

# **Guidelines for Researching and Writing a Seminary Extended Research Paper**

**The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University  
Revised Spring 2008, Updated Spring 2010**

(also available at <http://lincolnchristian.edu/Seminary/extendedResearchPaper.asp>)

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** Seminary students pursuing the Master of Arts degree are required to research and write either a thesis or an extended research paper. Students completing the 21 hours of credit in their M.A. major may choose to complete either 1) five 3-hour classes and a 6-hour thesis or 2) six 3-hour classes and a 3-hour extended research paper. Both the thesis and the extended research paper are intended to serve as a “concluding exercise that allows for summative evaluation,” in keeping with M.A. guidelines laid down by the accrediting body for seminaries, the Association for Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS Standard E.3.1.2).

**1.2** The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University generally defines both a thesis and an extended research paper as “a document that analyzes an appropriate topic from a theological perspective in a thorough and organized manner thereby demonstrating seminary-level mastery of research and writing skills.” However, there are significant differences between the two documents.

**1.2.a** A thesis is intended to allow the student to do original and critical research on a carefully delineated topic that will prepare the student for the kind of research and writing commonly required for the Ph.D. degree. A student intending to pursue doctoral level studies will be strongly encouraged to choose the thesis option. A thesis is typically 75-100 pages (a “page” equals a double-spaced printed text of approximately 250 words), excluding the bibliography. A thesis cannot be initiated and started within one semester. A thesis has two readers: the academic advisor serves as the primary reader joined by a qualified second reader mutually agreed upon by the advisor and the student. A thesis concludes with either an oral examination or a public presentation (as agreed upon by the advisor and student). A copy of each accepted thesis is catalogued and made available in the University’s Library.

**1.2.b** An extended research paper is intended to allow the student to do the same kind of research and writing required for the thesis but with less stringent expectations on research and analysis and more latitude for practical projects and pastoral applications. An extended research paper is typically 45-50 pages (a “page” equals a double-spaced printed text of approximately 250 words), excluding the bibliography. It is recommended the extended research paper be completed over two semesters, but it is possible to initiate and complete the extended research paper in one semester (following a rigid timetable). The student’s major professor is the only reader of the extended research paper. An extended research paper concludes with an oral examination concerning the extended research paper itself but also includes

a review of the student's entire course work and classes taken. A copy of the extended research paper is not catalogued or made available in the Seminary's Library.

**1.3** The guidelines for writing and researching an extended research paper at the Lincoln Seminary at Lincoln Christian University are described in this document. These guidelines assume that students are familiar with and follow the Seminary's manual of style: Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. The guidelines below are divided into ten sections:

1. Introduction
2. The Types of Extended Research Papers
3. The Parts of an Extended Research Paper
4. The Proposal for an Extended Research Paper
5. The Writing of an Extended Research Paper
6. The Major Professor
7. The Oral Examination
8. Intellectual Ownership of an Extended Research Paper
9. Timetable and Contract for an Extended Research Paper
10. Appendices

**1.4** It is the responsibility of the student to consult with his or her major professor early enough to develop appropriate plans for completing these requirements in a timely and acceptable manner. The final responsibility for meeting the appropriate requirements rests solely upon the student, not the professor. Deadlines listed in these guidelines (see section 9.4 below) are to be met. Deviations from these deadlines usually will result in delay of the degree or failure, unless formal approval is given in advance. The process for requesting formal extension of deadlines is described in section 9.3 below.

**1.5** Grading for an extended research paper is pass or fail.

## **2. The Types of Extended Research Papers**

**2.1** The Seminary allows several different types of extended research papers. These types may include biographies, histories, case studies, exegeses, etc.

**2.2** The type of extended research paper chosen is dependent upon several factors, such as the topic chosen, the student's interests, the professor's advice, and the nature of the research available. One should consult with the major professor in choosing an appropriate type.

## **3. The Parts of an Extended Research Paper**

**3.1** The Seminary requires the following parts in the following order to be included in an extended research paper:

**3.1.1 Preliminaries:**

- a. Title page (see Appendix D; see also Turabian, p. 386)
- b. Blank page (see Turabian, p. 386)
- c. Table of contents (see Appendix E; see Turabian, pp. 380-381, 387-388)
- d. List of abbreviations, illustrations, tables (only if appropriate; see Turabian, pp. 331-346, 360, 388-390, 399)

**3.1.2 Body of an extended research paper:**

- a. Introduction (see Turabian, p. 391)
- b. Text (divided into chapters and, if appropriate, into subheadings; see Turabian, pp. 391-399)
- c. Conclusion (see Turabian, p. 399)

**3.1.3 Reference matter:**

- a. Footnotes (see Turabian, pp. 75, 136, 152, 393) or Endnotes (if footnotes are not used; see Turabian, pp. 75, 136, 152-153, 400, 403-404)
- b. Appendix(es) (only if appropriate; see Turabian, pp. 399, 403)
- c. Glossary (only if appropriate; see Turabian, pp. 385, 390, 403)
- d. Bibliography (see major professor and Turabian, pp. 141-215, 401, 404)

**3.2** If there are any questions about the parts listed above, the student should consult with the major professor. Some professors, for example, may prefer footnotes over endnotes or may request that the bibliography be divided (e.g. Works Cited and Works Consulted, or Primary Sources and Secondary Sources).

