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

Useful Additional References
• How to Write for Religious Studies. https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/religious-studies/

### Evaluation Components, Assessment and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight, %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Initial Essay</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Second Essay</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Final Research Work</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**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:
- 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:**
  - 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.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 21st Century Church.
- Resources - Issues Christian Families Struggle With.
- Resources - Challenges Christian Youth Are Facing Today

Lecture 8:

Lecture 9:
- Submission of the final research work – Discussions.

Lecture 10:
- Wrapping up the course. Discussions.