



PMPR8301 Engaging Exposition II: Preaching the Genres
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
May 22-24|2024

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This seminar will lead students to examine the connection between the practice of expository preaching and the various genres of both testaments of the Bible. Attention will be given to methods of interpreting and proclaiming narrative, law, poetry, proverbs, prophecy, letters, and apocalyptic. Students will also apply their knowledge to their own preaching in a way that is relevant to the contemporary church and culture.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course has been designed so that students might achieve the following:

1. As a result of this seminar, students will be able to discuss the major approaches/methods of preaching from the various literary genres of the Bible.
2. As a result of this seminar, students will be able to state the names and views of writers and preachers who have explored the relevance of literary genre to expository preaching.
3. As a result of this seminar, students will heighten their competence in interpreting all the biblical genres.
4. As a result of this seminar, students will be able to preach expository sermons from all the types of literature in the Bible.
5. As a result of this seminar, students will be able to preach Christ-centered sermons from every literary genre of the Bible.
6. As a result of this seminar, students will be able to plan and preach series of sermons from every biblical genre.
7. As a result of this seminar, students will grow in their ability to learn from others in ministry as they interact with one another and with professors by sharing and listening to ministry ideas and practices.

Required Textbooks (Read 6 of the 13)

1. Arthurs, Jeffrey D. *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007.
2. Blomberg, Craig L. *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
3. Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2003.
4. Dowden, Landon. *Exalting Jesus in Esther*. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2019.
5. Gentry, Peter J. *How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017.
6. Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
7. Kent, Greenville J. R., Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner. *Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.
8. Mathewson, Steven. *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
9. Moseley, Allan. *From the Study to the Pulpit: An 8-Step Method for Preaching and Teaching the Old Testament*. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2018.
10. Paul, Ian and David Wenham. *Preaching the New Testament*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013.
11. Roberts, Vaughan. *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2003.
12. Smith, Steven W. *Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons Like Scripture*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2015.
13. Wright, Christopher J. H. *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Course Announcement:

You can expect an announcement/email from the professor 1-2 weeks prior to the course meeting dates regarding the content of the course, significance of the content, and how students can prepare for class.

Course Requirements:

1. Students will read 6 of the 13 textbooks and will write a 5-6 page review of each book they read. All students are required to read *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts as one of the 6 books they read. The reading and reviews will be completed before the first day of the seminar. Students are to submit one book review electronically to Dr. Dowden no later than May 15, 2024. Dr. Dowden will

grade and provide significant feedback for this writing assignment, including an assessment of content and especially writing quality and style. Hard copies of the 4 additional required reviews will be turned in on the first day of the seminar. Guidelines for writing a critical book review are included in this syllabus. Additional writing guidelines are also included, and students are encouraged to read all such guidelines and follow them in all their seminar writing. All 12 books will be discussed during the seminar. Each student will present at least one review orally (and perhaps two) and will lead a class discussion of that/those book(s). The student presenting the book will “teach” the book to the seminar, and may use printed and/or PowerPoint notes to help with the presentation. Students will select a book(s) for their oral review/discussion by emailing Dr. Dowden’s assistant, Carol Tant, at ctant@hebronchurch.org. Books will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis.

2. Students will listen to two sermons preached by one or two of the preachers listed below. Preferably, the sermons will be viewed via video. One of the sermons must be from the Old Testament, and students will choose sermons from biblical genres that are the biggest challenges for them. Students will write a 2-page summary/evaluation of each sermon, and will be prepared to present the evaluation in the seminar should time allow. Students should evaluate form, content, and presentation of the sermon. In their evaluations, students will bring to bear what they have learned from the assigned reading on the various biblical genres. Further questions that should guide the evaluation are included in this syllabus. The same questions will be used to evaluate student sermons.

Danny Akin
 Thabiti Anyabwile
 Alistair Begg
 Peter Rochelle
 Mark Dever
 Crawford Loritts
 Kevin DeYoung
 Landon Dowden
 J.D. Greear
 Jack Hayford
 Greg Heisler
 David Jeremiah
 Max Lucado
 Fred Luter
 John McArthur
 Steven W. Smith

Tony Evans
 Tony Merida
 James Merritt
 Allan Moseley
 Joel Osteen
 John Piper
 David Platt
 Haddon Robinson
 Stephen Rummage
 Jim Shaddix
 Robert Smith
 Charles Stanley
 Chuck Swindoll
 Chris Williamson
 Hershael York

3. Students will present one of their own sermons via video during the seminar. The sermon will be pre-recorded and brought to the seminar in a format that is viewable during the seminar (DVD, internet, flash drive). Students will select a preaching text from one of the biblical genres listed below by sending an email to Carol Tant at ctant@hebronchurch.org. All genres will be assigned, so students who contact Carol later may be required to preach from a genre that is not their first choice.

