



**THSE6300 – Theological Research and Writing**  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Theological & Historical Studies Division  
Fall 2018 – Fridays, 9:00–11:50 AM (first mtg. on 9/14)  
Hardin Student Center

### **Adam Harwood, PhD**

Associate Professor of Theology, McFarland Chair of Theology  
Director, Baptist Center for Theology & Ministry  
Editor, *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry*  
Office: Dodd 213 Phone: 504.816.8074  
[aharwood@nobts.edu](mailto:aharwood@nobts.edu)

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

### **Core Value Focus**

The seminary has five core values.

1. **Doctrinal Integrity:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting of the Bible.
2. **Spiritual Vitality:** We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word. Spiritual Vitality is addressed by reminding students that a dynamic relationship with God is vital for effective ministry.
3. **Mission Focus:** We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries. This course addresses Mission Focus by helping students understand the biblical foundations for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.
4. **Characteristic Excellence:** What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry.
5. **Servant Leadership:** We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. Servant Leadership is modeled by classroom deportment.

The core value focus for the 2018–19 academic year is **Doctrinal Integrity**.

### **Course Description**

This advanced seminar in research and writing is intended to help prepare students for postgraduate work and future publication in theologically related fields. In this course, every student will prepare a final, summative writing assignment in his or her degree concentration. Those with concentrations in theological or historical studies may request approval to adapt this summative writing assignment into a formal thesis. Particular attention will be given to the

different models of reasoning in research, the crafting and assessment of arguments, elements of form and style, and final editing. Only students within eighteen hours of graduation may take this course.

The primary basic competency in ministry addressed in this course is **Christian Theological Heritage**.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, by the end of the course, should:

1. Show competence in the various stages of writing, reviewing, and final editing.
2. Demonstrate the ability to do advanced research in a theologically related field.
3. Use argumentation and resources effectively in theological writing.

### **Course Teaching Methodology**

The course will involve the following methodologies: lectures, assigned readings, group discussion, a summative writing project, and assessment of other students' writing.

### **Technical Assistance**

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the [Selfserve.nobts.edu](http://Selfserve.nobts.edu) site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. [BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System [NOBTS.Blackboard.com](http://NOBTS.Blackboard.com).
3. [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/) - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

### **Attendance**

Per the catalog, "Class attendance is essential for effective learning. Students will be expected to attend all classes unless prevented by illness or emergency." Also, "The maximum number of absences without failure for classroom courses is as follows: . . . 3-hour courses - 9 classroom hours absent."

### **Evaluation of Grade**

The student's final course grade will be computed per the NOBTS grading scale:

A - 93–100    B - 85–92    C - 77–84    D - 70–76    F - Below 70

The course grade will be comprised of the respective percentages of the grades from the following assignments:

- Reading Reports (10%)
- Dissertation Assessments (10%)
- General Topic (5%)
- Research Thesis or Question (5%)
- Bibliography & Outline (10%)
- Summative Writing Assignment (50%)
- Peer-Critique of Summary Writing Assignment (10%)

## Required Texts

It is important for this class (and future endeavors in theological writing) that students **purchase** rather than borrow these books.

*The SBL Handbook of Style*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 1999.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Eighth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum, 2015.

## Course Requirements and Schedule

Time Commitment:

The student should average investing five-ten hours per week in this class. Part of the time commitment will go toward reading the assigned texts and materials related to the selected topic. The other part of the time will be used to write the research paper.

Class Assignments (with percent of course grade):

### 1. Reading Reports (10%)

The student is required to read *Elements of Style* and *Writing Theology Well* in their entirety. The student will highlight and make annotations in the books then compile a **list of important issues** extracted from each selection of reading (citing the works parenthetically). There are no requirements concerning word count or page count. Students must demonstrate evidence of interaction with the works and pay particular attention to (1) things they may not have not been aware of in writing and research or (2) areas they know are weak spots in their own writing.

