

Reformed Theological Research

Syllabus: Course # 322 -2 credits

I. Course Description

An examination of methods in theology intended to provide a foundation for graduate and postgraduate research, particularly from a Reformed perspective. Students will become familiar with basic research tools for biblical and theological study (including encyclopedias, monographs, periodicals, and bibliographical texts), and learn how to organize, build, and use their own theological library. The instructor will guide students through the seminary library, providing insights into various authors and helpful books in every section. Students will also work their way through several texts to develop the abilities to write graduate-level research papers, including such skills as the development of ideas and organization; interpretation and correct use of source materials (including quotation, paraphrase, citation, and bibliographic form); syntax, grammar, and punctuation.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Locate material through the use of traditional and electronic resources.
2. Create thorough bibliographies.
3. Understand the basics of Reformed theological research methods.
4. Research, organize, and write a major paper on a given subject, using such skills as the development of ideas and organization; interpretation and correct use of source materials (including quotation, paraphrase, citation, and bibliographic form); syntax, grammar, and punctuation.
5. Construct a system for maximal use of your own library.
6. Identify some of the best books and authors in every major area of Reformed and Christian studies.
7. Develop an increasing love for sound Reformed literature and able research.

III. Course Outline

1. I will acquaint you with PRTS's and Calvin's libraries.

2. I will acquaint you with major reference tools (including encyclopedias, monographs, periodicals, and bibliographical texts) by walking through Kepple's book, pointing out some extra details about Kepple's entries.
3. I will move you through our library, pointing out to you the most significant titles in each area. I will also supply you with some bibliographies that I have written, and make some comments on them.
4. I will walk you through the stages of research, and show you how to use primary and secondary sources.
5. I will scrutinize your submitted mini-biography (see weeks 5-7 below), so that you can learn from your weaknesses and strengths in writing. Using your papers, we will go over stylistic conventions in writing in class, addressing abbreviations, numbers, and punctuation; typescript format; footnote and bibliographical references; proofreading; indexing, etc.
6. Dr. Richard Muller will give you a lecture on writing for publication and on Reformed theological computer research.
7. If time allots, we may use our closing sessions for seminar presentations and critiquing of your final papers.

III. Course Texts

Kepple and Muether, *Reference Works for Theological Research*

Beeke, *A Reader's Guide to Reformed Literature*

Bradley and Muller, *Church History: Introduction to Research and Reference Works*

Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*

Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*

Struck and White, *The Elements of Style*

IV. Course Requirements

Assignments for Weeks #1-2 (Jan. 20-31):

1. Get familiarized with PRTS and Calvin libraries.
2. Divide your personal libraries into suggested 18 sections. Solicit help in beginning to organize your own library. Complete textual and subject files next summer, D.V.
3. Read chapters 1-4 in Turabian; complete Turabian worksheet #1.
4. Read Kepple, chapters 1-4. Complete Problem Set Questions #1.
5. Select two possible areas in which you would like to develop a selected bibliography. (Note: Should be areas in which you are interested in pursuing drafting a major paper at the conclusion of your studies. With my assistance, we'll whittle it down to one.)

6. Read Bradley and Muller, chapters 1 and 2.

Assignments for Weeks #3-4 (Feb. 3-14):

1. Read Turabian, chapters 5, 8, 9. Complete Turabian worksheet #2.
2. Read Kepple, chapters 5-8. Complete Problem Set Questions #2.
3. Finalize selecting the area for which you would like to develop a selected bibliography.
4. Read Struck and White, *The Elements of Style*
5. Read Bradley and Muller, chapters 3 and 4.

Assignments for Weeks #5-7 (Feb. 17-Mar. 7):

1. *Skim* (don't read) Turabian, chapters 11, 13, 14. (Note: no accompanying worksheet on these chapters. You will need to refer back to these chapters as you do your first papers.)
2. Read Kepple, chapters 9-12, 14, 16, 18, 19. Complete Problem Set Questions #3.
3. Read Kepple, chapters 20-25. Complete Problem Set Questions #4.
4. Write a 5 to 7 page (double spaced) mini-biography on any Puritan, using footnotes. Append a one page bibliography that includes a variety of sources. Implement a goodly number of Struck and White's suggestions and follow Turabian's guidelines (15% of grade).
5. Read Bradley and Muller, chapters 5 and 6.

Assignments for Weeks #8-10 (Mar. 10-28):

1. Read Kepple, chapters 26-31. Complete Problem Set Questions #5.
2. Using all the skills you have learned in this class, write a Reformed theological research paper (in accord with Turabian) of approximately 20 pages on the subject that you are considering to develop for your major paper in your M.Div. program. Paper is due April 15 (25% of grade).
3. Skim Beeke, *A Reader's Guide to Reformed Literature*, and Bradley and Muller, pp. 167-231.
4. Complete historiography exercises (10% of grade).

Assignments for Weeks #11-14 (March 31-Apr. 4; April 14-May 2):

1. Read Kepple, chapters 32-39. Complete Problem Set Questions #6.
2. Read John Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*
3. Submit your selected bibliography.
4. Give a seminar presentation of your final paper (if time allots).

Final exam =May 7 (20% of grade); on May 7 confirm in writing what percentage of the reading assignments you have accomplished (10% of grade).

Final Grade percentages: Turabian worksheets=10%; Kepple problem set questions=10%; historiography exercises=10%; biography paper=15%; major paper=25%; final exam=20%; reading assignm.=10%. lectures\rtr-assignments [Beeke]