M.A. Thesis Course Instructions

Please read the Student Handbook section on Thesis Courses, the instructions below and the GCTS Thesis Guidelines (attached to this form) before completing this M.A. Thesis Course Registration form.

What is a thesis course?
- A thesis is a major research paper done toward the end of a student’s program to demonstrate research and writing abilities. A thesis can be taken for one or two course credits depending on the student’s particular program and research interests. The thesis must be done within the student’s area of concentration; it generally develops from work done in other courses and, therefore, should be undertaken in the final year of study. These courses are subject to all policies and deadlines governing other ‘standard’ courses.

What policies and procedures pertain to thesis courses?
- Students must be invited by the division in order to write a thesis. Once a student has been invited and the topic of research has been determined, then he/she must submit a thesis proposal to the appropriate division chair. The proposal, typed and 200-500 words in length, must be submitted for approval no later than April 1st for a Fall semester thesis and November 1st for a Spring semester thesis. It must provide a rationale for the thesis topic, outline the body of the thesis (tentatively), describe the chronology for completion, and make preliminary suggestions for bibliographical resources where possible.

- Once approved, the division will select the supervisor, who will also serve as the first reader. The supervisor, in consultation with the student, will choose the second reader and additional readers as necessary. These readers will form the thesis committee, who will later administer the oral defense. The choice of supervisor and reader(s) must meet with the approval of the appropriate division. Requests to have an instructor other than a GCTS faculty member serve as supervisor or second reader must be made in writing to the registrar no later than April 1st for a Fall course and November 1st for a Spring course. The appropriate divisional chair as well as the academic dean must approve such requests.

- Upon approval, the student will register for the thesis using the attached petition form.

- The numbers 891 and 892 will be used (i.e., NT 891 – Thesis I; NT 892 – Thesis II). The thesis will be scheduled within one major semester (Fall or Spring) or two consecutive major semesters. When carried over two semesters, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the second section is registered by the standard registration deadlines. A one-course thesis must be 12,000 to 15,000 words (approximately 40-50 pages) in length. A two-course thesis must be 24,000 to 30,000 (80-100 pages) in length.

- The student will be responsible to initiate meetings with the thesis supervisor as needed during the writing process. The first meeting must take place within 10 days of the semester’s beginning.

- No later than three weeks prior to the end of the semester, the student must submit to the supervisor and second reader(s) copies of the completed thesis; it must be typed (double-spaced) and follow the most recent Turabian manual of style. Submitted copies may be photocopied. The student may request guidelines detailing proper thesis format from the Registration Office.

- The student will be examined orally on the thesis at a date scheduled by the supervisor and at least two other readers, who will administer the oral thesis defense. The readers will each assign a grade. The average of the grades will constitute the final grade submitted for each of the thesis courses, 891 and 892.

- Thesis examinations requiring extension beyond the standard deadline for written work in a given semester will require an approved extension from the registrar.

- See the Student Handbook for more policies pertaining to theses.

What must I do when my thesis is completed and has been presented to the thesis committee?

- Provide the Registration Office with two unbound revised copies of the thesis.

- Complete, sign, and submit to the Registration Office Gordon-Conwell’s Copyright Release Form for Deposited Student Works (found in final pages of GCTS Thesis Guidelines attached to this form, available online, or in the Registration Office).

- Complete and sign the Distribution Agreement for TREN (found in final pages of GCTS Thesis Guidelines attached to this form, available online or in the Registration Office).

- Pay the appropriate binding fee (this fee will be billed to your student account; check the Special Fees section of the Student Handbook for current fees). Note: Any student who is graduating in May and receives a passing grade on the thesis but does not submit two final copies to the registrar by the deadline in the Academic Calendar, will still be allowed to graduate; however, his/her diploma will be withheld until the copies have been received. In such cases, final copies should be submitted no later than one month following graduation.