- narrative
- law
- poetry
- prophecy
- proverb
- apocalyptic

- gospel
- parable
- epistle

4. Students will select a genre(s) and prepare a presentation for the class on preaching from that genre. Why should preachers preach from that genre? What are some cautions in preaching from that type of literature? What are some positive outcomes that can result from preaching from that type of Scripture? What is a method preachers can use in preaching from that genre? What human needs are especially exposed by preaching from that genre? How may a preacher preach Christ from the selected genre? Students will become the class expert on the genre(s) they select, and they may have to present more than one genre. Students will email Dr. Dowden's assistant, Carol Tant, at ctant@hebronchurch.org and indicate their first and second choice of genres to present. The bibliography in this syllabus lists numerous resources that address the interpretation and proclamation of the various biblical genres, and students are encouraged to consult such resources that relate to the genre they will teach. The genres are as follows:

- narrative
- law
- poetry
- prophecy
- proverb
- apocalyptic
- gospel
- parable
- epistle

5. On the first day of class, students will be divided into groups depending on the number of participants in the seminar. Students will be asked to work together to present a preaching strategy for an assigned text. Students will be required to utilize knowledge learned from the reading assignments and class discussions to formulate a faithful approach to their assigned text. The presentation should include: key aspects of preaching from the group's assigned genre, concerns when approaching the genre, the main point of the assigned passage, and a preaching outline for the text with clear points of application. Some class time will be provided for groups to work together and then present their projects.
6. Students will attend all sessions of the seminar and participate in class discussions in an effort to create an environment in which students learn both from the professors and from one another.

Course Grading Assignment Weight

- Book reviews – 20%
- Genre presentations – 20%
- Sermon reviews – 20%
- In-seminar preaching – 15%
- In-seminar Group Project – 15%
- Class participation/discussion – 10%

Course Load Expectations

Students are expected to satisfactorily fulfill all of the following listed requirements. Since this is a three hour course, the professors expect the students to complete 2250 minutes of work in

class and 4500 minutes of work outside of class. Reading and writing assignments for this course have been calculated with these requirements in mind.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Policies

Academic Honesty Policy: All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or any other course requirement.

Assignment Formatting: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to follow the NOBTS Style Guide (see page 7 of the course syllabus). The latest edition of the Turabian Manual may be consulted for any issues not addressed in the Style Guide. All written assignments must be Word documents, written in third person unless otherwise instructed, and created in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be based on your total accumulation of points as indicated under the *Assignments and Evaluation Criteria* section of this syllabus according to the grading scale in the NOBTS 2019-2020 catalog.

A 93-100 B 85-92 C 77-84 D 70-76 F 69 and below

Absences, Make-up Work, and Late Assignments: Students should consult the current NOBTS Catalogue for the Seminary policy on class absences. When emergencies exist, the student may petition the Academic Advisor for permission to remain in class with excessive absences. Students also are reminded that being tardy to class can result in absences being recorded (three times tardy will be recorded as one class period absence) and that students, **not the professor**, are responsible for having their presence in class recorded on the class roll when they are tardy in attendance.

Unless otherwise noted, **assignments are due by Midnight CST on the Monday** of the specific weeks/units listed. Those assignments turned in past the date and time due will incur an initial late penalty of **ten** points followed by an additional point each day it is late, which will be deducted from the assignment grade. **Assignments will not be accepted more than one week past the date due** without permission.

Netiquette: Appropriate Online Behavior: Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times in the online environment.

Disclaimer

Flexibility is a critical attitude to ministry faithfulness. Therefore, students will be expected to keep a good attitude when things change. This syllabus proposes a course of study for a given time period. However, occasionally things change. The professors reserve the right to adjust the syllabus when they reasonably think that doing so will enhance the learning experience of the students.

Withdrawal from the Course: The administration has set deadlines for withdrawal. These dates and times are published in the academic calendar. Administration procedures must be followed. You are responsible to handle withdrawal requirements. A professor can't issue a withdrawal. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in the course if you choose not to attend once you are enrolled.

