CT500 - Introduction to Theological Research
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary - Charlotte

Please Note: This one-credit class has a fair amount of work. If you are just starting seminary, or working full-time, we encourage you not to over-load your schedule with too many other classes. Please allow enough time to do the assigned work and achieve successful completion of the course.

Instructor: Dr. Bob Mayer, DMin., MLIS, Senior Librarian and Assistant Professor of Theological Bibliography.

Staff/Teaching Assistant: Ms. Mary Reitano, MACC, Coordinator of Writing Programs.

Writing Instructors: Mike Murdock, Erin James, Drew Anderson, Anna Gissing, Ashley Stamper, David White, Joy Glenny, Kendall Potter, Jeffrey Wubbenhorst, Curt Dean, and Doug Price.

Contact Information

If you have any questions as you move through this course, please contact your Writing Instructor. Working with a Writing Instructor and receiving feedback throughout the course on each assignment is a requirement of CT500.

If you have not been assigned a Writing Instructor, and been contacted by them as of January 20, 2016, please contact Mary Reitano promptly at mreitano@gordonconwell.edu

Technical Support

If you have technical problems, call the Help Desk at 978-646-4357 or 800-428-7329, or email them at helpdesk@gordonconwell.edu

If you cannot access your GCTS email or Sakai, your password may have expired. You can reset your password at: https://password.gordonconwell.edu/

All requests related to the course content or structure should be sent to your writing instructor.

Course Description

CT500 is an online course with modules and assignments you are required to complete in Sakai. This class is NOT self-paced. It has deadlines about every two weeks, with penalties for late submissions.

All assignments are graded and you must complete all the reading, modules, and assignments to receive a passing grade in the course. There is no live instruction or campus residency requirement. Your primary interaction will be via email with your personally assigned writing instructor.
CT500 introduces seminary students to graduate-level research and writing skills with specific attention to academic writing, theological research, proper use and citation of sources, plagiarism, and usage of style manuals. The course also explores the nature of theological reflection and introduces students to the idea of “thinking theologically” about various topics and issues they encounter both in academic study and in the practice of ministry.

**Gordon-Conwell Mission**

This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives:

Demonstrate constructive and critical thinking about Christian ministry in light of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship in accordance with historic Christian orthodoxy.

**Relation to Curriculum**

CT500 is a one credit hour course, required of all Gordon-Conwell, Charlotte students. Charlotte students must complete this course within their first year.

**Pre-Requisite Knowledge**

This course assumes that students have taken an undergraduate writing course and are familiar with the basics of good composition and mechanics. Students who do not feel confident in their knowledge of these elements should take some time to review writing fundamentals through writing handbooks or websites. Also, please feel free to contact Mary Reitano at mreitano@gordonconwell.edu and we can arrange additional coaching sessions.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand foundational principles for organizing and conducting graduate-level research.

2. Demonstrate their ability to develop a research topic and conduct effective research.

3. Demonstrate their knowledge of graduate-level academic writing standards and process.

4. Become familiar with proper citation of sources and the style manuals that govern the citation process.

5. Learn how to recognize plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional, and avoid it in preparation of their research papers.

6. Begin to develop a framework for ongoing theological reflection that will shape how they integrate Christian faith with academic study and the practice of ministry.
Module Topics

The following are a listing of the lesson topics in this course.

Module 1: Required Preparation

Module 2: Critical Thinking and Reading

Module 3: Grammar Review (if assigned by instructor)

Module 4: Academic Research

Module 5: Sources and Citations

Module 6: Thinking Theologically

Module 7: Academic Writing

Module 8: Theological Reflection and Revising Your Writing

Required Materials

Students are required to purchase and read the following three texts:


Course Requirements:

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below.

Content Mastery:

This course assumes that the best way to improve our writing is to write. In addition to reading about writing, you will practice the craft of writing at the graduate level. The following are the types of assignments you can expect.
Tutorials

It is required that you complete the Sakai and Library tutorials in the New Student Orientation, in order to take this class and be comfortable with the technology and resources. These can be accessed in Sakai in the “CHA Orientation Site.” If you do not see this site listed in your Sakai sites, please email the Admissions office at charlotteadmissions@gordonconwell.edu.

Students will submit a signed form at the beginning of the course (in the Assignments tool) indicating that they have completed the tutorial requirements. This is a requirement to pass the course.

Readings

The content of this course will be presented through three primary means: 1) reading of books and articles on research and writing; and 2) websites devoted to writing practice and resources. There are about 500 pages of reading from the textbooks, plus reading the modules and linked resources.

Students will submit a signed form at the end of the course (in the Assignments tool) indicating that they have completed the reading requirements. This is a requirement to pass the course.

Writing Assignments

Throughout this course you will construct a short research paper. In each module you will build your paper step-by-step and receive feedback from a writing instructor at each stage. The culminating assignment is a five-to-seven page essay on a topic you will select from the list provided for you by the course instructors. You will also write two papers of one to two pages (critical interaction and critical book review).

Other Assignments

You will also have one short open-book quiz, and six short assignments designed to help you write your paper (topic, outline, 200-word embedded theology email, paraphrase, citations, and bibliography / thesis statement).

Grading and Course Policies

This one credit hour course will be graded based on the standard Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary grading policy. CT500 is a Pass/Fail class and will be reflected on transcript as a “P” or “F.” The class will be based on a total of 200 points. Since research and writing are such essential skills for graduate students, a numeric grade of 160/200 (80%) or better, which is a B- or better, will be needed for a passing grade. (See next page for the assignments and related point values.)
The final course grade reflects the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment / Maximum Points Per Assignment</th>
<th>Total Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Activities (7)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Book Review</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Draft</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Final Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation/Tutorials Report</td>
<td>Pass/Fail for entire course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Log</td>
<td>Pass/Fail for entire course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Instructor Feedback**

Writing instructors will assist the instructor with review of course assignments. Students will receive feedback on their assignments within one week of submission, with the exception of the Rough Draft assignment, for which instructors will have up to two weeks to provide feedback.

**Document Formatting and Submission**

Formatting preferences:

Assignments should be double-spaced, using 11-12 pt font of Times New Roman or Cambria or Arial.

File naming convention for assignments:

Assignments and papers should be labeled as "FirstinitialLastname_Module#Lesson#_MMDDYY" (example: Jsmith_M2L3_010101).

**Early Submissions:**

You may post assignments early; they will be graded in order received. It is to your advantage to do so to allow additional time between assignments. However, note that some assignments required feedback before proceeding.

**Late Work**

Students must complete the course within the due dates given on the Course Schedule. The course must be completed within the first year of a student's program. Failure to pass this course within the first year could result in requirement to repeat course. Further Late Policy details below:

1) Each late assignment will incur a three point penalty. These points can add up quickly and put you at risk for failing the class. Please plan ahead!
2) "Grace" will be extended two times—when late penalties will not be incurred. You may select these times which may coincide with a particularly busy week, a vacation, or use them in unexpected circumstances (i.e. illness). However, notify your instructor in advance and complete the assignment within a week after the due date.

3) Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the Coordinator of Writing Programs.

Netiquette

Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

Additional Seminary Policies

For additional seminary policies that may pertain to this course, please refer to the Syllabus Addendum below.

Syllabus Addendum

Virtual Writing Center
Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing instructors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing instructors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of
another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy**
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work,” as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams. However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.
Returned Work
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self-addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.