### 2. Dissertation Assessments (10%)

Students are required to assess **two quality** dissertations and/or theses in related fields. **The professor must approve these dissertations before assessment begins.** A non-NOBTS student must have written **at least** one of these dissertations. These assessments **do not require close readings of the dissertations or theses.** Rather, students are expected to look over these documents, read specific sections, and answer the following questions about each of them:

- (1) Is the approach of the author *deductive* or *inductive* (Yaghjian 43–46)?
- (2) What is the thesis, hypothesis, or guiding research question of the project?
- (3) What are the stated assumptions of the author? Qualifications?
- (4) Assess the *types* of resources used—articles, books, essays, etc. Roughly describe the ratio of primary sources to secondary sources, English sources to second language sources, etc.
- (5) Describe the *structure* of the dissertation itself. What is the main purpose of the author in each individual chapter?
- (6) Assess the *critical analysis* and *conclusions* sections in the project. What *types of critique* are utilized?

### **3. General Topic (5%)**

Students must choose a general topic for their summative writing project in conversation with the course instructor and another faculty member in the field of the topic.

### **4. Research Thesis or Question (5%)**

Dependent on the model of research taken up—deductive or inductive—students are required to write a thesis (deductive argument) or ask a question (inductive argument). For more on these approaches, see Yaghjian, ch. 3. The thesis or question must be approved by the course instructor and the other professor engaging with the student.

### **5. Bibliography & Outline (10%)**

Students will submit a preliminary bibliography of sources that will be used. This preliminary bibliography will be evaluated on the quality of its resources. Students should list only sources they believe they will be able to use and engage with in the writing process. Also, students will provide an outline of the summative writing paper structure, including first and second-level headings as well as specific arguments or guiding research questions. This outline will be reviewed by the professor before the summative writing project begins.

### **6. Checking Student Progress**

Student will present to the class the current draft of the paper (digitally or in print) as well as the reading and note-taking plan for the next week.

### **7. Summative Writing Assignment (50%)**

Students are required to complete a summative writing assignment that serves as a capstone for their degree plan. The summative writing assignment must be **12,000–25,000 words** in length. It should integrate all of the components of the previous stages of writing and carefully weigh each element's place in the overall project.

The Summative Assignment will be assessed by the professor as follows:

- Form & Style (grammar, clarity, conformity to Turabian) – 20%
- Contents (support of research thesis or question, understanding of the issues) – 20%
- Organization (coherence and unity, logical development, effective transitions) – 20%
- Critical Thinking (argumentation, understanding and critique of sources and views) – 20%
- Research (quality and use of sources, documentation) – 20%

### **8. Peer-Critique of Summary Writing Assignment (10%)**

Students will be required to read and mark corrections on a classmate's summative writing assignment. Students will also receive from the professor a marked copy of the summative assignment. The student must revise and resubmit the assignment to the professor. This resubmission is necessary to complete the class and receive a course grade.

Schedule:

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Sept. 14	Class Introduction	
Sept. 21	Discussion of <i>Elements of Style</i> and <i>Writing Theology Well</i>	Reading Reports of <i>Elements of Style</i> and <i>Writing Theology Well</i> ; General Topic
Sept. 28	Discussion of Dissertations; Quality Research Theses and Questions	Dissertation Assessments
Oct. 5	Sources (bring a laptop to class)	Research Thesis or Question
Oct. 12	Form & Style (bring Turabian and SBL to class)	Bibliography & Outline
Oct. 19	<i>Fall Break</i>	
Oct. 26	Checking student progress	
Nov. 2	Checking student progress	
Nov. 9	Checking student progress	
Nov. 16	<i>ETS – no class</i>	
Nov. 23	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Nov. 30	Brief Class Presentations	Summative Writing Assignment
Dec. 7	Brief Peer Critiques	Peer-Critique of Summary Writing Assignment
Dec. 12	<i>No Class Meeting</i>	A <b>Revised Paper</b> must be submitted to professor for the student to receive a course grade.