Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Hispanic Ministries Program - Birmingham, Alabama
EM/MC605 - Introduction to Theological Studies
Spring (April 25-28), 2013

Rev. Juan C. Morales, MA, MAR, PhD (cand.)
(347)867-4216; jm3443@columbia.edu

Syllabus (preliminary)

I. Course Objectives - This course will provide an Introduction to Theological Studies for the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Urban Ministry as offered at the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (Boston Campus) through Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s Hispanic Initiatives Program. Class members will be exposed to methodologies and techniques necessary to do research and to write academic papers of graduate level quality. This will be accomplished through:

A. Improving Organizing and Thinking Skills (Seminary goals: MDiv.,3-4,6)
   1. Improving note-taking abilities
   2. Developing organizing and outlining abilities for writing and ministry
   3. Improving reasoning and critical thinking skills for writing
   4. Acquiring a Christian worldview

B. Discovering and applying practical research methods and sources (MDiv., 2,4,6-7; MAUM 1-3,5-6)
   1. Learning how to find useful sources of information
   2. Applying research methods to understand the community and its context
   3. Applying research methods to understand the church and holistic ministry

C. Developing the ability to use libraries and information sources effectively (MDiv., 2,4,6-7; MAUM 1-3,5-6)
   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 general and theological reference tools

D. Improving basic writing skills (Seminary goals - MDiv., 3,4,6-8; MAUM, 5-6)
   1. Correctly citing sources in footnotes and bibliographies
   2. Developing paragraphs effectively and with unity and coherence
   3. Writing sentences with improved style and clarity
   4. Sharpening present grammatical usage

II. Required Textbooks

- Turabian, Kate L., A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

III. Course Requirements

A. Attendance Policy & Class Participation (20%) – attendance at all class sessions is critical to the learning process. Students have a half-day (1/2) unexcused absence without penalty. Lateness to either half of the class sessions count as ¼ absence. Class participation enhances the learning process by making space for the diverse voices of knowledge and experiences of the students to become shared wisdom of the community.

B. Reading Log (20%) – students are responsible for the readings indicated in the syllabus. Failure to read the material will affect the student’s comprehension of the lectures and capacity to participate during class sessions. The attached reading log must be submitted with the final paper. Please note that class lectures do not summarize or review the readings due. Rather, they assume that the reading has been done and build on it.

Students should read at least the following before April:
- How to Think Theologically
- Chpts. 1,4,7,8,14,15,17,18 of the Vyhmeister book
- Chpts. 1,3 of the Bradford book
C. **Research Paper (60%)** - Students will write a 10-15 page research paper based on an issue facing the community where their “home” church is located. The paper is to include:

1. **Thesis Statement** - state the issue and what you will do with it in the paper (e.g., compare and contrast, take a position, etc.)

2. **Biblical and Theological Analysis** - parallels, contrasts, etc., from the Scriptures that may speak to the issue. Basic exegetical considerations (including historical, linguistic, theological analysis using key word studies, commentaries, etc.), must be incorporated.

3. **Historical Analysis** - what is the history of the issue? What are the historical factors that have contributed to the issue becoming what it is today in the community? Has the Church (local and global) historically dealt with the issue? If so, how? Has the Church been effective in its dealing with the issue? What models are/are not useful for today?

4. **Social analysis** - This involves doing qualitative and quantitative research. What does the issue look like today? Compare the issue at the state and/or national levels. How are various demographic groups being impacted by this issue? What is a contemporary understanding(s) of the issue both, in the local context, and in US society at large. How is the issue perceived in the community? What are the various ways in which folks in the community attempt to address or deal with the issue?

5. **Annotated Bibliography** - a minimum of fifteen (15) sources. At least five (5) of these should be non-reference texts on the issue. While there is no minimal amount required, attention should be paid to the use of primary sources. On-line, open-source reference tools are not to be included in the bibliography.

D. **Grading scale and Plagiarism** – please refer to guidelines as indicated in the GCTS Student Handbook

### Overview of Class Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thursday, 4/25 | AM      | • Syllabus review  
• Biblical Basis for Theological Research  
• Hearing, Developing and Owning Your Voice  
• Researching and Writing as a Holistic Being  
• Researching and Writing in the Context of One’s Calling |
| PM         |         | • The Theological Researcher as Writer:  
• The Writer as a Social Product and as an Individual  
• The Writer as Interpreter  
• The Writer and the Prophetic Imagination  
• Varieties of Research Papers |
| Friday, 4/26 | AM      | • Selecting a Research Topic  
• Developing a Preliminary, “Working” Thesis Statement  
• Gathering Sources for Research  
• Evaluating sources and their Authority  
• Notetaking Methods and Techniques |
| PM         |         | • Creating an Outline  
• Writing with Clarity  
• Revising and Improving the Paper |
| Saturday, 4/27 | AM      | • Referencing Formats  
• Footnotes, endnotes, parenthetical referencing  
• Bibliography, works cited |
| PM         |         | • Researching, Analyzing and Contextualizing Issues  
• Researching, and Analyzing the Community |
| Sunday, 4/28 | AM      | • Biblical Research Tools  
• Understanding the Text and the Context  
• Doing a Word Study  
• Applying Theological Research to Contemporary Issues |
| PM         |         | • Biblical Research Tools  
• Commentaries  
• Bible dictionaries  
• Concordances |

*The Final Paper and the Reading Log are both due on 5/11/13*