

BT702 PRINCIPLES OF DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Course: BT702 E - Principles of Dissertation Research
Credit: 3 Semester Hours
Semester: Fall 2025 Session 2
Date: October 20 – December 12, 2025
Time: Tuesdays (6:00-9:00 pm Central time)
Place: Microsoft Teams
Professor: Dr. Gary Gromacki, Th.M., D.Min., Ph.D.
Department Chair of Bible and Theology
Director of the Ph.D. in Bible and Theology Program
Director of the Master of Arts in Bible and Theology Program
Professor of Bible and Theology
Phone: 816-425-6174
Email: gary.gromacki@calvary.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course guides the student in research strategies, dissertation topic selection, employment of the correct form and style for dissertations, and the use of bibliographic resources, library materials and computerized data bases.

This is a blended class, meaning that both campus (in class) and online students take this class together. Campus students attend the classes in person; online students attend the classes via the online classroom. All interaction and assignments for campus and online students are done in the online classroom.

N.B. Students are not obligated to use the topic they choose for his/her dissertation proposal as his/her final dissertation topic.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

General competencies to be achieved. The student will:

1. Learn the principles of dissertation research (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A1, 8)
2. Discover the best resources to consult for dissertation research (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 2,3,4,5,6,7)
3. Write and present the proposal for his/her dissertation (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 9, 10)

Specific competencies to be achieved. The student will:

1. Choose and narrow a topic for the dissertation (PLOs 1, 2, 3) (A 1)
2. Do a literature review to discover what has been written on your topic (PLOs 1, 2, 3)
(A 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
4. Learn how to use the electronic Bible study resources Accordance and/or Logos in your dissertation research (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 6)
5. Learn the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary sources (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
(A 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
6. Evaluate commentaries and systematic theologies to use in writing the dissertation
(PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 7)
7. Determine the research questions to be answered along with research paper topics for the classes in the PhD program (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (A 9)
8. Write an introduction to your dissertation explaining the thesis, need for the study and research questions to be answered (PLO 5) (A 1, 9)
8. Write an initial outline for the dissertation (PLO 5) (A 9)
9. Learn how to write a dissertation using Turabian style guide and the book *Elements of Style* (PLO 5) (A 8)
10. Type out an initial research bibliography for the dissertation (PLOs 3, 4) (A 2,3,4,5,6,7)

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), New King James Version (NKJV), or King James Version (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-0830851317 Cost: 11.99 Amazon paperback

Evans, Craig. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*. Hendrickson, 2005. ISBN: 978-0801048425 Cost: \$30.51 Amazon paperback

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph, M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0226239736 Cost: \$13.52 paperback

REQUIRED: ORIGINAL LANGUAGE BIBLE STUDY SOFTWARE (Accordance OR Logos)

Students are required to have digital resources to engage Biblical study in the original languages, including but not limited to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*, *Nestle Aland 28 (NA28)* – both including critical apparatus; *Septuaginta (LXX)*, a *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG)* by Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich; *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)* by Koehler and Baumgartner.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1 (100 points)

Read Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis* and type out a list of 10 things you learned about writing a dissertation from this book.

Type out 10 possible topics to research for a dissertation and number them from 1-10 in order of preference. Explain why each topic is of interest to you and what you would want to learn about each topic.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students on the question.

Assignment #2 (100 points)

Search for Dissertations and Books on your dissertation topic and type out a minimum list of 20 sources in a Word document using Turabian style to begin your Research Bibliography.

Read a minimum of 200 pages from these sources and type out summaries of each source. Explain how each source relates to your dissertation topic.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students on the question (100 points)

Assignment #3 (100 points)

Search for journal articles and electronic resources on the internet on your dissertation topic and type out a list of 20 sources in a Word document using Turabian style to continue your Research Bibliography.

Read a minimum of 200 pages from these sources (journal articles and electronic resources on the internet) and type out summaries of each source. Explain how each source relates to your dissertation topic.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students on the question

Assignment #4 (100 points)

Read the following sections in the textbook *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies* by Craig Evans and write a short paragraph summary of each section. Explain how each section of the textbook could relate to your dissertation. Post the Word document in Assignment 4 in Canvas.

- The Old Testament Apocrypha (p.9-25)
- The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (p.26-75)
- The Dead Sea Scrolls (p.76-154)
- Targums (p.185-215)
- Rabbinic Literature (p.216-255)

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students on the question

Assignment #5 (100 points)

Read the following sections in the textbook *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies* by Craig Evans and write a short paragraph summary of each section. Explain how each section of the textbook could relate to your dissertation. Post the Word document in Assignment 5 in Canvas.

- Philo and Josephus (p. 167-184)
- The New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (p.256-267)
- Early Church Fathers (p.268-277)
- Gnostic Writings (p.278-286)
- Other Writings (p.287-328)
- Examples of New Testament Exegesis (p.329-340)

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with at least one other student on his/her answer to the question.

Assignment #6 (100 points)

Write out 20 research questions for you to research and study on your dissertation topic.

Watch a minimum of twenty training videos on how to use Logos and/or Accordance. Type out 20 points you learned from watching these training videos (one for each training video).