Additional Information

Blackboard and SelfServe: You are responsible for maintaining current information regarding contact information on Blackboard and SelfServe. The professor will utilize both to communicate with the class. Blackboard and SelfServe do not share information so you must update each. Assignment grades will be posted to Blackboard. You will be need to enroll in the course on Blackboard.

In Case of a Declared Campus Evacuation

Students are to check the NOBTS electronic Blackboard at www.nobts.edu within four days of evacuation.

NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service: Once you have established a SelfServe account you may sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service by going to <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html> .

Special Needs: If you need an accommodation for any type of disability, please set up a time to meet with the professor(s) to discuss any modifications you may need that are able to be provided.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

NOBTS Style Guide

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Syllabus Disclaimer

This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the course description, course objectives, general content, grading criteria, course requirements, attendance requirements, and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary because of events and circumstances that change during the term.

Tentative **Class Schedule**

Wednesday

- Welcome and orientation
- Submit written book reviews and discussion
- Student presentations on preaching from a genre
- Student evaluation of preaching
- Group project work time

Thursday

- Remaining book reviews and discussion
- Student presentations on preaching from a genre
- Student evaluation of preaching
- Group Project work time

Friday

- Remaining Genre presentations
- Group Presentation – presenting a preaching strategy for an assigned text
- Remaining Student sermons and evaluation

Questions for Sermon Evaluation

1. How well did this sermon explain the biblical text under consideration?
2. How well did the preacher address and explain theological issues related to the preaching text?
3. How well did the preacher apply and illustrate the biblical text being considered?
4. How did this sermon reveal/expound God's grace?
5. How was the sermon relevant to the context of Western culture and local culture? What specific cultural ideas and/or practices were addressed?
6. How did the preacher's appearance and voice contribute and/or detract from the message (posture, eye contact and facial expressions, clothing and appearance, mannerisms, voice and inflection)?
7. How did the sermon point to Christ and our need for Him?
8. How did this sermon impact the local congregation as it currently exists? How did it potentially contribute to the development of disciples?
9. How well did the preacher hold the attention of the people?

GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

I. Preliminary Considerations

A critical book review is not merely a summary of the contents of a book. A critical book review is a vehicle for examining and discussing issues the book raises or fails to raise. One writes a critical book review for the benefit of those who may not presently have time to read the book but who need to learn more about its basic approach should they read it in the future. The book reviewer is to inform these readers concerning merits and/or shortcomings the book may have. From information in the review, the reader may determine the contributions and value of the book.

II. Components of a Critical Book Review

A. Give complete bibliographical information at the top of the page (title, author, publisher, place of publication, date of publication, number of pages, and name of reviewer). Use the following format:

Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament, by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 250 pages. Reviewed by Randy C. Slocum.

B. Briefly state the reason this book was chosen for review. State the author's credentials (education, place of employment, previous achievements, etc.) as a preface to giving the book a serious hearing. Biographical information about the author should be included only as it demonstrates the author's competence to write the book. Within the context of the paper, do not use titles (Dr., Rev., etc.). In most brief reviews, reviewers should limit the introduction to one or two paragraphs.

C. Briefly (in one or two well-written sentences) summarize the thesis of the book. This is a crucial step because the thesis contains the reason the author wrote the book (dozens of books with similar subject matter may be available on the market). The thesis will state the author's basic presuppositions and approach. The critical nature of the book review will grow from the reviewer's conclusion that the book does or does not achieve the author's stated purpose.

D. The main body of a critical book review will be concerned with thesis development. That is, did the author achieve the stated purpose? In this section the reviewer will inspect each of the chapters of the book noting how the author develops (or does not develop) the thesis. If the author develops the thesis convincingly, providing adequate information and statistical data, the reviewer says so, providing concrete examples and citing their page numbers in the text.

Given the limited amount of space in a brief book review, reviewers should not use footnotes. Quotations or ideas taken directly from the text should be followed parenthetically by the page number of the quotation. The reviewer should not use abbreviations for page(s) (p./pp.).

Example:

Rainer argues that evangelistic churches should focus on reaching youth (20). Indeed, he writes, "Many churches fail to recognize that adolescence is a critical time of receptivity to the gospel" (21).

If the thesis is poorly developed or if the examples are inadequate to support the assertions of the author, the reviewer will point this out as well. Most critical book reviews will contain both praise and criticism, carefully weighed and balanced against one another.

