

## **BT702 PRINCIPLES OF DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

**Course:** BT702 E - Principles of Dissertation Research  
**Credit:** 3 Semester Hours  
**Semester:** Fall 2026 Session 2  
**Date:** October 19 – December 11, 2026  
**Time:** TBA  
**Place:** Microsoft Teams  
**Professor:** Dr. Gary Gromacki, Th.M., D.Min., Ph.D.  
Department Chair and Professor of Bible and Theology  
Director of the Ph.D. in Bible and Theology Program  
Professor of Bible and Theology

### **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)**

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

Second: 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.

Third: Select a dissertation and read through it quickly and type out 10 observations of the dissertation.

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

#### **Assignment #2 (100 points)**

First: Search for Dissertations and Books on your topic and type out a minimum list of 30 sources in a Word document using Turabian style to begin your Research Bibliography.

Second: Read a minimum of 300 pages from these sources and type out summaries of each source (explaining how each source relates to your topic).

Third: Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with one other student on his answers to the question.

**Assignment #3** (100 points)

First: Search for journal articles and electronic resources on the internet on your topic and type out a list of 30 sources in a Word document using Turabian style to continue your Research Bibliography.

Second: Read a minimum of 300 pages from these sources and type out summaries of each source (explaining how each source relates to your topic).

Third: Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with one other student in the forum.

**Assignment #4** (100 points)

First: Read all articles posted in Modules written by Dr. Gary Gromacki. Type out a short paragraph summary of each article. Explain how each article could relate to your dissertation.

Second: Read the chapters in Craig Evans book *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies* and write a short paragraph summary of each section. Explain how each section could relate to your dissertation.

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)

Third: Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with one other student on his responses.

**Assignment #5:** (100 points)

First: Read a minimum of 300 pages from these primary sources: Greek New Testament, Josephus, Early Church Fathers, Greco-Roman sources, NT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library, and New Testament Archaeology.

Second: Read all articles posted in Modules written by Dr. Gary Gromacki.

Third: Read chapters from Craig Evan's book *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*.

Four: Type out summaries of all sources read along with information you will use in your dissertation research.

Five: Write a detailed response to the question on the lecture posted in Discussions in Canvas and interact with one other student on his answers.

**Assignment #6** (100 points)

First: Write out 20 research questions for your dissertation.

Second: 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 video.

Third: 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.

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

**Assignment #7:** (100 points)

First: Read a minimum of 300 pages from 30 Secondary Sources: 15 Systematic Theologies and/or Biblical Theologies and 15 Commentaries that relate to your dissertation topic.

Second: Type a summary of each resource noting information that you will use for your dissertation research.

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

**Assignment #8:** (100 points)

First: Read the book *The Craft of Research* by Booth, Colomb, Williams, Bizup and Fitzgerald.

Second: Type a list of 20 points to remember from the book as you write your dissertation.

Third: Type an initial outline of your Ph.D. dissertation with chapter divisions including a summary of what each chapter will include in the dissertation.

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

**Assignment #9:** (100 points)

First: Type the Ph.D. dissertation proposal using the information you discovered in assignments 1-8 (minimum of 20 pages double spaced). Follow this outline for the Ph.D. dissertation proposal:

The Topic of your dissertation – What are you writing about in your Ph.D. dissertation?

The Thesis of your dissertation – What are you trying to prove/demonstrate?

The Need for the Study – Why is your dissertation necessary? How will your dissertation add information to the topic/debate/text?

Literature Review – What are the major primary/secondary/tertiary sources you have read on your topic? 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).

Research Questions: What questions will you research? Write 20 research questions that you will try and answer in your dissertation.

Initial Outline: What are the chapter divisions of your dissertation? Explain how each chapter defines and defends your dissertation thesis.

Use of Electronic Bible Study Software: How will you use Accordance or Logos in your dissertation research?

Initial Research Bibliography: What books/dissertations/journal articles will you read and study for your Ph.D. dissertation? List in alphabetical order (last name of author first) according to Turabian format.

### **Assignment #10 (100 points)**

First: Make a 20 minute presentation of the Ph.D. dissertation proposal to the class using Powerpoint.

Second: Respond to each of the Ph.D. dissertation proposals presented in class by the PhD students and type a critique of each in Discussions in Canvas

### **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 – Dissertation Topic Selection; Steps to Writing a Dissertation

Week Two – Literature Review and the Research Bibliography

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

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

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

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

Week Seven – Style of Writing for a Dissertation; Logic and Logical Errors

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

## **NOTICES**

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

Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person's ideas and presenting them as your own.

All class papers must follow Turabian format – See Calvary University 2019 style guide.

The Clark Academic Center ([learning@calvary.edu](mailto: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.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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