## **4. The Proposal for an Extended Research Paper**

**4.0** The first major step in preparing or planning an extended research paper is to present a proposal to one's major professor. The proposal is typically a 5-10 page document (excluding bibliography) that is typed and formatted according to Turabian. This document should include five parts or sections, not counting the preliminaries (i.e. title page and table of contents). Questions about any of these parts should be addressed to one's major professor. The five basic parts required by the Seminary are categorized and explained here, with each part then described later in some detail (as noted):

1. Introduction (see 4.1)
2. Literature Review (see 4.2)
3. Research Methodology (see 4.3)
4. Outline (see 4.4)
5. Bibliography (see 4.5)

**4.1 Introduction**

This first introductory section of the proposal for an extended research paper should address at least four key issues: 1) an introduction to the issue to be addressed, 2) a thesis sen-

tence specifying the approach to be taken, 3) the significance of this research project, and 4) the scope of the project, including any significant limitations or key assumptions.

#### **4.1.1** Introduction to the Proposal

A well-written proposal, like a well-written paper, should begin with an interesting introduction that invites the reader to read further. The introduction may begin with a story, a quotation, a statistic, a provocative statement, an intriguing question, or a clearly stated problem or concern. However one chooses to begin, it should be done in such a way that the readers' attention is captured and the topic of study is introduced.

#### **4.1.2a** Research Thesis Sentence: Overview

Once the issue or topic is introduced, the thesis sentence should be clearly stated. A clear statement of what one intends to accomplish in the extended research paper is perhaps the most critical part of the entire proposal. Such a statement is often called a thesis sentence ("thesis" here does not refer to the document called a "thesis" but to the "main proposition" or "key idea"). The thesis sentence should describe in one sentence the heart of the thesis or paper. At the proposal stage, the thesis sentence may be in the form of either a statement or a question. Merely choosing and listing a general topic is not sufficient, though that is the first step in formulating a good thesis sentence. Choosing a topic can be the hardest or easiest part of an extended research paper. Sources for topics are issues about which the student cares deeply and issues about which one has already written or about which one has already read. A consultation with the major professor about what topic to choose can be very helpful, but the student should already have some idea(s) in mind. It is the student's responsibility, not the professor's, to choose a topic.

#### **4.1.2b** Research Thesis Sentence: Examples

Once a topic is chosen, it must be narrowed and clarified (see Turabian, pp. 6-8, 13-20). A thesis sentence needs to address both a sufficiently limited topic and how one intends to treat that topic. For example, an *unacceptable* thesis statement would be: "The purpose of this extended research paper is to examine the doctrine of conversion." An acceptable thesis statement might be: "We will demonstrate that Alexander Campbell adhered to a doctrine of conversion in which the Holy Spirit operates through the written word alone." One might at the proposal stage rephrase the thesis statement as a question (substantively, if not grammatically): "We will try to discover whether Alexander Campbell held to a doctrine of conversion in which the Holy Spirit operates only through the written word."

#### **4.1.2c** Research Thesis Sentence: Expansion

The thesis sentence should be expanded at this point in the proposal by describing briefly the major parts of the extended research paper (with fuller details provided later in the outline). A well-stated thesis sentence will, in fact, give some indication of the major parts of the paper to come. For example, using the thesis sentence listed above, the student could describe how the research project will include an analysis of Campbell the person, of conversion in general, of the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion, of Campbell's view of conversion, etc. Crafting a careful thesis sentence is perhaps the biggest hurdle and first major goal in writing a proposal.

**4.1.2d** Research Thesis Sentence: Summary Guidelines

The thesis sentence should exhibit these five characteristics:

1. It clearly states the topic(s) of the extended research paper.
2. It carefully delineates how the writer will treat the topic(s).
3. It is stated in such a way that the major sections of the extended research paper are recognizable.
4. It uses precise and specific language to describe the topic and its treatment
5. It does so creatively, avoiding such bland phrasing as “The purpose of this extended research paper is to ...”

**4.1.3** Research Significance

This third section of the first part of the proposal should also describe the significance of the research. As one wag once said, “Something not worth doing is not worth doing well.” If one spends months and months doing quality research, it should address an issue that matters. This section will indicate how the topic one has chosen has significance—at least in terms of the writer’s perspective. Significance is a relative term, but in this context one should be able to describe how this proposal will impact one’s chosen ministry, or how it will help inform a particular audience about an important issue, or how it will resolve a pressing problem, or—put bluntly—why this research project is worth doing. A pointed discussion with one’s major professor on this point could prove very fruitful in avoiding issues that lack real significance.