Remember the purpose of a critical book review is not to provide a summary of the book. You may assume that the professor and the grader know the contents of the book.

Questions the reviewer will seek to answer in this section will include:

- Is there an adequate, consistent development of the author's stated thesis? Why or why not?
- What is the author's purpose, i.e., what does he/she hope to accomplish through this book? Does the author accomplish the purpose? If so, how does he/she do so? If not, why not?
- Does the author approach the subject with any biases, i.e., do the author's theological, experiential, philosophical, denominational, or cultural perspectives influence his/her conclusions?
- Does the author properly support his/her thesis? Does the author adequately consider and refute opposing viewpoints? Is the book limited in application to specific types of churches? Is the book relevant to contemporary culture?
- Does the author have to resort to suppression of contrary evidence in order to make the thesis credible (slanting)? If so, what additional evidence would weaken the case?
- Is the thesis sound but marred by a flawed procedure?
- Is the author's case proved, or would another thesis have been more appropriately chosen?

E. Finally, students will include a summary section. How does this book differ from other treatments of the same subject matter? What is unique and valuable about this approach as opposed to others? Would the reviewer recommend this book above others? Why or why not?

This final summary should include the major strengths and weaknesses of the book and evaluate its value for readers who may be interested in that particular field of inquiry. The primary purpose of this section is to respond both positively and negatively to the book's contents and presentation. The response should be more thoughtful and detailed than, "This book is a good book that should be recommended reading for everyone," or "This book is a lousy book not worth reading." A central issue in this evaluation is whether or not the author achieved the book's stated purpose.

Answer questions such as:

- What are the strengths of the book, i.e., what contributions does the book make?
- Why should a person read this book?
- What did you learn from this book?
- How might you apply the lessons of this book in your ministry context?
- Would you recommend the book to other ministers? to seminary students? to laypersons? Why, or why not?

Do not allow your response to the application question to become lengthy (this paper is not primarily an evaluation of your ministry), but make some application.

Throughout your critique, be specific in your evaluations. Do not merely tell the reader about the book; tell and show the reader with concrete examples from the book, including page numbers.

F. The length of the review should be between five and seven pages, double-spaced.

III. Style Issues for a Critical Book Review

Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7th ed.) and the SEBTS supplemental guide to Turabian are the accepted standards for style issues. You are expected to be familiar with both guides.

The following guidelines are included to counter common style errors:

- A. Utilize this suggested outline to guide your book review, but do not include the specific subheadings ("Bibliographical Entry," "Summary of the Book," etc.) in the essay. The brevity of the review demands a smooth flow from one section to another without including the subheadings.
- B. Use first-person sparingly; however, you may use "I" when referring to your opinion of a text.
- C. Avoid contractions in formal writing.
- D. Use active voice as much as possible.
- E. Be clear and concise. A brief review allows no room for wandering from your objective.
- F. Use your spell-checker, but do not trust it. A spell-check will not catch the error in such sentences as, "The whole church voted too pass the amendment." Use your eyes as well as your spell-checker.
- G. Proofread your paper. Finish the paper, and proof it. Lay it aside, and proof it again at a later time. If you do not catch your errors, someone else will.

(TITLE PAGE FOR ALL SEMINAR PAPERS)

TITLE OF PAPER

Your Name
Class Title
Date Submitted

Common D. Min. Writing Issues and Guidelines

Capitalization:

- Do not capitalize for emphasis. Follow standard capitalization rules (beginning of sentence, proper nouns but not common nouns replacing proper nouns).
- Learn capitalization rules for specific religious words such as: Bible, biblical, Scripture, scriptural. Church? Refer to handouts distributed in workshops.
- Be consistent with the capitalization of divine pronouns. Discuss this with your Chair.

Punctuation:

- Use semicolons sparingly (better to begin a new sentence in most situations).
- Use dashes appropriately and sparingly:
 - hyphen (-) use between words (first-rate)
 - en dash (–) use between series of numbers (John 3:16–17)

- em dash (—) use for interruptions in sentences (Sentence begins here— interruption—then goes back) (No spaces before or after dashes)
- Quotation Marks: Periods and commas are placed inside quotation marks; semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation points are placed outside unless it is part of the quotation.
- Any change you make in a quote must be within brackets []. This includes a change in capitalization.
- Use commas appropriately:
 - Comma between items in a series in place of a conjunction (The sun, the moon, and the stars).
 - Comma before a conjunction if both sides of the sentence are independent clauses (The wages of sin is death, **but** the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.).
 - No comma before a conjunction if one side is a dependent clause (All have sinned **and** fall short of the glory of God.). Independent clauses can make a sentence by itself—dependent clauses cannot.
- Use ellipsis points correctly:
 - A space should be **before and after** each dot. If it is following a period, place the period as usual, then space and start with the first dot. Know Turabian’s guidelines concerning when to use ellipsis points. Do not use before or after an obviously incomplete sentence.

