



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

**TH 090 - Research Methodologies**  
**January Term 2011**  
**Thursdays, January 6 and 20, 9 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This non-credit seminar provides advanced guidance on the tasks of choosing and narrowing a research topic, conducting theological research, using technology in research, analyzing one's findings and articulating their significance, and organizing and writing academic-level theological papers or theses. This course is taught by members of the Bible and Theology departments and by members of the Library staff.

*Required for first-year Th.M. students. Open to others. Offered in January. Zero hours.*

**II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. There will be no written requirements for this non-credit course. Students will show that they have mastered the material of this course by presenting high-quality papers in other courses, and especially by presenting a high-quality Th.M. thesis.

2. Students are required to read the following books thoroughly:

Booth, Wayne G., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*, Third Edition. The University of Chicago Press, 2008. (ISBN 0226065669)

Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. Longman, 2008. (ISBN 020530902X)

3. Students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the layout and the contents of the following books, and able to use these books for reference as they write research papers:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Revised by Wayne C. Booth et. al. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. (ISBN 0226823377)

Alexander, Patrick H., et al, eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999. (ISBN 156563487X)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Session 1: Thursday, January 6, 2011, 9:00 – 12:30

Session Topic: An Introduction to Advanced Research (Loyd Melton, discussion leader)

Topics to be covered:

- a. The goal of an academic research project
- b. Choosing and narrowing a topic
- c. Formulating the specific question of the research
- d. Reading and analyzing primary sources
- e. Evaluating and critiquing secondary sources
- f. Appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology in research
- g. The use of foreign languages in research
- h. Suggested strategies for taking notes, storing and managing information, and moving from notes to the research paper

Session 2: Thursday, January 6, 2011, 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Students will divide into one of two groups. One group will be led by members of the Bible department. The other group will be led by members of the Theology department.

Session 3: Thursday, January 20, 2011, 9:00 – 12:30

Session Topic: Advanced Techniques for Finding Sources (Fred Guyette)

Topics to be covered:

- a. Advanced searches using SCOTTY
- b. Advanced searches using the ATLA Religion Database
- c. Introduction to NT Abstracts, OT Abstracts, and Rel./Theol. Abstracts
- d. Introduction to WORLDCAT
- e. Making the most of special encyclopedias and bibliographies
- f. What is meant by a “literature review”?

Session 4: Thursday, January 20, 2011, 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Session Topic: Writing the Paper/Thesis (Loyd Melton, discussion leader; members of the Bible and Theology departments)