



BC600 Advanced Biblical and Theological Research Methods
Fall 2022

Professor: Dr. Steven Duby
Contact Information: sduby@ps.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help students develop the skills necessary for successful research at the doctoral level. Students will acquire advanced instruction in research methods and writing principles, as well as achieve expert understanding in the citation style of the Society of Biblical Literature.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Research, read, and write at the doctoral level.
2. Recognize the difference between a good argument and a bad one.
3. Use correct grammar.
4. Find good research materials and use them appropriately in essays.
5. Use appropriate formatting in papers (e.g., footnotes, bibliography, etc.).

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

- The SBL Handbook of Style*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
- Cameron, Andrew J. B., and Brian S. Rosner. *The Trials of Theology: Becoming a 'Proven Worker' in a Dangerous Business*. Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2010.
- Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2016.
- Lewis, C. S. "Learning in Wartime." In *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses*. New York: HarperCollins, 2015. (earlier editions also acceptable)
- Webster, John. *The Culture of Theology*. Ed. Ivor J. Davidson and Alden C. McCray. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<p>1. Reading Report (25% of grade) <i>Outcomes 1, 4-5</i></p>	<p>This report must be submitted to the professor by email before the end of the day on August 12. In that email, you will simply tell the professor how many items in the required reading you completed on time (i.e., by the time the relevant class period began).</p>
<p>2. Review Essay (50% of grade) <i>Outcomes 1-5</i></p>	<p>For this assignment, you will choose a controversial book to review and analyze. The goal here is to strengthen your ability to identify good and bad arguments and to offer incisive critique. Further instructions are provided below.</p>

3. Bibliography (25% of grade) <i>Outcomes 1, 4-5</i>	For this assignment, you will produce a bibliography for a topic on which you envision yourself doing a ThM thesis. Further instructions are provided below.
---	--

GRADING INFORMATION

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Description
A+	100–97	4.0	
A	96–93	4.0	Excellent; superior achievement.
A-	92–90	3.7	
B+	89–87	3.3	
B	86–83	3.0	Good; commendable achievement.
B-	82–80	2.7	
C+	79–77	2.3	
C	76–73	2.0	Satisfactory; acceptable achievement.
C-	72–70	1.7	
D+	69–67	1.3	
D	66–63	1.0	Poor; marginal achievement.
D-	62–60	0.7	
F	59–0	0.0	Failure to advance in the course. No credit earned. Computed in GPA.

SEMINARY ACADEMIC POLICIES

All Seminary policies affecting student work, appeals, and grievances, as outlined in the Student Handbook and/or Seminary Catalog, will apply, unless otherwise indicated in this syllabus. See the respective sections of the [*Student Handbook*](#).

Assignment Policies

Assignments must be formatted and submitted according to the instructions provided in the syllabus and according to any supplemental instructions provided in class. Late assignments are subject to a grade reduction. If the student has a true emergency (e.g., severe health issue or death in the family) that will affect the student's ability to submit an assignment on time, the student should email the professor as soon as possible.

Courteous Use of Technology in the Classroom (phone, tablet, laptop)

Students are expected to silence phones in class (airplane mode or turned off). If a student has an emergency situation (e.g., health issue in the family or imminent birth of a child), the student should step out of class to handle the situation. Students will be expected not to have laptops and similar devices out during the lectures and interaction in class. This is due to the fact that even the most godly among us can succumb to the distractions that such devices provide. The aim here is to foster an environment characterized by attentiveness to God and to one another. Furthermore, taking notes by hand improves memory.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Course schedule, topics, evaluation, and assignments may be changed at the professor's discretion to meet the needs of this class.

Date	Topic	Reading
8/10	Introduction to BC 600; Academia and the Christian Life	Cameron and Rosner, chaps 1-5; Lewis, "Learning in Wartime"
8/11	The Craft of Research and Writing	Kibbe, <i>From Topic to Thesis</i>
8/12	Academia and Christian Vocation	Cameron and Rosner, chaps 8-10; Webster, <i>Culture of Theology</i>
9/16	Review Essay Due	
9/30	Bibliography Due	

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEW ESSAY

I. *Overview*

For this double-spaced, 10-12 page paper, you will select one of the following books on which to write a review essay. If you wish to propose an alternative book to analyze, please discuss this with the professor in class.

Bates, Matthew W. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.

Gregory, Brad S. *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Hart, David Bentley. *That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

Sparks, Kenton L. *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2015.

Wright, N. T. *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion*. New York: HarperCollins, 2016.

You will be required to do the following things:

- 1) provide an accurate and fair chapter-by-chapter summary of the author's argument
- 2) provide a response to the author's argument, observing any strengths to be found and shedding light on points at which the author employs poor arguments (e.g., making dubious assumptions, generalizing, caricaturing opposing viewpoints, using heightened rhetoric instead of supplying good reasons for reaching a conclusion)
- 3) offer some brief, constructive statements on how you think the topic at hand could be addressed in a more helpful way

II. Structure

You will be required to use the following outline exactly. If you deviate from the following outline, a significant number of points will be deducted from your final grade. This is not to stifle your creativity but to provide you with the clarity of mind and the freedom to focus on the real task at hand. Each section of the paper will have a Roman numeral and a section heading. The text must be double-spaced throughout.

I. Introduction (c. ½ page)

(In this section, tell me exactly what you're going to do. Give an overview of where you are going with the rest of the essay. Be clear, not clever! It is permissible to use some first-person language here: e.g., "In this essay, I will discuss...")

II. Overview of the Book (c. 4 pages)

(Given an accurate, fair, chapter-by-chapter summary of the book's argument.)

III. Response (c. 6 pages)

(In accordance with the directions above, provide your response – both the critical and constructive comments.)

IV. Conclusion (c. ½ page)

(In this section, summarize what you've just done. You may consider ending with something like a nod toward the need for future reflection on the issues covered in the book.)

III. Resources, Footnotes, Bibliography

A. Resources

Beyond the book you are reviewing, you will need to consult a minimum of three different academic resources and cite them in your “Response” section. The “Response” section should still reflect and prioritize your own thinking. The footnotes in this section should be used simply to indicate key points at which another scholar’s work would be helpful to those who are studying the topic at hand.

B. Footnotes and Bibliography

The citation of sources should be done by using footnotes (not endnotes). A bibliography page should be added at the end of your essay (it will not count toward the total number of pages in your paper).

For citation format and for other formatting guidelines, see the *The SBL Handbook of Style*. You may also consult the information provided on the Seminary’s website: <https://ps.edu/guidelines-for-course-papers/>.

IV. Submission

You will submit this paper in a Word or PDF document. The document should be attached to an email sent to the professor (sduby@ps.edu). The email must arrive by the end of the day on 9/16.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY

For this assignment, you will be required to identify 75-100 academic sources pertaining to a topic on which you envision yourself doing a ThM thesis. This does not mean that you will be required to use all of these sources in your thesis. Nor does it mean that you cannot adjust your topic as needed in the future. Nevertheless, the goal is to identify resources that you will benefit from using in the near future. You are therefore expected to select your resources wisely, setting aside those that are neither relevant nor sufficiently rigorous and focusing on what you will actually need to read in the future.

The format of the bibliography should follow the SBL guidelines exactly.

You will have to produce your bibliography and submit it in a Word or PDF document by email. The email should be sent to the professor by the end of the day on 9/30.