



**St. Paul Theological Seminary**  
The Canadian Coptic Centre  
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada



## **Course Syllabus**

### **Methodology and Resources for Theological Studies**

**St. Paul Theological Seminary**  
**The Canadian Coptic Centre**  
**Mississauga, Ontario, Canada**

#### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Dr. Wagih Ghobriel  
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Office Hours: By appointment

#### **Course Identification**

Course Number:  
Course Name: **Methodology and Resources for Theological Studies**  
Course Location: Course offered at the Church of the Virgin Mary and St Athanasius. Address: 1245 Eglinton Avenue West, Mississauga ON L5V 2M4.  
Class Times: Dec 2019. Schedule to be announced.  
Prerequisites: None

#### **Course Description**

This course introduces the basics, procedures and practices of a Christian theological research methods that culminate in writing. It is based on practice in which students design and carry out writing essays and research work through a series of instructed research techniques and formats. Students will learn, and be assisted, to select and use the introduced information and apply it to one or more of the interesting topics. Students will gain experience in generating ideas, clarifying insights, structuring arguments, composing paragraphs and sentences, critiquing and revising their writing. Typical theological studies range from dogmatic/ systematic theology, patristics, spirituality, hagiography, biblical studies, liturgy, Coptic history, to contemporary practical Christian challenges with a special emphasis on the youth problems. This will be done through the acquired skills for the writing of essays, book review, and research work. The course introduces extensive number of references and various types of resources, both written and digital. A lot of easily accessible Internet resources are cited, especially those related to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

#### **Textbook and Other Materials**

##### **Required Textbook**

- *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Ninth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, April 2018. by Kate L. Turabian (Author), Wayne C. Booth (Editor), Gregory G. Colomb (Editor), Joseph M. Williams (Editor), Joseph Bizup (Editor), William T. FitzGerald (Editor), ISBN-13: 978-0226430577.

##### **Useful Additional References**

- Church History: An Introduction to Research Methods and Resources, Second Edition Mar 22, 2016 by James E. Bradley (Author), Richard A. Muller (Author). ISBN-13: 978-0802874054.
- Religious Studies: Methods in Religious Studies. <https://research.auctr.edu/c.php?g=197215&p=1297584>
- How to Write a Theological Paper by John M. Frame, 1987. [https://www.proginosko.com/docs/frame\\_theol\\_paper.html](https://www.proginosko.com/docs/frame_theol_paper.html)

- Research Approaches in the Study of Religion. Article in Studia Humana. February 2015. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282557062>
- Writing Theological Book Reviews. [https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library\\_archives/theological\\_resources/theological\\_guides/writing\\_theological\\_reviews.html](https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library_archives/theological_resources/theological_guides/writing_theological_reviews.html)
- Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 8th Edition. Bruce L. Berg, California State University, Long Beach. Howard Lune, Hunter College, 2012, Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780205809387
- Books by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in English. <https://www.stgr.org/books-by-his-holiness-pope-shenouda-iii-in-english/>
- How to Write for Religious Studies. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/religious-studies/>
- Claremont Colleges Digital Library. Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia. <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/cce>

### **Evaluation Components, Assessment and Grading**

Type	Description	Due Date	Weight, %
Class Participation	Class Participation	On-going	15
Assignment	Initial Essay	On-going	10
Assignment	Second Essay	On-going	15
Assignment	Book Review	On-going	20
Assignment	Final Research Work	On-going	40
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Penalties for Lateness**

There will be a penalty for lateness of 2% deducted per day. Work that is not handed in one week after the due date will not be accepted.