Grammar and Composition:

- Write paragraphs as tight units of thought. Begin with a topical sentence and make sure the entire paragraph supports that topic sentence. Each paragraph should be about one thing. Page-long paragraphs do not normally exist. The last sentence should bring the paragraph to a close and introduce what is coming next. When the subject changes, create a new paragraph. Include no “filler.” Every sentence should make a contribution to the paragraph and every paragraph to the section. **Paragraphs should be more than 2 sentences long.**
- Do not use an extra space or half space between paragraphs.
- Avoid using forms of the phrases “There is” or “It is.” Those phrases are wordy and take up space. One example of a way to change this form is: “There was a solution to this problem” **to** “The writer’s research revealed a solution to this problem.”
- Avoid using the vague wording “this is.”
- Main comma usage: A comma is used with a coordinating conjunction (and, for, but, so, nor, or, yet) that combines two complete sentences. The comma may occur in a series following every element of that series: “I like football, basketball, and baseball.” A comma may also follow an introductory clause: “As the storm approached, the students went inside.” **Please avoid the overuse of introductory clauses!**
- Follow the rules for numbers in Turabian 23.1.
- Insure pronouns and their antecedents agree. Example: “The group reached their decision to....” A group is one entity, so the possessive pronoun should be “its”.
- Avoid using clichés and assumed terminology. Cliché = “off the top of my head” or “right off the bat.” Assumed terminology, usually biblical or religious in nature = “lost people” or “people outside of Christ” or “unbelievers” or “build God’s kingdom”.
- Always check verb tenses (present, past, future) for appropriate uses.
- Avoid unnecessary words in sentences: “Peter Steinke wrote the book *Healthy Congregations*. In the book, he stated...” Instead, “In *Healthy Congregations*, Peter Steinke stated....”

- Avoid long sentences with several subordinate clauses or run-ons. Short, concise sentences make better writing.
- Be careful beginning sentences with “However,” “Therefore,” and prepositions. Make your writing strong.
- To avoid weak writing do not use “there are” or “there is,” especially to begin sentences.
- **Write in active voice. Avoid passive nouns and “to be” verbs (is, was, are, etc). Turn passive nouns into strong statements and “to be” verbs into active verbs.** Change “As it was realized that change was needed in the church of...” to “As the pastor realized the church needed change....” **Changing passive statements to active makes the material more appropriate for academic writing and easier to read.**
- Students should avoid the use of “that” or “this” or “it” with no noun. “That” will lead to one wondering what “it” is! If the sentence makes sense without the “that,” leave it out. Use “which” and “that” correctly.
- Do not use 1st or 2nd person pronouns such as “I” or “you” except in very limited cases when the specific assignment calls for it. In the Project Report it can only be used in very limited places in chapters one and five.
- Avoid overusing pronouns in general. Attempt to use nouns instead.
- Choose appropriate words, especially when introducing quotes. Most of the time “wrote” is appropriate. For variety use “argued,” “stated,” “illustrated,” etc. (as long as it appropriately describes the author’s intent). In most cases “remarked” or “noted” are not strong enough to correctly describe the author’s intent. Avoid the historical present, “writes” or “claims” unless quoting a current statement in a very recent publication or on line comment. Writers wrote in the past.
- Make sure subjects agree with verbs. “The group consider the response” should be “the group considers or considered the response.”
- Do not make general references to “many” or “some” writers or scholars. This will always lead the reader to wonder, “How many?” Do not use overarching statements, “Everybody knows...” Stating truths and statistics without referenced research is not appropriate. “Most”, “All”, “Every”, “Each” are all statistical claims. In addition, do not assign credit or blame unless you can name and reference. “There are those who say....” Who? What did they actually say? This is research-based writing.
- No sermonizing with moralizing, editorializing, and illustrations. No figurative language, metaphorical language, or clichés. Do not preach unless you are writing a sermon. Do not try to sound scholarly. No “shall,” “surely,” “certainly.”
- **Do not offer your unsupported opinions. Document every idea and remember that you are not an authoritative expert.** You are a student researcher writing a paper. If you fail to cite a source for any statement you make, by default you are claiming authority for yourself as an expert scholar. Your opinion does not count until about chapter five of your Project Report.
- In your Project Proposal and Report, you are not arguing for something or demonstrating something or seeking to prove something. You are seeking to research something and then honestly draw conclusions directly from the research. Do not create your list of claims and then proof text resources to support your claims. Do the research and allow it to form your claims and lists. This work should be research driven. In your Project Proposal and Report, state the problem, why it is a problem, why it is a problem in your context, how you are researching this problem, and the strategy based on that research to deal with the problem. Do not state, “Here is my plan I am going to prove.” Again, you do not prove anything. State your thesis. “This is why I am writing.” Support your thesis in the body. In chapter five remind the reader of your thesis and tell them what you have just told them.