**4.1.4** Research Scope

This fourth section of the first part of the proposal should address the scope of the project, including any significant limitations or key assumptions. In addressing the scope of the project, the writer describes what limits will be imposed on the project. These limits may be matters of chronology or geography (e.g. researching evangelical missions in Bolivia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) or matters of a more practical nature (e.g. limiting research to English-language materials only). These limits must be agreed to by the major professor and cannot include limits that would be deemed excuses or poor research (e.g. looking only at resource materials available on the Internet or only at books available in the local library). Limits may also be definitional ones. For example, if one is researching a topic in children’s ministry, one should define what one means by “children.” One should also address any key assumptions or presuppositions that are germane to the research topic and to the Seminary’s context and should be limited to those that the typical reader would find helpful. For example, if one is researching a topic related to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it may be helpful to state one’s position on the charismatic gifts. Certainly, one should discuss such presuppositions with the major professor early on to see what issues might need to be addressed. Related to one’s presuppositions are one’s assumptions about the topic or the intended audience. Some discussion of significant assumptions is appropriate, e.g. for what kind of reader the extended research paper is intended or whether any special knowledge of this topic is assumed.

## 4.2 Literature Review

The second part of the research proposal is a literature review. Depending on the topic and approach chosen, the final extended research paper may or may not include a separate chapter that comprises a “literature review,” since some topics lend themselves to an approach that incorporates such a review throughout the text. However, it is common for a research proposal to include a separate section that reviews key works that are included in the research bibliography. One does not need to include every work listed in the working bibliography (see 4.5), but one should discuss a variety of key works that are most pertinent to the topic chosen. The review should ideally provide not only a brief summary of key works, but also some form of evaluation or at least assessment of how such works do or might relate to the issues being raised in the research project. To be sure, at this early stage of the research process, one will not likely have read all or perhaps even most of the key works but one should know enough about the potential value of the key works listed in the bibliography to be able to provide some assessment of their potential, if not actual, value. This section of the research proposal can be organized in several ways, e.g. chronologically or topically. One should consult with the major professor to determine the most appropriate approach.

## 4.3 Research Methodology

The third part of the proposal should describe how the student will conduct his or her research. The Seminary’s Library staff and the “Shaping the Mind of a Leader” course (LS600) can be especially helpful in this regard (see also Turabian, p. 390). Three primary concerns that the proposal should address in this part are these: 1) the type of extended research paper being planned, 2) the research strategies and resources that will be used, and 3) the viability of the research methodology described.

### 4.3.1 Type of Research

As noted in section 2.1 above, the Seminary allows various types of theses or extended research papers. These types include biographies, histories, case studies, exegeses, topical analyses, etc. For further information on these types, one may consult Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2008), Chapters 14-17 (this book is available in the Library). The student should consult with the major professor in deciding upon the type of extended research paper that is most appropriate.

### 4.3.2 Research Strategies and Resources

Designing a research methodology is a significant part of the research project, and the methodology one chooses needs to be described in some detail in the proposal. In the proposal the student should describe what resources have been or will be consulted in building a bibliography. This section is not the same as the literature review (see 4.2), but instead should address the sources (library catalogs, research databases, specialized encyclopedias, printed bibliographies, etc.) that were or will be consulted to build the bibliography. This section should also describe what kinds of special strategies, if any, will be used to discover new information not currently in print (e.g. surveys, interviews, case studies, etc.). Finally, this section should describe the plan or process that has been and will be followed in pursuing the research (e.g. what will be done first, second, etc.).

### 4.3.3 Research Viability

This third section of the third part of the proposal should indicate how feasible this research project is for the researcher. For example, if most of the key resources for a particular topic are available only in French and the researcher knows only English, then that topic is not really viable. If the topic requires specialized knowledge or skills not possessed by the researcher, then that topic is not viable. On a positive note, this part of the proposal may describe prior writing or coursework done by the person in this area that demonstrates the student's competence to do serious research on this topic.

### 4.4 Research Outline

The fourth part of the proposal should list a tentative, but fairly detailed outline of what the final thesis or paper will likely look like. It is certainly subject to change and revision, but even at this early stage of research some kind of structural framework is vital. The outline itself should flow from the thesis sentence and its expansion, described in section 4.1.2 above. The outline usually has two to five main points (eventual chapters) and should be developed to at least three levels, using a consistent numbering scheme (e.g. I.A.1 or 1.1.1). Complete sentences are not required (unless they are required by the major professor), but the outline must be complete enough to be readily understood. More information about outlining is provided by Vyhmeister, pp. 41-44 and Turabian, pp. 20-21, 63-64, 330 (this work is described in section 4.3.1 above).

