

MA/MTS Thesis Proposal Seminar, Iliff School of Theology
Fall 2016
Online: 4 credits

Instructor: Elizabeth Coody

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Office Hours by appointment

(Use writing.iliff.edu to make appointments, or contact me directly if these times are not possible for you. We can work something out.)

Course Synopsis and Objectives

This course is designed to provide support and structure to students in the first phases of thesis development. Assignments will be geared toward teaching effective and sophisticated research practices as well as writing and argumentation skills. In this class, students will define and refine their topic, thesis, and points of evidence in order to produce a proposal and a detailed outline of the thesis.

Note: Students will be expected to consult with a faculty advisor at two points in the quarter. Within the first two weeks of the quarter, students should plan to discuss the viability and scope of their topic with the advisor. After submitting their proposal at mid-quarter, they should seek their faculty reader's guidance to refine and revise the proposal and discuss the next phases of thesis development.

Books for the Course

Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2008).

ISBN: 978-0226065663

The second required book is the style manual you will need for your thesis project. Choose the appropriate style guide based on the citation style you will be using. Please check with your advisor to determine the style you will need to use. Most theses at Iliff use Chicago

Style. **Choose only ONE of the following:**

For Chicago Style, sometimes called "Turabian":

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, **8th ed.** Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013.

ISBN: 9780226816388

For APA Style (American Psychological Association), specific kinds of pastoral care projects:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 6th ed. Washington, DC:

American Psychological Association, 2010.

ISBN: 9781433805615

For SBL Style (Society of Biblical Literature), specific kinds of biblical studies projects:

Alexander, Patrick H., ed. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

ISBN: 156563487X



Evaluation and Grading

You may take the proposal seminar Pass/Fail or for a letter grade.

From the Handbook: There is no limit to the number of Pass/Fail grades a student may request. However, 2/3 of a student's course credits taken at Iliff must have a letter grade to qualify for graduation with distinction.

Weight of assignments

(You'll note that the proposal itself is not a graded assignment; your faculty reader will assess its quality.)

- Participation, engagement, peer reviews. 20%
- Annotated bibliography. 20% (Due Week 5)
- Literature review. 20% (Due Week 7)
- Introduction to the thesis. 20% (Due Week 8)
- Full outline. 20% (Due Week 10)

Student Expectations

This course covers many topics over a ten-week period. Each is designed to help you get a *solid start* to your thesis. You will not complete your thesis during this time! However, you should walk away with a complete proposal, significant research materials, and a viable plan for completing your thesis in the time you have planned. We will not thoroughly exhaust each subject but will introduce many different ideas. Every week I will open a new module. You should plan to spend time on each weekly module, including reading the material, posting and responding to discussions, and completing activities. Remember, for a four-credit course such as this, one should expect to spend approximately twelve hours working. The more quality time you devote to this course, the closer this course can get you to your thesis goals.

Course Rhythm

I hope that having a clear rhythm will help you plan your time in the course more easily. Keep yourself to a regular rhythm as suits your schedule to avoid getting lost. Let me know if you have questions.

Tuesday Mornings: **Weekly module starts.** I actually open the modules before Tuesday morning, often on Fridays, but this is the first day of our "week" together.

Thursday Nights (by Midnight EST/10:00 pm MT): **First discussion post due.**

Sunday Night (by Midnight EST/10:00 pm MT): **Discussion responses due. Main weekly item(s) due. Each week, these items will be clearly marked in the check list.**

Monday Night: **Module round-up.** I'll post some sort of response either video, audio or text announcement giving any overview or response from this week of posts.

Final Week Exception to Course Rhythm (Week Ten):

Tuesday: Weekly module starts as usual.

Thursday: Final discussion posts due, just one post.

Friday: Detailed Outline Due.

Time to Be Announced: If the class wants a regular time, I'll set up a Google Hangout where you can ask questions for about an hour. This is the only time that I may change during the quarter, depending on everyone's availability. That student survey might really change this!

For more on the course rhythm and what to do for each Weekly Module, be sure to read the Start Here page and the Course Guide.

Policies and Services

Incompletes: If incompletes are allowed in this course, see the Master's Student Handbook for Policies and Procedures and contact me as soon as you can to discuss it if you feel you cannot complete the requirements of this course.

Pass/Fail: Masters students will take this course pass/fail, according to the course description.

Academic Integrity and Community Covenant

All students are expected to abide by Iliff's statement on Academic Integrity, as published in the Masters Student Handbook, or the Joint PhD Statement on Academic Honesty, as published in the Joint PhD Student Handbook, as appropriate. All participants in this class are expected to be familiar with Iliff's Community Covenant.

Plagiarism happens when writers do not properly cite sources. Instruction will be offered in proper citation techniques. Please feel free to bring any questions about citing sources to me or to the Writing Lab *before* you hand in the assignment.

Accommodations

Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303-765-1146.

All students are under a lot of pressure. If you feel overwhelmed and anxious, please don't hesitate to contact Consultation and Guidance, Dr. Jason Whitehead at jwhitehead@iliff.edu or 303.765.3162.

Iliff Writing Lab

Grammar and organization are important for all written assignments. Additional help is available from the Iliff Writing Lab, which is available for students of any level who need help beginning an assignment, organizing thoughts, or reviewing a final draft. Please see <http://writing.iliff.edu> for more information.

Inclusive Language

It is expected that all course participants will use inclusive language in speaking and writing, and will use terms that do not create barriers to classroom community.