

ACTS

SEMINARIES

Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University

MTS 700A/MTh 800A/MLE 803A: Research Writing & the Ministry of Scholarship

Instructors: ACTS Faculty
Coordinator: Dr. Brian M. Rapske, Professor of NT
Fall – 2017
credit hours*

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604-888-7592 (#3868)
Course Dates: Sept 11th – Dec 4th
Day/Time: Mondays, 11:30 am – 2:10 pm

**PLEASE NOTE that this course serves multiple programs. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, but course requirements will vary depending on the number of credit hours. Please review the assignment schedule carefully to determine which assignments are required for your program.*

1. *For students in the MLE program, MLE 803 will be a 1-credit hour course.*
2. *For students in the MTS and MTh programs, MTS 700 and MTh 800 will be a 3-credit hour course. The few MTS students who still need to complete the Integrative Seminar requirements that were a part of a previous program template will participate in designated sessions.*

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the world of academic scholarship, research, writing, and teaching. This objective is situated within a more general attempt to help students discern and prepare for their own contribution to the ministry of Christian scholarship. The course explores broad epistemological issues that shape research within the Christian worldview; it considers other specific issues and methodologies related to research writing in the fields of specialization represented by the MTS, MLE, and MTh programs; and it helps students prepare for teaching in an educational setting. Students are challenged to develop the skills of persuasion in the academic context, and to build a personal philosophy of scholarly ministry. In addition, the course prepares students for the specific task of researching, writing, and defending a graduate thesis.

II. OBJECTIVES

The course will help students to:

1. understand the nature, purpose, value, challenges, and opportunities of a scholar's vocation within both the larger academic and Christian community;
2. discuss the special characteristics and challenges of *Christian* scholarship, and its role in the life and ministry of the church;
3. describe the general characteristics of good scholarship and their application to the writing of graduate theses (e.g., research methodologies, argumentation, persuasion etc.);
4. analyse an argument or worldview presentation, identifying essential elements and assessing their effectiveness and appropriateness in the context of Christian scholarship;
5. become more conversant with a variety of practical features of scholarly and educational ministry in academic and/or church settings, and increase proficiencies in selected practical skills (e.g., professional development planning, curriculum and course design, instructional strategy, lecture preparation, evaluation mechanisms, grading, academic advising, committee work, and publication);
6. understand the various stages of thesis production and the process used by ACTS Seminaries in assisting students through their academic program;
7. demonstrate expertise in the skills of scholarly research writing (including topic selection, identification of appropriate methodology, data collection, and collaboration) through the preparation of an acceptable thesis proposal; and
8. contribute to scholarly dialogue by participating in structured academic exchanges.

III. TEXTBOOKS

Required textbooks for the course:

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. [336 pages]
- MTS/MTH Thesis Manual: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. ACTS, 2016.¹
- MLE Degree Program Manual*. ACTS/CANIL, 2014.²
- Sire, James W. *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. [263 pages]
- Truss, Lynne. *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. New York: Gotham Books, 2004. [240 pages]
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed., rev. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. [464 pages]

Recommended as handy reference guides for thesis writers:

- Aaron, Jane E., and Elaine Bander. *The Little Brown Essential Handbook for Writers*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc., 2010. [288 pages]

¹ The *MTS/MTh Thesis Manual* will be available in electronic form through TWU Moodle.

² The *MLE Thesis Manual* will be available in electronic form through TWU Moodle.

Bell, James B., Edward P. J. Corbett. *The Little English Handbook for Canadians*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Wiley Publishers, 1996. [264 pages]

IV. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Readings, Attendance, Class preparation and Participation

Students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topic(s) of the day. It is **essential** that preparatory readings are completed prior to our meeting each week. The grade for this component will be based on the degree of preparation for, and participation in, each week's class sessions. Consideration will be given to patterns of attendance, evidence of completion of the assigned readings, regular attempts to be involved through contributions to discussions and the raising of questions, the quality of contributions (for example, indications of careful reading, insight and interest in issues, etc.). Simply put, if you do not contribute to classroom discussions there will be no basis upon which to assign a grade for your preparation and participation!

2. Thesis Review: **DUE DATE - 25 September**

Each student will prepare a short review (3-5 pages in length) of a thesis or dissertation already written. The review will be submitted in written form, and will also be presented orally to the class. The selected thesis/dissertation should, if possible, be related to the discipline and area in which you intend to do your own thesis work. The review should be evaluative, considering matters such as:

- the significance and appropriateness of the topic
- the clarity and adequacy of the hypothesis
- the suitability of the methods of research and evidence of skill in using them
- the strength of the argument and conclusions
- the overall readability and effectiveness of the thesis
- the impact of the thesis on you, and its potential for the larger scholarly and Christian community

Use no more than half of the paper to describe briefly the subject of the thesis, its hypothesis, its main lines of argument and conclusion. Then use the remainder of the paper to offer critical observations on its strengths and weaknesses.