3/04/16
M.A. Thesis Course (891/892)

Please read the accompanying M.A. Thesis Course Instructions before completing this form.
Obtain the signature of the thesis supervisor, second reader(s), and divisional chair.
Then return this form to the Registration Office for final approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>GCTS ID #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>GCTS Box #</th>
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<th>Degree(s)</th>
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<th>Term(s) course(s) is/are to be registered (i.e., Fall 2008, Spring 2009, etc.)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Thesis Supervisor</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Include the department code (i.e., CH, TH, etc.) and either 891 (one-course thesis) or 891/892 (two-course thesis) as the course number.)</td>
<td>(This is a self-created course title (e.g., &quot;The Impact of 19th and 20th Century Revivals on Today’s Church&quot;)</td>
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Student, please check the appropriate box(es) below:

- [ ] This is a one-course thesis (3.0 credit hours) to be registered in the ________ term.
- [ ] This is a two-course thesis (6.0 credit hours):
  - [ ] Register both parts (891 and 892) in the ________ term.
  - [ ] Register 891 in the ________ term and 892 in the ________ term.

The student should first secure the signature of the thesis supervisor, then the second reader, and finally the division chair. After that, the petition should be submitted to the Registration Office for final approval.

The student and the thesis supervisor will receive a copy of this form upon approval by the Registrar.

*I have read and understand the registration instructions on this form. I have read and agree to abide by the Community Life Statement and the policies and deadlines in the current Gordon-Conwell Student Handbook. By submitting my registration, I agree to pay tuition and fees and accept all applied penalties and fees, including interest charges on unpaid balances, should I not adhere to the policies and deadlines regarding registration and payment of my student account. I further acknowledge that I agree to reimburse Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary the fees of any collection agency, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of 33 1/3 percent of the debt and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney’s fees, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary would incur in such collection efforts.

Student Signature (REQUIRED — ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.)

Required Approvals:

<table>
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<th>Thesis Supervisor (REQUIRED)</th>
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<td>Second Reader(s) (REQUIRED)</td>
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<td>Divisional Chair (REQUIRED)</td>
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<td>Registration Official (REQUIRED)</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
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FOR REGISTRATION OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date of Final Approval: ____________________________
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Basic Requirements

Supplementary Clues for Writing a Good Project/Paper/Thesis

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BASIC REQUIREMENTS

A Th.M. student should seek instruction from his/her Th.M. Program Director about the Th.M. thesis process. Master of Arts students cannot choose to write a thesis, but must be invited to write one. Unless you have been invited to write a thesis, you should not attempt to begin this process, but should seek advice from the faculty member who serves as director of your particular degree program.

1. The M.A. and Th. M. programs have faculty directors. If you have been invited to write a thesis, and would like to accept the invitation and do so, you are responsible to find out who the director of your degree program is, make all necessary appointments with him or her, and be sure to follow carefully the required process, submitting any materials that your program director may require.

2. Pay close attention to all deadlines, lest your desire to write a project, paper, or thesis -- or to graduate on time -- be nullified by your failure to meet one or more of the deadlines or requirements. There are various deadlines for: registering to take a project, paper or thesis course, submitting a thesis proposal, turning in individual chapters, submitting the completed project, paper or thesis to your readers, having your oral thesis defense, submitting revised copies to the Registration Office, etc.

3. Your degree program director can help you know how to write a thesis proposal. Normally, a thesis proposal will include at least the following four elements: a proposed title for the thesis, a 100-300 word summary of what the thesis will hopefully accomplish, a tentative outline, and a tentative bibliography.

