

**Course title**: **Thesis Proposal Workshop**

**Term offered: January 2017**

**Instructor: Ellen K. Wondra**

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**Staying connected:** We are available by email and by phone (and if you get voice mail, do leave a message!). If you wish to meet during the classroom session, please arrange an appointment *in advance*.

**Course description**

The purpose of this workshop is to assist DMin students to design their thesis research and write a working draft of the thesis proposal. The workshop will be shaped to suit the needs of the students enrolled. Expected topics include:

* Developing and limiting the thesis topic
* Engaging in theological reflection in the thesis
* Finding and using appropriate resources
* Using experience and qualitative research in the thesis
* Structuring the thesis
* Writing a helpful thesis proposal
* Working with advisor, reader, and writing coach
* Planning research, writing, and completion.

**Curriculum goals related to this course**

* Participants will develop “an aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith.”
* Participants will develop their ability to listen, read, speak, and write effectively in order to contribute to the life of the church as it participates in God’s mission.
* Participants will engage in a learning community characterized by dialogue, mutual respect, and appreciation of diverse views.
* Participants will strengthen their identity as congregational leaders and scholars for the missional church.

**Course outcomes**

* Participants will develop their skills as writers in the area of the practice of ministry
* Participants will complete a workable draft of their thesis proposals and have a realistic plan for writing the thesis.

**Requirements:**

* Completion of reading and assignments due prior to the classroom sessions.
* Full attendance at all class sessions.
* Participation in class discussions and interactive learning experiences.
  + Your class comments and questions should show familiarity with the required reading and exhibit prior reflection on a preliminary DMin thesis topic and research design.
  + We encourage you to be imaginative and creative in leadership.
  + Your interaction with others should be respectful and constructive. This is a collegial workshop in which students will give and receive ideas, suggestions, and constructive criticism from each other.
* Completion of assignments following classroom sessions.

*See assignments section below for specific assignments and deadlines.*

**Required texts**

* **Please note: you need the editions indicated below**.

Earlier editions are outdated. And though Turabian, 8th ed., contains much of what is in *Craft of Research*, you will be better helped by having both Turabian and *Craft of Research*.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research,* Third Edition. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)

Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009). ISBN: 978-90-470-28354-7.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Eighth Edition, ed. Wayne C. Booth et al. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) ISBN: 978-0226816388

Joseph M. Williams and Gregory G. Colomb, various selections from idem., *The Craft of Argument,* Second Edition. (NY: Longman, 2003) – available on Moodle site

Recommended materials

“Seminary Writing 101: Your Guide to What ~~Lays~~ Lies Ahead,” from Trinity Lutheran Seminary; available on Moodle.

*The web has lots of material on the two major projects for this course. What follows are some sites that may be particularly helpful. Remember, though, that the form of the bibliography and of the thesis proposal required in this course is assigned on the Moodle class site.*

And be sure to use Turabian*.*

*On annotated bibliographies:*

* <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>
* <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>
* <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html>

*On writing a thesis proposal*:

* <http://chronicle.com/article/Demystifying-the-Dissertation/128916/>
* Ask Google “How do I write a thesis proposal?” to find tips and advice. But remember, you must use the BexleySeabury Thesis Proposal template, not any of the templates you’ll find online.
* You might also find it helpful to look at what professional writers have to say about writing, e.g., Anne LaMott, *Bird by Bird*.

**Assignments**

1. Draft thesis statement. Detailed instructions available on Moodle site. Post draft statement to specified forum on Moodle site. ***Due Jan. 9, 5:00 p.m.***

* ***Note:*** you must also respond to one other draft statement by ***Jan. 16, 5 p.m. CST***

1. Annotated bibliography related to proposed thesis topic. Detailed instructions available on Moodle site. Post bibliography to specified forum on Moodle site. ***Due Jan. 9, 5:00 p.m. CST***

* ***Note:*** you must also repond to one other draft bibliography by ***Jan. 16, 5 p.m. CST***

1. Revised thesis statement. Post revised statement to specified forum on Moodle site. ***Due Jan. 21, 8 p.m. CST***
2. Post topics you want to discuss in class on the Moodle site; this will help structure our time together for best use. ***Due Jan. 19, 5 p.m. CST***
3. Draft thesis proposal. Detailed instructions available on Moodle site. Post draft proposal to specified forum on Moodle site. ***Due Feb. 8, 5 p.m. CST.***

* ***Note:*** you must also respond to one other thesis proposal by ***Feb. 11, 5 p.m. CST.***

**Note:** Extension on work in this course will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances, and must be requested in advance of due dates. See the section on Incompletes in the Bexley Seabury Student Handbook. Extension requests should be sent to Prof. Wondra at [ellen.wondra@seabury.edu](mailto:ellen.wondra@seabury.edu).

**Student Course Performance will be assessed in the following areas:**

1. Quality of student contribution to the class discussion;
2. Evidence of student having read others’ work and quality of on-line reflections;
3. Student use of originality, clarity and strength of writing (Essay Assessment Rubric);
4. Student use of creativity, critical judgment, constructive engagement and imagination (Essay Assessment Rubric);
5. Accuracy and precision of student scholarship, as well as proper use of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writing Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations,* 8th edition. (Essay Assessment Rubric);

A Word about Assessment:

The Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation regularly evaluates the quality of our programs using a variety of data and artifacts, including portfolios of students’ work. These portfolios consist of designated student work (artifacts) from each course, along with the instructor’s rubric-based evaluation of the artifact.

At the end of the term, the course instructor will send your draft thesis proposal (the designated artifact for this course) and the evaluation of your work to you, and to the Officer for Academic Affairs for inclusion in your portfolio.

We use your portfolio annually as a check list to track your progress toward the degree, diploma, or certificate. This usually does not involve any further evaluation of your work.

Your portfolio or parts of it may be included in a small, random selection of portfolios from a 3-4 year period so that we can assess overall (aggregate) student learning relative to curricular goals and program effectiveness. No portfolio or artifact is evaluated until all identifying information is removed, and no identifying information will be included in any evaluation or report.

Please note the Bexley Seabury statement on academic honesty:

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the taking of the words, ideas, and methods of others as one's own. In academia, plagiarism involves the use of others' words and ideas without adequate reference to the author or indication of quotation. It is a serious form of academic dishonesty or academic fraud, and offenders are subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion from the school. In order to avoid plagiarism, especially by inappropriate use or citation of quotations and ideas, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements and practices of citation found in Turabian’s *Manual for Writers*. Unfamiliarity with these requirements and practices is not an acceptable reason for unintentional plagiarism. Plagiarism cannot be evaded through the alteration of occasional words from one's source.

When plagiarism is detected, the instructor will assign the work an appropriate grade and then refer the matter, together with evidence, to the Academic Dean who, in consultation with the faculty and the President, will make an appropriate disposition of the matter, which may include failure of the course, academic probation for a designated period, suspension for a designated period, or expulsion from the program. The student's bishop will normally be notified of the situation.

Those who have questions about the nature and scope of plagiarism should consult the Academic Dean.

**Class Schedule**

**January 20, 7 – 9 p.m.**

**Session I:** Overview of course, discussion of topics to be covered

**Compline**

**January 21, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Morning Prayer**: **8:45**

**Session II** (9:00 - noon, with breaks):Clarifying and limiting the topic

**Session III** (1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., with breaks):Putting together a sustained case/ argument

**January 22, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Session IV** (8:30 – 11:00):What’s involved in the thesis proposal

**Holy Eucharist**: **11:15**

**Lunch**

**Session IV** (1:30 – 4:30): Planning and completing the thesis