### 4.5 Research Bibliography

The fifth and final section of the proposal is a working bibliography of sources consulted or considered. The bibliography for the proposal will not usually be as complete as the one included in the final draft, but it should be comprehensive enough to indicate that the student is aware of the range of resources and key sources for the topic. Omission of key resources or a meager listing of bibliographic items is not acceptable, even at the proposal stage. The bibliography must be formatted according to Turabian, pp. 147-150, 401, 404. The bibliography, even for the proposal, may be divided into sections and even annotated if deemed appropriate by the major professor.

## 5. The Writing of an Extended Research Paper

**5.1** Once the proposal has been submitted and approved, the research and writing, especially the writing, can begin in earnest. The student must consult with the major professor to determine how the extended research paper should be submitted. One should follow the writing principles described in Turabian, especially pp. 48-199. At no point in the writing process—for the proposal, initial drafts, or the final draft—may the student submit work that reflects sloppy, unprofessional, un-proofed, or a mere scissors-and-paste approach. Occasional and minor typographical errors may be allowed in early drafts, but are not permitted to remain in any final copies. The final submitted copy should include all the elements of a quality extended research paper (see Appendix B).

**5.2** Taking notes on one's research prior to the more formal writing process is also critically important. The major professor will usually indicate whether footnotes or endnotes are pre-

ferred, but most prefer footnotes, which most word processing programs handle fairly easily. The final extended research paper must be written, typed, and formatted according to Turabian.

## **6. The Major Professor**

**6.1** Students writing an extended research paper do so under the guidance of their major professor only (sometimes called an adviser). On occasion, the “supervisor” of the extended research paper may be a person other than the major professor or adviser, but that must be approved by the major professor/adviser.

**6.2** The major professor is almost always a resident member of the Seminary faculty with whom the student is majoring. If the student is unclear or has any difficulty in choosing a major professor, he or she should consult with the Seminary’s Dean for that field. Of course, the major professor must be approached well in advance of writing the proposal and must agree to serve as the student’s reader for the extended research paper. Once the major professor is chosen by the student, the student will work closely with that professor in choosing a topic, making a formal proposal, writing the extended research paper, and preparing the extended research paper for final submission and for the oral examination (see section 7).

## **7. The Oral Examination**

**7.1** Each writer of an extended research papers concludes his/her work with an oral examination, or infrequently in the event of excellent work an oral presentation.

### **7.2 Oral Examination for an Extended Research Paper**

The oral examination for an extended research paper covers not just the paper itself, but also larger issues associated with the major. The examination is considered to be an integrative experience rather than a barrier to passing the paper. The purpose is to allow the student to speak intelligently and integratively about his/her seminary career. It is the responsibility of the major professor to schedule and administer this oral examination. Occasionally the professor may have the student give an oral presentation in the event of excellent work.

### **7.3 Oral Presentation for an Extended Research Paper**

An oral presentation for an extended research paper is an opportunity for the student to present his or her findings orally not only to the major professor but also to any others who may be invited (typically an open invitation is sent to the entire Seminary, though the number actually attending may vary greatly). The student should allow opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions and make comments about the findings from the extended research paper. Written handouts or computer presentations are encouraged. An oral presentation is an opportunity to determine the extent to which the student has mastered the material covered by the extended research paper and to pursue the implications of that material. The student and the major professor must mutually agree upon an acceptable time for the oral presentation.

## 8. Intellectual Ownership of an Extended Research Paper

**8.1** An extended research paper completed at The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University is considered the sole intellectual property of the student.

**8.2** A copy of the extended research paper is not submitted to the Library except on the rare occasion the major professor in consultation with the Library Director believes the paper is of sufficient interest, useful research contribution, and excellence to merit adding it to the Library's collection.

## 9. Timetable and Contract for Submitting an Extended Research Paper

**9.1** Completing an extended research paper—in its various stages and parts—in a timely manner is absolutely critical. To that end, The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University has established a one-semester timetable and a one-year timetable of deadlines (see 9.4) for submitting the various parts and completing the various steps required. The student must adhere to the deadlines described in the selected timetable (see 9.2), unless given specific approval otherwise (see 9.3). Failure to meet any of these deadlines will normally result in failure to complete the extended research paper, which, in turn, will result in failure to be granted a degree at the expected time.

**9.2** A contract (see Appendix A) that establishes specific dates for the deadlines (see 9.4) described in the selected timetable and requirements for submitting an extended research paper must be agreed upon and signed by both the major professor and the student.

**9.3** In the case of exceptional reasons, the student may request a formal extension of deadlines by submitting a one-page letter to the major professor and to the appropriate Dean, giving the reason for the extension request and suggesting alternative dates for new deadlines. If the extension is granted, alternative dates will be determined by mutual agreement of the major professor and the appropriate Dean. If acceptable alternative dates cannot be agreed upon, the request for extension will be denied. If the student disagrees with any decision by the major professor over deadlines or over any other matter related to the extended research paper, he or she may appeal to the appropriate Dean (following the appeal process described in the current Seminary catalog).