4. Follow the directions for grammar, punctuation, style, and format in the latest edition of the style manual most appropriate to your subject. Your paper or thesis director may suggest or require alternatives or modifications to these manuals or to certain instructions in them.

   a. For most papers and theses in Christian Thought or Practical Theology, use either A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate Turabian or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

   b. For papers and theses in Biblical Studies, use The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient, Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies. For dates, however, use B.C. and A.D., rather than B.C.E. and C.E.

   c. For papers and theses in Pastoral Counseling, use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

   d. Any of these may be supplemented by the Chicago Manual of Style.
5. You and your thesis director (also called thesis advisor or first reader) will work out a schedule for submission of the first draft(s) of the thesis in stages, for revisions, and for submission of a final draft, as well as meetings, as needed, for the evaluation of materials submitted. Sometimes sections of a thesis are submitted to both first and second readers at all stages; sometimes only the first reader sees the thesis until the final draft is complete. Follow the directions of your thesis director. Do not begin a thesis without knowing the schedule and procedure for all submissions, and do not fail to meet the deadlines and procedures for all submissions. Some students try to run ahead of their thesis reader(s) and to complete the thesis and then submit it for approval, as if this would save everyone time and thus please the reader(s). What usually results in such cases is failure, with the student losing the time and money invested in the thesis work -- not to mention the personal humiliation. Don't attempt to write a thesis on your own. Always write under the direction of your thesis director/reader(s).

6. In the completed project/paper/thesis include a title page (sample attached), abstract (sample attached), table of contents, and, as appendices, a vita (a brief sketch of the author's life, including at least full name, date and place of birth, educational background, and year of scheduled graduation -- sample attached). The following are required for theses only: a Copyright Release Form for Deposited Student Works, a Distribution Agreement for TREN, and, if required by either the registration office or the director of your degree program, a Thesis Check List to be submitted to the Registrar.

7. MAR project/papers should be submitted to the directing professor by the academic deadline.

8. Theses should be delivered to the Registration Office by the established deadline but in no case later than the Friday before baccalaureate: two (2) hard copies of the revised original prints, double spaced on acid-free high quality 8 1/2 by 11 paper with one inch margins except 1 1/2 inches on the left. Include payment for the thesis binding fee(s), if not already paid (See Student Handbook). The registration office will transmit copies to the appropriate program director for final review. When the program director has established that the thesis is in good order he or she will forward it to the library for binding, one copy kept for circulation and one for the archives.
SUPPLEMENTARY CLUES FOR WRITING A GOOD PROJECT/PAPER/THESIS

I. General Guidelines.

A. Sharp focus.

A thesis is supposed to be an extremely careful, extremely thorough, extremely incremental, written analysis of a topic. Ideally, the reader of a thesis is supposed to be able to conclude, “I find this thesis convincing because it carefully, thoroughly and incrementally explains and backs up with evidence, good reasoning and ample citation from original and secondary literature every assumption, argument or conclusion that it makes, leaving no unsupported steps of logic, no unexplained assumptions, and no reasoning gaps in the steady progress toward its conclusion.”

This means that a thesis topic cannot be broad. A book topic can be broad, but not a thesis topic. If your topic is broad, it will not be possible for you to provide all the reasoning, evidence and citation necessary to make the thesis sufficiently careful, thorough and incremental (free of gaps in the logical process of arriving at its conclusion) as it needs to be.

Therefore you must decide, in consultation with your thesis advisor, on a topic that may seem to you to be terribly narrow (e.g. “Redemption Terminology in 1 Kings 12:15,” rather than "The Problem of Evil in the Bible"). The latter topic is the sort to pick if you want to be sure never to finish your thesis, let alone earn a passing grade on it. If your topic proves to be too narrow (highly unlikely) as your research proceeds, it will be much easier for you and your thesis director/reader(s) to expand the topic as necessary than to pare down a topic that proves to be overly broad.

B. Quality over quantity.

In the writing of your project/paper/thesis, stress quality over quantity. A well-written, cogently argued paper or thesis (20,000 words) may be graded far more generously than a less well-written, meandering, long paper or thesis (40,000 words). Bear in mind, however, that the paper/thesis must be long enough that all its parts are extremely careful, extremely thorough and extremely incremental. You must prove everything you assert in a step-by-step process, and whatever space this requires you must provide.

C. About style, grammar, and spelling. (Follow these suggestions unless your project/paper/thesis director advises you otherwise.)

1. General comments: For models of what an integrative project/paper or thesis should look like with respect to layout, style, etc., you should consult recent M.A. or Th.M. theses which have been written under your supervisor and have earned good grades. The style of your paper should be formal and academic.