3. Theology of Scholarship Essay: **DUE DATE - 27 November**

The course is designed to help each student form their own personal philosophy/theology of research and scholarship in which they develop a clear vision of its nature and importance in life, its proper methodology, and its role in the larger context of Christian life and thought. Each student will prepare a paper (6-9 pages) discussing their own personal philosophy/theology of scholarship. This paper should not be a simple re-statement of course content. Rather you are to outline your own views on the importance of scholarship and its place in your life and ministry. You should consider the assumptions you make and the methodological principles you will follow as you do research in your own particular field, and reflect on the "Christian-ness" and biblical basis for those assumptions and methodologies. You should also identify areas in which further reflection is needed.

You might consider dividing this paper into three sections: (1) the first discussing the nature of scholarship – and especially Christian scholarship – in general (focus on broader questions of philosophy, purpose, governing principles, and guiding values for Christian scholarship); (2) the second commenting on your own personal sense of calling, and the application of your views on Christian scholarship to your life and ministry vocation; and (3) a short annotated bibliography of the sources utilized (annotations should not be longer than three lines).

4. Scholarly Activity Report: DUE DATE: 11 December

This assignment offers a more practical orientation to the life of a scholar/teacher than some of the other assignments. The Scholarly Activity Report includes three components:

a) Participation in Colloquia

Students will be expected to attend at least three academic colloquium, public lecture or conference presentations, and to participate in discussion as appropriate. The ACTS MTS/MTh program committee attempts to organize at least one or two colloquia each semester featuring either faculty members or senior students at ACTS. Each colloquium is held over the lunch hour, and lasts approximately 90-120 minutes. Normally one or two individuals (faculty, students, or guests) will present a brief paper. Presentations may be followed by reflections from a respondent, and always by open discussion. More details on dates, topics, etc., will be posted to the *Moodle* website.

Unless special permission is granted, at least one of the three colloquia events needs to be sponsored by ACTS. In the event that ACTS does not offer a sufficient number of events, look for colloquium, lecture or conference events sponsored by other programs at TWU (e.g., Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Humanities or the Religious Studies Department), or other institutions in the area.

The end of term Scholarly Activity Report must include a short one-page summary for each of the colloquia events you attended. Each summary should include the following: (1) basic information about the event itself: date, place, participants, topic etc.; (2) the main thesis of the presenter(s); (3) a few evaluative comments on the presentation (yours and/or those of others who responded); and (4) a few thoughts on what you may have learned from the experience.

b) Field Work

Each student will be expected to be involved in structured field work relevant to their program, area of study, personal goals, and anticipated future ministry. For MTS students, field work might involve serving as a faculty TA, teaching (or assistant teaching) a college or seminary course, teaching a class in a church or para-church setting, assisting a faculty member (or in some cases a pastor or denominational leader) in a research or publication project etc. Various types of involvement are appropriate. A suitable field assignment for this course must:

- Involve one or more major academic skills (research, course design/prep, instruction, learning evaluation, academic administration),
- Be structured and planned around a clear set of measurable goals, established early in the semester (you should be able to say just what you are going to do, what you hope to achieve through it, and what you expect to learn in the process, before the ministry involvement starts);

- Include accountability to one or more competent individuals who will oversee your involvement, and who will give you evaluative and developmental feedback

Total involvement time in field work should be at least 30 hours. To make the exercise most helpful, you will plan and organize the learning plan for your field work to approximate a course syllabus (to be called the “self-syllabus”), and your evaluation documents (to be called a “grade sheet”) should be set up the way you might provide students with evaluation on their work in a course. Both the self-syllabus and grade sheet must be included as part of your scholarship activity report.

The self-syllabus should include:

A course title (what would you call the field work you’re going to be doing?)

- A course description (a brief summary of your field involvement, describing what you will be doing, where, with whom, and when)
- A list of student-centred, potentially measurable “course objectives” for the field work (what do you want to learn and how would you like to grow through this involvement? You may want to comment on what you hope to contribute in your area of ministry, too, though the main focus of this syllabus is your learning.)
- Your “course assignments” (What tasks do you plan to do in order to accomplish these goals within your field work? How should they be done? How will you measure your success?)
- A “course grading” section, listing the assignments you have given yourself and assigning a point value to each. (Possible points for all the assignments should add up to 100.)
- A “course schedule” setting out the tentative timeline in which you will be doing your field work.