**9.4** Listed below is a timetable showing the deadlines for submitting an extended research paper. The student should work closely and regularly with the major professor to ensure that these deadlines are met. Of course, students may submit materials earlier than these dates.

**Deadlines for Submitting an Extended Research Paper**  
(these deadlines assume a May graduation date)\*

**One-Semester Plan**

Proposed Time	Proposed Activity
Before 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in January	Student informally explores topic with major professor before finalizing topic
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in January	Meeting to finalize topic and draw up contract
1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in February	Proposal due, student and major professor meet to discuss the proposal
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in February	Revised proposal due
ASAP after proposal accepted (latest date for chapter one: 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in March)	First chapter to major professor, then corrected version returned to student (ASAP)
ASAP (to get the work done by the deadline for the final draft date, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in April)	Corrected chapter (with earlier draft included) returned (ASAP)
ASAP (to get the work done by the deadline for the final draft date, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in April)	Only after a chapter is accepted is a new chapter submitted and the sequence repeats for each chapter (ASAP)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in April	Completed and corrected work due approved
Before 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in May	Oral Examination or Oral Presentation

**One-Year Plan**

Proposed Time	Proposed Activity
Before 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in September	Student informally explores topic with major professor before finalizing topic
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in September	Meeting to finalize topic, draw up contract
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in October	Proposal due, student and major professor meet to discuss the proposal
1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in November	Revised proposal due
ASAP after proposal accepted by major professor (latest date for chapter one: 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in December)	First chapter to major professor only, then corrected version returned to student (ASAP)
ASAP (to get the work done by the deadline for the final draft date, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in April)	Corrected chapter (with earlier draft included) returned to professor (ASAP)
ASAP (to get the work done by the deadline for the final draft date, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in April)	Only after a chapter is accepted by major professor is a new chapter submitted to professor and the sequence repeats for each chapter (ASAP)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in April	Completed and corrected work approved
Before the end of April	Oral Examination or Oral Presentation

\* The deadlines for students graduating in August or December will vary. The key deadline is that the final draft must be submitted by July 1 for an August graduation and by November 1 for a December graduation, with other dates adjusted accordingly.

## 10. Appendices

The six appendices that follow include:

- A. Blank Extended Research Paper Contract
- B. Common Writing Errors to Avoid for a Quality Extended Research Paper
- C. Sample "Title Page"
- D. Sample "Table of Contents"
- E. Selected Bibliography of Helpful Resources for Researching and Writing
- F. Guidelines for the Reader of an Extended Research Paper

### Appendix A: Extended Research Paper Contract

Guidelines for Researching and Writing a Seminary Extended Research Paper are available on the Lincoln Christian University Library website: Go to services for students, then services for Seminary students, and then extended research paper guidelines.

*It is the responsibility of the student to consult with his or her major professor concerning all aspects of the extended research paper. The final responsibility for meeting the appropriate requirements rests **solely upon the student, not the professor.***

Below are the due dates for an extended research paper being completed during the \_\_\_\_\_ school year.

The student must adhere to the deadlines unless given specific approval otherwise.

Due	Date	Completed (✓)
Topic chosen and approved	_____	_____
Proposal* Due	_____	_____
*Note: The proposal must follow closely the parameters indicated in the extended research paper guidelines. Proposals turned in that do not do so will be returned and considered late.		
Proposal Approved and Returned	_____	_____
Chapter One Due	_____	_____
Chapter Two Due	_____	_____
Chapter Three Due	_____	_____
Chapter Four Due	_____	_____
Chapter Five (Conclusion)	_____	_____
Complete Draft Due	_____	_____
Final Copy (edited) Due	_____	_____
Final Copy Approved	_____	_____
Oral Exam/Presentation	_____	_____

I agree to work in a timely fashion on my extended research paper, as indicated by the above dates. I understand that failure to meet these dates may result in failure of the extended research paper.

I understand that I must remain in contact with the major professor and I take responsibility for the proper completion of the extended research paper.

Signed by Student \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Bring this document with you to all meetings with your major professor.*

## Appendix B: Common Writing Errors to Avoid for a Quality Extended Research Paper

This appendix is provided to assist the student in avoiding common writing errors. While avoiding these errors can not guarantee an excellent extended research paper, failing to exclude these errors will result in poor quality. Specific questions should be addressed to the major professor. The major professor may add other elements of quality.

These elements of quality are based on the Seminary's manual of style: Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Used as well is this writing manual: Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2004. References are to Turabian.