### **Course Outline**

- 1 – Introduction. Research. Methodology
- 2 – Academic writing in theology
- 3 – Research in Theology
- 4 – Evaluating Sources – Material from the Internet
- 5 – Styles and Style Guides
- 6 – Academic Writing Skills
- 7 – General Resources for Theological Studies
- 8 – Resources for Early Christian Theology
- 9 – Resources for Eastern Christian Theology
- 10 – Resources for Western Christian Theology
- 11 – Resources for Selected Issues – Christian Traditions

### **Course Learning Objectives**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Understand the major frameworks that guide qualitative analysis.
- Get familiar with the various aspects of writing research work in theology utilizing standard conventions for academic writing, including structure, format, references, footnotes and bibliographies.
- Practice the various progressive steps in research. This includes: topic identification, formulation of related questions, organization of ideas, development of thesis statements, decision about the research methodology, writing research draft, preparation of preliminary bibliography and list of resources, development of an

outline and argument, revision leading to the final version together with drawing of conclusions based on academic writing standards and format.

- Identify and assess critically various types of written and digital resources relevant to Christian theology in general and to a specific field of interest, including resources available through digital databases and major online library catalogues.

### **Basic computer skills needed**

Considerable part of the course draws on digital and internet resources. So, students need to have ready access to a computer and to Internet and have an e-mail address which they consult regularly. Students must have some familiarity with a word processing software (PC or Mac), writing skills, PowerPoint. Basic Web navigation and search skills to access information resources. Email address.

### **Written Essays**

The initial topic of the written essays will be selected by the student in consultation with the instructor no later than the third class. The topic will be further developed during the subsequent weeks. Several of the practical exercises relate to the topic of the essay. The essay should be between 1000 and 1500 words (around 4-6 pages), including titles and Bibliography. Please, closely follow the deadlines and guideline as instructed in lectures.

### **Book Review**

The review should follow standard essay format, with footnotes for sources. Typical books to be reviewed are:

- “*Scholia on the incarnation of the Only Begotten*” by St. Cyril of Alexandria. Thirty-seven short articles discussing “*What is Christ?*” ([http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril\\_scholia\\_incarnation\\_01\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_scholia_incarnation_01_text.htm)).
- John Behr, *The Way to Nicea, Formation of Christian Theology*, Vol. 1 (Yonkers NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001). The review should follow standard essay format, with footnotes for sources. References to this review may be made in brackets in the text itself, e.g.: (*The Way to Nicea*, p. 123). Students may use and cite other writings of the same or other authors.
- One of Pope Shenouda III theological books: *Divinity of Christ, The Creed, The nature of Christ,...*
- Students may propose another book for review, in consultation with the instructor. A substitute book may relate to the student’s proposed essay topic but must *not* have been reviewed or used as a prime source in another course.
- The review must be between 1500 and 2000 words (around 6-8 pages.)

## **Detailed Course Lectures – Content and Sequence**

### **Lecture 1:**

- Introducing the Syllabus and Timetable.
- What Research Is.
- How Researchers Think about their Aims.
- Active Learning through Inquiry and Research.
- Research Design.
- Research Methodology.
- Research as Active Learning.
- Research is a Student-Centered Learning Process.
- Simple Ways to Support Inquiry-Based Learning and Research.

### **Lecture 2:**

- 2.A Guide to Writing an Essay.
  - Choose a topic for your essay.
  - Organize your ideas.
  - Compose a thesis statement.

- Write the body paragraphs.
- Write the introduction and conclusion.
- Add the finishing touches.
- 2.B Sample Essay 1 – Discussion.
- 2.C How the Essay will be Marked.

**Lecture 3:**

- Individual Counseling on How to Proceed.
- Coptic Orthodox Resources Online.
- Coptic, and Other, Orthodox Books in English Online.
- Writing Resources Online.
- Sample Essay 2 – Discussion.

**Lecture 4:**

- Introduction to research and research methodology 1.
- Sample essay 3 – Discussion.

**Lecture 5:**

- Introduction to research and research methodology 2.
- Submission of the first essay.

**Lecture 6:**

- Writing a Theological Book Review.
- Submission of the second essay.

**Lecture 7:**

- Resources - Christian challenges.
- Resources - Challenges Facing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church.
- Resources - Issues Christian Families Struggle With.
- Resources - Challenges Christian Youth Are Facing Today

**Lecture 8:**

- Submission of the book review – Discussions.

**Lecture 9:**

- Submission of the final research work – Discussions.
- Review Session. Discussions.

**Lecture 10:**

- Wrapping up the course. Discussions.