The grade sheet should include:

- A list of all the assignments for your field work that you established in your self-syllabus
- A numeric score that you believe accurately reflects the quality of the work you did relative to each assignment
- A total numeric score for your field work. (This would be your assessment of your final grade)
- Some brief comments on each of the assignments you have done. How did the tasks go? What went well, and why? What could have been improved? What would you do differently next time? What did you learn from the experience? Comments do not need to be extensive, but should demonstrate good evaluative reflection.
- Supervisor’s signature (and comments as appropriate)

A detailed report from the individual who supervises your field work is not required. It is assumed that you will get person-to-person feedback on your work, which will be reflected in your own personal assessment. If your supervisor is able and willing to provide some evaluative comments on one or more of the assignments, those are certainly welcome.

Please Note: It may not always be possible to find and organize a field work assignment within the space of one semester, particularly if the assignment occurs outside of ACTS. Therefore, with permission of the course coordinator, this assignment may be extended into the Spring semester.

c) Reading

In addition to the textbooks and assigned readings, students will be expected to read 150 pages on effective educational ministry from sources of their own choosing (this reading should not be a duplication of items used for other assignments in this course). In addition, students need to select a scholarly journal in their field of specialization (*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Church History*, etc.) and read at least two issues (or equivalent), including both articles and book reviews. Your Scholarly Activity Report must include an annotated bibliography: full bibliographic information of the material read, a short sentence or two indicating what the book/article/review is about, and the number of pages read from each work.

5. Thesis Proposal: DUE DATE: 04 December

Each student will prepare a draft thesis proposal according to the guidelines outlined in the *ACTS Thesis Manual* and other information shared in the course. Please bring enough copies to distribute to other members of the class.

Obviously, it is to your advantage to use this assignment to develop a starting point for the thesis proposal you will eventually submit to your degree's program committee. Not all students, however, are ready for this step during the course. In preparing this paper, you are not required to have all the conceptual, bibliographical, and other elements in place that would be needed for a successful thesis proposal. But you should be able to design a draft proposal that includes the necessary elements of a formal proposal, which shows your ability to select and refine a possible topic, and which demonstrates an understanding of the issues that must be addressed in order for the project to be accepted.

Please note: Do not assume that the draft thesis proposal you produce for this course will be ready for submission to the MTS, MLE, or MTh committees for approval. This course is designed to help prepare you for this step, but the ongoing development and submission of a proposal for your program committee takes place upon your initiative when you believe you are ready to take this step.

Assignments	Due Date	MTS / MTh 3 Credit	MLE 1 Credit
Attendance, class prep., readings	Weekly	Yes (10%)	Yes (30%)
Thesis Review	Sept 25	Yes (15%)	Yes (30%)
Theology of Scholarship Essay	Nov 27	Yes (20%)	Not applicable
Thesis Proposal	Dec 04	Yes (30%)	Yes (40%)
Scholarly Activity Report	Dec 11	Yes (25%)	Not applicable

V. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES/POLICIES (The fine print!)

1. All written work must be electronically submitted as MS Word or easily convertible to Word documents (PDF's will not be received) to the appropriate drop box on the *Moodle* website.

They must be double-spaced and in a font that is not less than 12 point Times New Roman or equivalent. Page-bottom footnotes are preferred (but not mandatory). Grades ***WILL*** be reduced if the Turabian style format is not followed (take special care with bibliographies and footnotes). Documents whose format is corrupted in the process of conversion to Word will be marked as inappropriately formatted. ***NOTE***: Here’s the message between the lines—if you do not use your course work as the occasion to learn the Turabian format and do not give meticulous attention to format matters in your thesis proposal, it will ***NOT*** be received by the program committee.

2. Develop the habit of using inclusive language – it will be required in the thesis. Failure to do so in writing or in public speaking is often considered offensive in North America, and it is impossible to publish material without using inclusive language. It is therefore a useful habit to develop during graduate studies. Remember, thesis deposition will make your work available for the world to see.
3. Students are expected to be familiar with the ACTS policy concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty (see *Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS* below). Plagiarism will be treated as a serious offense and will result in the failure of the specific assignment and possibly also in a failing grade in the course. ***EVERY*** instance of plagiarism without exception (even minimal plagiarism) ***will be reported*** both to the registrar and the Academic Committee of ACTS, and will result in a letter included in your permanent student record.
4. Late Assignments will be penalized one letter grade. They will not be accepted if more than seven days late.