### ORGANIZATION

- Start with as clear and focused a **thesis sentence** (or **proposition** or **claim**) that you develop by asking yourself the **basic questions** about the topic that you have narrowed your interest down to (what? why? how? when? where? who? for whom? so what?) [1.1-1.2.5; 2.1; 5.3-5.4.2]. The thesis statement summarizes in **one clear sentence** the one central claim you are intending to defend concerning your topic.
- **Outline** carefully and in a logical and persuasive sequence [6.2.1; 6.2.3-6.2.6; 23.4.2] what you will claim about the various elements involved in your thesis statement [9.1-9.4]. A **phrase-outline** expresses what the topic will be on each level of the outline but a **sentence-outline**, while more difficult, is much more useful because it states what your claim will be on each level (Roman numeral level, capital letter level, Arabic number level, and small letter level).
- Develop each sentence within the context of **distinct and integrated paragraphs** [9.3], each built around **one central idea** or question. Good paragraphing results from clear outlining of a clear thesis statement (proposition) and developing each key idea into one whole paragraph within a logical sequence.
- **Rewrite** your introduction, conclusion and title once the first draft of the paper is completed [10.1-10.3].

### GRAMMAR

- Traditionally "**quote**" has been a verb never a noun (you share not a quote but a quotation).
- Indicate all **possessive cases** of singular nouns by adding apostrophe and s ('s). However plurals ending on "s" add only the apostrophe (s') [20.2].
- The possessive of "it" is "**its**" but the contraction of "it is" is "**it's**" [11.4].
- Differentiate between **their**, **they're** (they are), and **there** [11.4].

- Use "**then**" to refer to time; use "**than**" to make a comparison [11.4].
- Differentiate carefully between "**two**" (number 2), "**too**" (as in too much) and the particle "**to**" [11.4].
- "**Effect**" can be a verb (meaning to cause, to bring about, to accomplish) as well as a noun (as in: to have as an effect); "**affect**" is a verb, meaning to influence, to change, and to alter [11.4].
- You "**cite**" a quotation (not "**site**") [11.4].
- Always write **whole sentences** with at least a subject and a verb and NEVER divorce the subject from its verb with just ONE comma (set off all parenthetical matters and appositives with two commas between subject and verb) [21.2.1; 21.2.3-21.2.4].

## SPELLING

- When in doubt about spelling, consult *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.) [20 introduction].
- **Never** turn any paper in without, as an important last step, doing a careful **spell-check** [11.4].
- Keep a list of **spelling errors** you tend to repeat and consult it regularly.

## REFERENCE

- Use **primary sources** to provide your most important evidence and to justify your reasoning; back up your evidence and warrants with **secondary sources** [3.1.1-3.1.3; 4.3.2; 15.1]. Weigh all your sources carefully as to their authority and value especially **internet** sources [15.4; 17.1.7; 17.1.10; 17.2.7; 17.3; 17.7; 19.1.8; 19.2.8; 19.5.9; 19.7].
- Decide when and how to share your information: when to **summarize**, to **paraphrase**, and to **quote** [4.2.2; 7.4; 15.2.1].
- Find out which of the **two citation styles** [3.2.1; 15.3] your major professor **prefers** you use:
  - 1) **footnotes** (in general preferred over endnotes [16.3.1; 16.3.3 but see 7.6 and 16.4.3]) with **bibliographic** entries [15.3.1; chapters 16 **all** and 17 **all**] or
  - 2) **parenthetical notes** in the text with a **reference list** (different from a bibliography) [15.3.2; chapters 18 **all**, fig 18.1 and 19 **all**, especially 19.9.1].
- **Quote** the text exactly as it is written and include all quoted words in quotation marks [7.9.1; 11.4; 15.1-15.2.2]; do not put quotation marks around paraphrases (ideas rephrased in your own words [7.9.2]). If you are dependent on a specific source for information, structure or argumentation, acknowledge your debt in a footnote cited at the beginning of your dependence even if not quoting text.

- Is every **author** mentioned and quoted in the text referred to as author in the footnote or parenthetical note and listed as well as author in the bibliography?
- In footnotes and bibliographies refer to articles cited from dictionaries or chapters in edited books by their **named authors** not by the book's **editor** [17.1.8].
- Indicate all scriptures at the end of the **scripture quotation** in the text with a parenthesis using the **appropriate abbreviations** for Bible books [24.6; 17.5.2; 19.5.2]. Example: “. . . but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). At the very **first use of a scripture**, indicate the primary version used in a footnote (with a note that you will indicate other versions where used).