2. Avoid references to yourself ("I," "in my opinion," "the author," etc.). If necessary (and only if necessary) refer instead to "this investigation" or "this essay," etc., or make use of the editorial "we" ("Having established our methodology, we may now investigate. . . ").

3. Avoid statements that express your high (or low) regard for the work of others. For example, avoid such a statement as: "In Tillich’s rather obtuse systematic theology . . ." or “According to Buttrick, whose views on preaching are surely overrated . . .”

4. Be irenic when presenting views with which you may disagree. It is often a good exercise to begin by stating the strengths of a view before exposing its weaknesses.

5. Let your project/paper/thesis evince an appropriate scholarly humility. Avoid an off-putting dogmatic tone, and avoid overstating your conclusions. Watch out for red flag words such as "certainly," "definitely," or "surely." Be willing to acknowledge other possibilities. Make use of such qualifiers as "perhaps" or "may" in
the main body of your paper, and, at least in footnotes, cite the work of scholars who oppose your views even when space limitations may prohibit a detailed response on your part. Let your evidence and your arguments be stronger than your conclusions. In this way your readers will be impressed with your caution, and they may become even more convinced of your views than you appear to be. Modest conclusions tend to seem more convincing than strident ones.

6. Use elevated, formal English grammar, such as is presented in William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*. There is no better or more succinct remedy for sloppy English grammar than this classic volume.

7. While some students are capable of editing their own work, most others, especially international students, are encouraged to have an outside reader edit all papers for grammar and spelling before submission. In some cases, such outside editing may be required by one or more of your paper or thesis readers. Naturally, any editorial help should be acknowledged in a preface or in footnotes. Do not submit poorly written material to your reader(s) at any stage, including the first drafts. Poor writing gives a reader the impression that you don’t care deeply about your work, an impression you don’t want to create.

D. Structure.

Your project/paper/thesis should exhibit a clear, logical, coherent structure. Begin each major section and each chapter with a succinct statement of what will be discussed and why. Close each major section and each chapter with a brief summary of what has been covered and your principal conclusions.

Your introductory chapter should accomplish four goals. First, it ought to set out in a succinct manner the problem that you intend to investigate in your thesis. Second, it ought to explain and defend the precise (narrow) scope of your thesis. Third, it ought to articulate the method of your approach. Finally, it ought to offer an overview of the intended course of the investigation, providing, as needed, a rationale for the particular sequence of the chapters in your thesis. NB: Although it is probably best to postpone writing this introductory chapter until the rest of the paper or thesis is completed, it may be a helpful discipline to submit as your first paper a condensed preliminary version of this introduction. Follow the directions of your project/paper or thesis director. Typically, the introductory chapter is 10-20% of a paper or thesis as measured in volume, but follow the advice of your director as to the length of this chapter in your paper or thesis.

Your second chapter should review the history of research to date on your topic. What have scholars so far said about your topic? How have they approached it? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of their various arguments (summarized and examined one-by-one)? Where do the prevailing opinions on your topic now stand? What remains to be explored (i.e. in your thesis)? Everyone builds one scholarship of the past. In this chapter, therefore, you have the opportunity to set forth a great many “givens” -- things you will build your logical case upon, by referring to the views of scholars who have gone before you, carefully summarizing and citing their views as needed, and declaring, where appropriate, that you regard what they have argued for as convincing--and have adopted them as your working assumptions in the thesis. That will obviate the need for you to start at the beginning of all knowledge and prove everything up to the point at which you wish to begin. Typically, this chapter is also 10-20% of the paper or thesis as measured in volume.

Write the other chapters according to your outline and as directed by your thesis director. Remember to be incremental -- identify your assumptions, and then try within reason to prove every assertion you make, so that there are no logical gaps between your assumptions and your conclusions. Judicious use of footnotes is part of the process of proving your assertions.