- Do not personify your paper or study, such as “this paper seeks” or “this study will demonstrate.” People do such things, not papers.
- Check for agreement between singular or plural nouns and pronouns. If you use a singular noun you must use a singular pronoun when referring to it later in the sentence.
- Make sure the nouns in your subordinate clauses match your subject and verb.
- Do not use contractions or abbreviations. Do not use the % symbol. Words should be spelled out.
- Discuss referencing Scripture passages with your Chair. Some prefer footnotes while others allow some parenthetical references. You cannot plagiarize the Bible. If you refer to a truth from Scripture you must include the reference.
- Use a limited number of block quotes. Make sure the entire quote is significant. Remember the five-line Turabian rule for block quotations. Check to see whether parts may be left out using ellipsis points.
- Do not quote out of context or plagiarize. Your committee members will often know the writers and their material. You will be caught.
- Use headings appropriately and make certain every paragraph under a heading is about that topic.

Footnotes:

- Know the proper formatting and spacing for footnotes. Begin new form and numbering at the beginning of each chapter.
- Do not paraphrase an author for entire paragraphs covering several pages of their material and then place one footnote at the end of the paragraph for all the material cited. You need several footnotes and ibids. When in doubt, footnote.
- Content notes should be used only if the information is relative but too digressive or complex to place in the body of the paper, or when it hinders the flow of the paper but is needed as a reference.

Appendix:

- Understand what should be placed in an appendix and what is allowed in the body of the paper. Almost without exception, all raw research data (including reports of meetings in person or by phone, sermon and curriculum content, and most tables and charts) should be in an appendix.

Bibliography:

- Choose the right bibliography. **Do not quote secondary sources.** You will need a minimum of 50 sources.
- Carefully use credible sources instead of devotional books and other non-academic sources. Also be careful of non-authoritative online sources.

Mechanics:

- Top, bottom and right margins should be one inch and the left margin should be 1 and 1/2 inches. Page numbers are included within the margin, not outside the margin.
- Do not exempt supplemental material found in the appendices from the margin rule. Place documents, e-mails, photos, certificates, examples and PowerPoint slides (with or without notes) in the correct margins.
- The date on the title page should be the month and year only.
- Include vita and approval documentation for each expert evaluator/tutor in separate appendixes, referenced via footnotes in the document.
- Page numbers should be in a consistent font and all appendixes should be numbered.

- Make sure to follow the proper order of chapters for the Final Project Proposal and the Project Report. Review the information in the D.Min. Handbook concerning contents and ordering.
- Beware of footnote font and font size not matching the font and font size of the document.
- Check Turabian for correct spacing between text/footnote separator line and footnote.
- Do not use page-long paragraphs. Use a minimum of 2 or 3 paragraphs per page.
- Do not use more than two or three consecutive ibids.
- Appendixes should be in the order of where they are referenced in the document. **All Appendixes should be referenced with footnotes at least once.**

A Humorous Take on Writing Style and Grammar Guidelines:
(thanks to Dr. McDill)

1. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid clichés like the plague—they're old hat.
6. Also, always avoid the application of annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
13. Do not be redundant. Do not state the same idea twice.
14. One should *never* generalize.
15. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
16. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
17. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
18. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
19. The passive voice is to be ignored. (To be: is, are, was, etc.)
20. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary.
21. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
22. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
23. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
24. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth-shaking ideas.
25. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
26. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
27. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
28. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
29. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
30. Who needs rhetorical questions?
31. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
32. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

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