## PUNCTUATION

- Follow all **terminal punctuation** at the end of a sentence with **one** space (period, exclamation point, question mark) [21.1].
- The **dash** involves—as you see here (--) the use of two hyphens with no spacing before, between or after (computers often convert these two hyphens)—whereas a **hyphen** self-evidently has only one stroke (-) between two closely bonded words [21.7]. Always check dictionary for proper **hyphenation** [20.3].
- The **ellipsis** indicates materials left out of a text or thought and consists of three dots with a space before and after and between each period . . . and a 4th dot when the end of a sentence is included in the omission (. . . .).
- **Always** put the final period and comma **inside** the double quotation marks (For instance: This is a “guideline,” and it is also a “rule.”). **Always** put the semicolon and the colon **outside** the quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation points go on the inside only if part of the quoted material [21.11.2]. Examples: I ask you directly: “Do you get this?” Do I need to “remind you of this”?
- Two independent clauses may be separated in one sentence by a **semicolon**, but *never by just a comma* [21.3]. To use a **comma** between clauses, make the second clause dependent on the first by an appropriate conjunction (and, but, for, while, etc.) [21.2.1]. Otherwise, make the long sentence into two independent sentences separated by a **period**.
- **Initials** of any person's name always have **one** space between [17.1.1; 20.4.2], but there are no spaces in standard places and abbreviations: C. S. Lewis and John A. T. Robinson, but Ph.D., G.E.D. or M.I.T.

## FORM

- Follow the exact **form and pagination specifications** in the Guidelines for Front Matter, Title Page, Abstract, and Table of Content [A.2].
- **Double-space** the entire text except for table of contents, block quotations, the bibliogra-

phy or reference list [A.1.3].

- In the **first** footnote for any given item, give the **full** reference [3.2.2; 15.3.1; 16 introduction; 16.1; 17.1.1-17.1.10; 17.2-17.10] in **footnote format** and enter the exact same information but in the proper **bibliographic** format in the bibliography [16 introduction; 16.1]. The footnote format and the bibliography format should not be confused [for comparisons of the two formats, see 15.3.1; 17.1.1].
- When you quote **from 1 up to 4 lines of text**, the quotation is normally run into the sentence (except when set into block for special emphasis). **All words** you quote from the source in a sentence must be **quoted exactly** [but see 25.3] and must have **quotation marks** or you are committing PLAGIARISM (literary theft) [7.5; 7.9; 7.9.4; 25.1; 25.2].
- To quote a text of **five or more lines**, use the **block format** [25.2; 25.2.2] It requires no quotation marks before or after, is single-spaced, and indented from both sides.
- **Number** all pages of the final product. Remove numbers from title pages [A.1.4].
- **Italicize** all book titles, movie titles, and foreign terms, but use quotation marks for articles and unpublished theses.
- After the first full entry in the first footnote, for all **subsequent** footnote references **abbreviate** the reference for a book or article to the author's last name, shortened title, and page [15.3.1; 16 introduction; 16.4; fig 16.2].
- Always leave one blank space **before a parenthesis**.
- **ALWAYS** put your **full name, the paper's exact title, the class name** and **course number** on any title sheet (follow any models provided).
- **Ibid.** is an abbreviation and always takes a period. It is used when the exact same source appears in the previous footnote. If the page also is the same as the previous footnote **Ibid.** (capitalized) is sufficient; if not, the page is added: **Ibid., 7** [16.4.2].

## STYLE

- Aim for many more **short sentences** with only a few longer ones [11.1-11.1.2].
- Avoid all **shifts** in a) **perspectives** (one/you/we/he/she/they), b) **verb tenses** (stay in the same tense in united sections: past/present/future), c) **subjects/verbs** (either singular or plural) and d) **antecedents/pronouns** (to avoid "he"/"she" use plural verbs and "they" or "them").
- Unless unavoidable, avoid "**would,**" or "**would be.**" Repeated usage of "would" makes your style sound tentative and unsure.
- **Think, write, reread, rewrite** until you simply can **not** be misunderstood [7.1-7.3]. **Written English** is much more precise and formal than spoken English. Avoid informalities in a research paper including colloquial contractions and abbreviations [24.1].

- Use **active** verbs rather than passive ones, **concrete** nouns over abstractions, and always search for the word with the most **vivid** and **exact** meanings [11.1-11.1.6; 11.3].
- Avoid unnecessary repetitions within the same paragraph and all **wordiness**.
- Avoid all **unnecessary capitals** (avoid capitalizing words with merely emotional significance to you) but use them where needed or to make an important distinction: God, Christ, Christian, Methodism, Bible, Gnosticism, Gentiles, Truth, etc.
- You may refer to yourself by the **first person pronouns** where appropriate (“I,” “me,” and “mine”) rather than using round-about descriptions (“the author of this thesis”) [11.1.7].

### Appendix C: Sample “Title Page”

[2.5" from top]      The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University

[4" from top]                      TITLE OF EXTENDED RESEARCH PAPER  
IS LISTED HERE: SUBTITLE IS ALSO INCLUDED  
AS APPROPRIATE

[6" from top]                      An Extended Research Paper  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Master of Arts Degree

[8" from top]                      by  
  
Name of Student  
  
Month Year

**Appendix D: Sample "Table of Contents"**

[Note: If shorter than one page, the Table of Contents should be centered vertically. The Table of Contents is paginated using small Roman numerals, beginning with “iii” (the Title Page and following blank page are considered pages “i” and “ii,” though they are not visibly numbered). The page after the Table of Contents is left blank and considered to be page “iv,” though it is not visibly numbered.]

## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	5
Research Type .....	5
Research Strategies .....	6
Research Viability .....	8
4. OUTLINE .....	9
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	10

Note: Chapters longer than two pages should be subdivided into sections with separate subheadings. All subheadings listed in the extended research paper should be reflected in the Table of Contents (listing the beginning page numbers is required for all chapters and major sections, but is optional for subheadings). For further information on preparing a Table of Contents, consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 380-381, 387-388.

### Appendix E: Selected Bibliography of Helpful Resources for Researching and Writing

**Books:**

Strunk, William Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2000.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman and Douglas Hesse. *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson/ Prentice Hall, 2007.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

Yaghjian, Lucretia B. *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*. New York: Continuum, 2006.

**Online:**

OWL at Purdue University and Purdue University located at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

- The reader is generally the student's major professor in his or her discipline. If the student's paper would benefit by having a different reader, the change must be approved by the major professor. There is no second reader for an extended research paper.
- It is the *student's responsibility* to initiate and maintain contact with the major professor.
- The first order of business for the reader is to informally explore a topic with the student. When a student has settled on a topic, he or she should schedule a meeting with the major professor to finalize the topic and sign a thesis contract (see Appendix A).
- The contract will include deadlines for each step of the paper process. The reader will go over these deadlines, stressing that the student *must* adhere to them. Failure to do so will result in delay of the degree completion, or failure of the paper.
- The schedule assumes that the student will turn in the work one chapter at a time.
- The extended research paper is limited to 45-50 pages (a few pages more at the discretion of the professor), excluding the bibliography.
- The extended research paper may have practical or pastoral elements not commonly found in a thesis. These elements may be presented in an appendix, which is not counted in the 50 page limit.
- If the student misses a deadline, there is a formal process by which he or she may request an extension (see 9.3 in guidelines). The major professor is allowed some discretion in determining whether this appeal must be made, depending upon the particular circumstances. The final deadline, however, should be extended only under extreme circumstances.
- In Appendix B is a suggested list of "Common Writing Errors to Avoid for a Quality Extended Research Paper." The major professor may add elements that may be specific to the discipline or topic. The professor should be certain that the student is aware that these errors should be avoided in his or her paper.
- The Seminary at Lincoln Christian University has adapted Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. as the official style manual. Every extended research paper must conform to this style.
- Parts of the proposal and paper are clearly delineated in the extended research paper guidelines, available at <http://lincolnchristian.edu/Seminary/extendedResearchPaper.asp>. The student is expected to closely follow these guidelines.
- An extended research paper is not catalogued or made available in the Library. If the paper is of sufficient interest and superior quality the professor, in conjunction with the Library Director, may suggest that the paper be bound and placed in the Library.

- Grading for an extended research paper is pass or fail. If a student is completing the project over more than one semester, the appropriate grade to report to the registrar is NG. The reader should report the final completion of the project directly to the Registrar's Office.
- Students who fail to complete the project must re-enroll for the following semester. The professor should make every effort to discourage the student from spreading the process over a period of more than four semesters.
- An extended research paper concludes with an oral examination concerning the paper itself as well as a review of the student's entire course work. It is the responsibility of the major professor to administer this examination. In the event of excellent work, the professor may choose to have the student give an oral presentation. Following are suggested guidelines.

#### For the EXAMINATION:

- The oral examination is considered to be an integrative experience rather than a barrier to passing the paper. The purpose is to allow the student to speak intelligently and integratively about his/her seminary career. The major professor administering the oral examination should familiarize him/herself with the student's transcript before the exam.
- The oral examination for the extended research paper reviews the writing and research for the paper itself, but also explores the extent to which the student has grown over the course of his or her seminary experience.
- General questions might include:
  - ◆ What is your extended research paper about?
  - ◆ Why did you choose this topic?
  - ◆ What have you learned about yourself from this project?
  - ◆ How has the paper sharpened your skills in research, critical thinking, and writing?
  - ◆ If you could do the project over, what would you do differently?
  - ◆ How has this project opened up other areas to be explored in the future?
  - ◆ How has the project helped you in developing your leadership skills?
  - ◆ What are the best books, articles, or online resources concerning this topic?
- Specific questions concerning the paper itself should follow.

#### For the PRESENTATION:

- The presentation should cover the same type of topics listed above, but in the form of a presentation open to the public.
- The student should provide handouts, power point presentations, etc. that will enhance the experience for the audience.
- The student should not read the paper aloud, but offer a succinct summary, then zero in on relevant findings and conclusions.

After the EXAMINATION or PRESENTATION:

- The professor might then explore the overall seminary experience.
  - ◆ What are the strengths & weaknesses of the program?
  - ◆ How have you grown?
  - ◆ What would you do differently?
  - ◆ What are your plans for the future?
- End with prayer.