II : Exercises in Paragraph writing  

**READ: Required reading**  
**SUBMIT: Grammar Worksheets**  

November 13  
**READING WEEK #2 - NO CLASS**  

November 20  
**WRITING IMPROVEMENT**  
* 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**  

November 27  
**RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY MINISTRY**  
* 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**  

December 4  
**RESEARCH APPLICATION TO CHURCH MINISTRY**  
* 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**  

December 11  
**APPLICATION OF RESEARCH & WRITING TO LIFE & MINISTRY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**  
* Oral presentations of class members’ research  

**SUBMIT : Final Draft of Paper Reading Report 2 Oral Presentation**  

**SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS**  

September 18  
**PAPER TOPIC & PRELIMINARY THESIS**  

October 2  
**TAKE HOME QUIZ: LIBRARY/RESEARCH**  

October 16  
**PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY**  
**TAKE HOME QUIZ: FOOTNOTES**  

October 23  
**READING REPORT #1**  

October 30  
**PRELIMINARY OUTLINE WITH REVISED THESIS**  

November 6  
**GRAMMAR WORKSHEETS**  

November 20  
**FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER (with OUTLINE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, & FOOTNOTES)**  

December 11  
**FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER (with OUTLINE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, & FOOTNOTES)**  
**ORAL PRESENTATION**  
**READING REPORT #2**
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

WRITING, STYLE & RHETORIC


Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. With 2 Chapters Co-authored by Gregory G. Colomb. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990. (See also *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity & Grace*.)


**WRITING THE RESEARCH PAPER**


**GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND LANGUAGE**


**GUIDES TO GENERAL REFERENCE BOOKS & RESEARCH SOURCES**


REFERENCE BOOKS ON BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FOOTNOTES


COMMUNITY, CHURCH AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH


THINKING IN WRITING


COMPUTER and INTERNET RESEARCH


See the following website for research links: [www.egc.org/urbanmin/ark.html](http://www.egc.org/urbanmin/ark.html)