Type out how you will use Logos and/or Accordance in your dissertation research. Be specific and list the type of searches you will do for your dissertation.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with other students in the discussion forum.

Assignment #7 (100 points).

Search for 10 biblical theologies and/or systematic theologies and 10 commentaries that relate to your dissertation topic. Type these out in a Word document using Turabian format.

Second: Read a minimum of 200 pages from the 20 sources (biblical theologies, systematic theologies and commentaries). Type a summary paragraph of each source in a Word document. Explain how each source could be used in your dissertation research.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students in the discussion forum (100 points)

Assignment #8 (100 points):

Read the book *The Craft of Research* by Booth, Colomb, Williams, Bizup and Fitzgerald. Type a list of 20 points to remember as you write your dissertation.

Write an initial outline of your dissertation with chapter divisions including a summary of what each chapter will include in the dissertation.

Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions and interact with other students in the discussion forum.

Assignment #9 (200 points)

Write the dissertation proposal using the information you discovered in assignments 1-8 (Minimum of 20 pages double spaced following Turabian format). You will present this proposal to the PhD students in our week 8 class. The dissertation proposal should include:

The Title of your dissertation – This title may be revised later on in the program (10 points)

The Thesis of your dissertation – What are you trying to prove/demonstrate in your dissertation? (10 points)

The Need for the Study – Explain why your dissertation is necessary. How will your dissertation add information to the topic/debate/text? (20 points)

Literature Review – Give an overview of previous research (dissertations, books, journal articles) on the topic of your dissertation (chronological by date of writing or thematic by topics) (40 points)

Research Questions: Write 20 research questions that you will try and answer in your dissertation. (20 points)

Initial Outline of the dissertation with chapters and chapter sections (20 points)

How you will use Accordance or Logos in your dissertation research (20 points)

Initial Research Bibliography (20 points)

Present your dissertation proposal to the professor and the PhD class in Week Eight. Each PhD student will make a 20 minute presentation in class (20 points)

Type out a short evaluation of each dissertation proposal presented in class (20 points)

GRADING SCALE

960-1000 points	A
940-959 points	A-
920-939 points	B+
880-919 points	B
860-879 points	B-
0-859 points	F

SCHEDULE

Week One – Selecting a Dissertation Topic to Research; Steps in Writing a Dissertation

Week Two – Starting the Research Bibliography; Writing the Literature Review

Week Three – Using Logos and Accordance (Electronic Bible Study Resources)

Week Four – Surveying Primary Sources: Hebrew Old Testament; Septuagint; OT Apocrypha; OT Pseudepigrapha; Dead Sea Scrolls; Targums; Talmud; Philo; Old Testament Archaeology

Week Five – Surveying Primary Sources: Greek New Testament; Josephus; Greco-Roman Sources; Early Church Fathers; Nag Hammadi Gnostic Sources; New Testament Archaeology

Week Six – Surveying Secondary Sources: Commentaries; Biblical Theologies; Church Histories; Systematic Theologies

Week Seven – Outlining the Argument of the Dissertation; Introduction to Logic and Logical Fallacies

Week Eight – Presentation and Evaluation of Dissertation Proposals by PhD Students

HELP FOR STUDENTS

Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support.

The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu) is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for Calvary University students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENT

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's ideas or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. The use of AI generated content in student work is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. If a student plagiarizes the student will receive a zero (F) for the assignment and he or she will be reported to the dean of students and the chief academic officer.

Use Turabian style for all research papers. All Ph.D. papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 edition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, George R. *The Graduate Student's Guide to Theses and Dissertations: A Practical Manual for Writing and Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974.

Barber, Cyril J. and Robert M. Krauss, Jr. *An Introduction to Theological Research*. Second Edition. New York: University Press of America, 2000.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph, M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabrey, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 14 volumes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977-.

Carson, D. A. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. Seventh Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller and John F. Kusko, eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Danker, Frederick William, rev. and ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. [BDAG]

Evans, John F. *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works*. 10th Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Glynn, John. *Best Bible Books: New Testament Resources*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018.

Glynn, John. *Commentary and Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*. 10th ed. Fully revised and updated. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.

Institute for Biblical Research Bibliographies. 14 volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992-.

Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.

Koehler, L. W. Baumgartner and John Stamm, eds. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*. 2 volumes. Leiden: Brill, 2001. [HALOT]

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. Revised by Henry Sturt Jones. 9th ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.

Longman III, Tremper. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. Fifth Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Louw, Johannes P. And Eugene A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. 2 volumes. New York: United Bible Societies, 1988.

Mann, Thomas. *A Guide to Library Research Methods*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

McKnight, Scot and Matthew C. Williams. *The Synoptic Gospels: An Annotated Bibliography*. No. 6. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

Seifrid, Mark A. and Randall K. J. Tan, *The Pauline Writings: An Annotated Bibliography*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Silva, Moises, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Sparks, Kenton L. *The Pentateuch: An Annotated Bibliography*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Strunk, William , Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Swales, John B. and Christine B. Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Ninth Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

VanGemeren, Willem, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.