LETTER GRADE TO PERCENTAGE CORRELATION

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

VI. CLASS LECTURE and READING SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

**NOTE: Any readings beyond those supplementing the required textbooks will be noted on TWU Moodle course page.*

COURSE DATE	WHAT WILL BE COVERED
September 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting Acquainted, Introduction to the Course and Program The Act of Reading Academic Mountain Climbing: Writing a Thesis
September 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loving God and the Pursuit of Learning: The Calling of a Christian Intellectual Christian Scholarship and the Life of the Church <p>Assigned Reading: Sire, James W. <i>Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling</i>. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.</p>
September 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present and Discuss Thesis Reviews Discussion: Finding Your Topic, ACTS Thesis Manual and Disciplinary-Specific Research Methodologies <p>Assigned Reading: <i>MTS/MTH Thesis Manual: A Guide for Students and Faculty</i> (ACTS, 2016). Pages 1-14 <i>MLE Degree Program Manual</i> (ACTS/CANIL, 2014). Pages 1-9</p> <p>Thesis Review Due</p>
October 02	<p>“Thinking about Thinking ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Methodologies: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods <p>Assigned Reading: Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. <i>The Craft of Research</i>, 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. Chapters 1-6.</p>
October 09	Thanksgiving Holiday
October 16	<p>“Thinking about Thinking ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argumentation and Logic <p>Assigned Reading: Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. <i>The Craft of Research</i>, 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. Chapters 7-11.</p>
October 23	Reading Week & Modular Classes – No Class
October 30	<p>“Thinking about Thinking ...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persuasion and Effective Communication Writing Wrongs: Good Grammar–The Construction Tools of Writing Research Ethics <p>Assigned Readings: Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. <i>The Craft of Research</i>, 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. Chapters 12-17 and Last Considerations. Truss, Lynne. <i>Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation</i>. New York: Gotham Books, 2004.</p>

November 06	<p>“Thinking about Thinking ...” Foundations: Epistemology and Assumptions</p>
November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting It Done (Working with an advisor, keeping on track, closing processes) • Qualities of a Successful Scholar • “My Thesis/Dissertation Experience: Advice from those who have boldly gone before” <p>Assigned Reading: <i>MTS/MTH Thesis Manual: A Guide for Students and Faculty</i> (ACTS, 2016). Pages 15-24.</p>
November 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to Teach Adults
November 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Discussion Session: This forum will be highly interactive and directed by questions raised by students. It can include topics related to academic life, educational philosophy, educational issues and methodologies, scholarly research and publication, job search, program issues, fieldwork experiences, etc. <p>Theology of Scholarship Due</p>
December 04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral presentation and review of student thesis proposals <p>Thesis Proposal Due</p>
December 06	<p><i>Mock Thesis Defense – Trial Run (Class Make Up Day)</i></p>
December 11	<p>Scholarly Activity Report Due – No Class</p>

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://www1.twu.ca/services>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations: CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University’s campus closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University’s website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <http://www.twu.ca/campus/campus-notification.html> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes will be made at 6:00 a.m. and will cover all classes that begin before 1:00 p.m. A second announcement pertaining to classes that begin between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. will be made at 11:00 a.m. A third announcement pertaining to classes that begin after 5:00 p.m. will be made at 3:00 p.m.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used, and in CanIL courses.

Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (to create an account or log in, go to: <http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. It is free. The link to EndNote from the library home page provides detailed instructions. Students will need to be aware that it is necessary to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. In EndNote Basic/Web the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, and APA 6th edition. For Turabian, there are two formats – Notes (Bibliography) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information may be found at the following website: <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable students to create properly formatted bibliography

citations, go to <http://www.eturabian.com/turabian/index.html> or <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> (“Chicago” stands for “Turabian”).

CANIL students should consult with their own faculty on specific requirements.

Please check with your professor to find out which style he/she recommends you use!!

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are important for improving teaching outcomes, faculty professional development, and the student learning context. Completion of course evaluations is, therefore, considered to be a course expectation. Professors will schedule time for students to fill out online course evaluations (20-30 minutes) on their personal laptops or a collegium computer during the last scheduled class of the semester. Students who are absent that day or who are otherwise unable to complete the online course evaluation during the last class will be expected to make every effort to do so by the last day of exams. Information about how to access online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/research/research-ethics/default.html>. Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean’s office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

Christian scholars at TWU regard academic integrity to be a core value. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and are required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship. This means that all members of the TWU academic community must avoid all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. ACTS uses the TWU Student Handbook as a guide for our seminary students. Though some features in the handbook are focused on the university’s undergraduate population, it provides the essential student life information for ACTS students as well. It can be found online at: <http://www.twu.ca/studenthandbook/>.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student’s responsibility. An excellent resource in this regard has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or can be viewed in flash (self-running) tutorials of different lengths:

<http://williambadke.com/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

Students with disabilities who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and such documentation should include a statement regarding the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined on the TWU website at <http://twu.ca/life/wellness/learningresources/disabilities-and-equity-of-access/steps-to-attaining-disability-services.html>.

Policy Information and Student Concerns

Information on academic and community life policies and procedures that affect students can be found in the ACTS *Academic Catalogue*, which is available on the ACTS website (www.actsseminaries.com) under the *Academics* tab. Students who wish to communicate concerns or to lodge academic appeals are welcome to contact the appropriate faculty or staff member directly, or to fill out and submit the relevant Concerns & Grievances or Appeals form found on the *Files & Forms* page of the *Current Students* section of the ACTS Website.