Your final, concluding chapter should briefly retrace the main flow of your thesis, summarizing the problem under investigation, your main arguments, and your conclusions. As you retrace your paper/thesis, include parenthetical references to the chapter being summarized. For example, insert the parenthetical reference
(chapter 1) at the end of the paragraphs that summarize your first chapter. Your concluding chapter should highlight any special contributions that you believe are contained in your thesis (that is, any original, particularly insightful interpretations, etc.). It may also hint at further implications of your research, which go beyond the scope of your thesis, but it should not introduce new arguments or other new material. Because of its summarizing purpose, this chapter should normally include few footnotes, if any. Typically, the concluding chapter is 5-15% of the paper or thesis as measured in volume.

Some theses benefit from appendices of various sorts, e.g., lists, tables, texts, statistical analyses, etc. that are referred to in the thesis. Often, putting something in an appendix keeps the thesis body more “clean” and allows your steady progression of logic to proceed in a step-by-step fashion without any unnecessary disruption of the argument. In general, material too lengthy to fit in a footnote, but nevertheless part of your evidence, or containing evidence that some of your conclusions are based on, might be more properly presented in an appendix than in the main body of the thesis. If you include appendices, number them, refer to them by number in the main body, and introduce them as necessary with an explanatory paragraph or two at the beginning of each.

A bibliography must be provided, listing a full bibliographic citation for every work cited in your project, paper, or thesis, and for every work you consulted that may have influenced your thesis in any way. In other words, a bibliography is not merely a place to list works cited, but to tell the reader which books you used -- even when you saw in them only unconvincing arguments or data not relevant in your judgment, and therefore you rejected their advice. Do not, however, include references to standard, obvious reference works that everyone uses (e.g. Webster’s dictionary; a thesaurus; an English Bible) which are not actually cited as sources in your thesis, even if you consulted them in the course of your research.

E. Specific grammatical concerns and preferences.

1. Watch out for improper word usage. For example, a text can "imply" something, but only a reader can "infer" it. Another frequent error is the confusion of "like," which is a preposition, and "as," which is a conjunction ("as G. Vos has argued," rather than "like G. Vos has argued"). An argument can be "weighty," but not "heavy").

2. Avoid the improper use of adverbs. When enumerating observations, start a second point with "Second" (not "Secondly"), a third point with "Third" (not "Thirdly"), etc.

3. Use the present tense for most references to the biblical text or any other extant text from the ancient world: "Paul uses rhetorical questions in 2 Corinthians . . .," rather than "Paul used rhetorical questions in 2 Corinthians . . .".

4. Use the present tense for references to scholars writing in the last 100 years. For example, "Brand and Yancey argue that pain is actually a protective blessing."

5. Avoid splitting infinitives: "to evangelize effectively," rather than "to effectively evangelize."

6. For your prose to be as vigorous as possible, avoid passive and other indirect constructions: "It is not possible to date this text precisely," rather than "Providing a precise date for this text is not possible."

7. Be merciful to your readers. Break up excessively long sentences.

8. Use parallel grammatical construction to express correlative ideas ("giving, taking, and keeping," rather than "giving, taking, and to keep"); or "The reader must choose either to omit the word or to revocalize it," rather than "The reader must choose either to omit the word or he revocalizes it").
9. Be succinct. Avoid redundancies, like "a difficult paradox" (what other kind is there?), "a dangerous hazard,” or "a Jewish rabbi." Eliminate verbiage ("since,” rather than "because of the fact that"). (The expression “excess verbiage” is an example of verbiage.)

10. Avoid dangling participles and other misplaced modifiers -- they often produce nonsense. For example, the implied subject of an initial participial phrase should be the same as that of the main clause: "Reading the account of Amnon's rape of Tamar against the background of the ancient Near East, one is not surprised at Tamar's grief," rather than "Reading the account of Amnon's rape of Tamar against the background of the ancient Near East, Tamar's grief is not surprising." [The latter sentence states that Tamar’s grief reads the account of Amnon’s rape.]

11. Avoid orphaned prepositions at the end of a clause: "The city, to which they went, was unwalled," rather than "The city, which they went to, was unwalled." This should not be applied to phrasal verbs, however. So, for example, "This is an inconvenience which the preacher must put up with," rather than "This is an inconvenience, up with which the preacher must put."  

12. Watch out for the correct placement of commas: Set off a parenthetical phrase or clause, including a nonrestrictive relative clause, with commas ("These couplets, which exhibit antithetical parallelism, appear original to the manuscript," rather than "These couplets which exhibit antithetical parallelism appear original to the manuscript"). A common mistake is to use a comma to introduce a parenthetical phrase or clause, but to fail to provide the matching closing comma.

Omit commas, however, with a restrictive relative clause (" . . . research a letter which is cited in the full collection of Finney’s works," rather than” . . . research a letter, which is cited in the full collection of Finney’s works"). A restrictive relative clause is one which provides necessary information to define its head noun.

Include a comma before a conjunction which introduces an independent clause ("He went, and he said, rather than "he went and he said").

In general, include a comma after a phrase or subordinate clause when it precedes the main clause ("Having examined the evangelist’s method, we turn now to consider its effectiveness," rather than” Having examined the evangelist’s method we turn now to consider its effectiveness"). This comma may be omitted if the fronted phrase or clause is sufficiently brief.

Eliminate unnecessary commas. Do not separate a subject from a verb, for example, with a comma: "In that part of the world, Hindi, Urdu, and Farsi are important languages to master," rather than” In that part of the world, Hindi, Urdu, and Farsi, are important languages to master.”

F. Common spelling/diction errors:

1. it’s (contraction of it is) vs. its (possessive form of it);
2. anointed, rather than annointed;
3. ancient Near East, rather than Ancient Near East;
4. prophecy (the noun) vs. prophesy (the verb);
5. capitalizing pronouns which refer to God or Christ (use he, rather than He; it is not considered disrespectful to use normal pronouns for God -- the original Bible languages all do it);
6. - rather than -- for a dash (there is a difference -- though many people do not seem to know it -- between a hyphen ( - ) and a dash ( --)). In typing, a dash is formed by putting two hyphens together.
7. impacted (which means trapped or constipated) vs. affected (which means influenced or shaped)
GERMAN TITHING DURING THE REIGN OF PIUS IV

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SOUTH HAMILTON, MASSACHUSETTS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

BY

JOHN ADAMS DOE

APRIL 26, 2001
Abstract

This work focuses on the way that tithing in the German wing of the Roman Catholic Church influenced not only the construction program of the “cathedral-captivated” Pius IV, but also drew the German churches increasingly into the Roman orbit theologically.

The evidence for this study comes especially from two main historical repositories on the topic: the forty-one letters of Pius IV to his cousin and confidant, Karl of Königsberg, and the official Vatican records of the financial dealings of Pius IV with Germany, the Documenti Monetarii Germaniae. The thesis examines these sources and others, primary and secondary, that bear on the topic.

The thesis begins with an historical overview which offers four areas that have been contributing factors to the confusion and debates about the German tithing patterns from 1346-1377. It then proceeds to describe the contents of the original source materials and what they reveal, and suggests why the usual interpretation (that the so-called tit-for-tat tithing was in fact isolated and inconsequential) must be rethought.

A key question the thesis poses is whether the churches in Germany could have known, or cared, exactly how their contributions to Rome would have been used by Pius IV. The answer centers on the evidence that Pius IV had the deepest interest in preserving good relations with the German wing of the churches, and consistently revealed a strong desire to keep them well informed and pacified during his entire reign.

VITA

The author of this work is John Adams Doe. Born July 23, 1962, in Elizabethton, Tennessee, he has lived in Knoxville, Tennessee most of his life. During that time, he received his formal education through the Knoxville City School System. Upon completion of required studies at West High School, he entered the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. From there, he received the bachelor of arts degree with a major in sociology, graduating with honors. After working for four years as an aluminum siding sales representative for Big Bill’s Big Building Supply Stores, he entered Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. His studies will be completed in May, 200X.

Mr. Doe currently lives in South Hamilton, Massachusetts with his wife, Linnie, and their three children, Nathan, Cassie and Carter. He is the assistant youth pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church in Essex, Massachusetts.

Note: The following goals apply only to theses in Biblical Studies. Students writing theses in areas other than biblical studies should consult their thesis directors for information relative to their respective disciplines.

There are three basic goals for any masters-level thesis in biblical studies:

1. To provide the student an opportunity to utilize the full encyclopedia of exegetical methodology in order to interpret accurately some important biblical text or texts. In other words, your thesis should feature original language exegesis of a biblical text, or texts, addressing a significant problem.

2. To provide the student an opportunity to engage the most advanced level of current scholarship in the discipline of biblical studies. In other words, your thesis should demonstrate two things: your ability to control the important bibliography on your topic (awareness and use major scholarly journals, commentaries, reference works, and other publications) and your ability to summarize accurately and to interact with that scholarship in an irenic and judicious manner.

3. To provide the student an opportunity to conceive, plan, and write a major paper of publishable quality. In other words, your thesis should exhibit a coherent, logical structure at every level, and it should be written in a concise and effective manner. Furthermore, your thesis should demonstrate an appropriate scholarly temperament by its respectful treatment of the views of others and by its humility in the expression of your own views. Be tentative where called for, cite scholars who oppose your conclusions, not just those with whom you agree, and be willing to leave questions open where the evidence is as yet inconclusive.

One appropriate format for an M.A. thesis is that it should focus on a well-defined Old Testament or New Testament text which allows a significant problem to be addressed. For example, "Implied Family Rights in the Complaint of Laban's Daughters in Genesis 31:14-16."

A Th.M. thesis, on the other hand, should exhibit the ability of the student to integrate biblical data. In other words, the thesis should demonstrate competence in biblical theology. One option for a Th.M. thesis is to choose an Old Testament text that provides a background for a subsequent text or subsequent texts, usually in the New Testament, or to choose a New Testament text that cites or alludes to an Old Testament text. For example, "2 Samuel 7:4 and the Hope of a Second David" or "Jesus as the True Israel in Matthew 4:10-11."

Many other types of theses are acceptable as well, including theses that address special problems of interpretation or historical context, as long as these demonstrate exegetical-theological competence and integration.

Originality.

Your work should be "original" in the sense that all the writing should be yours and that any place where the wording of your paper or a significant concept is dependent on the work of others (including lectures, unpublished comments of professors or fellow students) should be acknowledged in a footnote. Failure to acknowledge such dependence is plagiarism, and will be grounds for a failing grade and disciplinary action.

It is not required, however, that an M.A. or Th.M. thesis makes a fully original contribution to the field of biblical studies. Save that for a Ph.D. A masters-level thesis should, nevertheless, be insightful and original in the manner it poses the problem to be addressed by the thesis, the manner it summarizes and evaluates previous scholarship, and the manner it articulates and defends its (not necessarily ground-breaking) conclusions.
Methodology and content.

For help with certain rudimentary issues of methodology, separate guidelines are available for how to do a word study, how to do text criticism, and how to do exegesis. Consult your degree program director or thesis director for bibliographic guidance to take you beyond those guidelines, or for help in other matters (methodology for a proper biblical theology, etc.).

Hebrew and Greek fonts.

The use of Hebrew and Greek fonts is preferable to transliteration. Pay close attention to the word order of any Hebrew text that runs over onto a second line. Where these fonts are not available, you may write in by hand any Hebrew or Greek. Check for places in your manuscript where you intended but failed to insert Hebrew or Greek text. If it is necessary to use English transliteration, follow the conventions of *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Improper transliteration is nonsense, and you do not want to include nonsense in your thesis.
INTEGRATIVE PROJECT/PAPER AND THESIS HELP CHECK LIST

NAME: ____________________________________________ STUDENT ID# __________
TITLE: ___________________________________________ __________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

DATE: __________________________

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