APPLICATION FOR CORE APPROVAL
OF MAJOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Major Program: Theology & Religious Studies

Timing of this capstone experience: Fall semester of the student’s senior year*
   * The capstone may be taken in the fall of Junior year if the student will be studying abroad during senior year or has other extenuating circumstances.

Capstone type (select and explain all that apply):

♦ Course — TRS493 Senior Seminar (3 cr.), capstone seminar for TRS majors/minors

☐ Created work or product

☐ Conference poster or presentation — Students are encouraged to present their research projects at a regional professional meeting and/or the JCU Celebration of Scholarship, but this is not a mandatory course requirement.

☐ Internship or other experiential learning

Focal point of capstone: Under the direction of a full-time faculty member who serves as the senior essay advisor, the student engages in an independent research project of his/her choice. The project design must meet the two basic criteria of (1) serving to deepen the student’s understanding of a particular topic in the field while (2) utilizing knowledge and skills the student has gained throughout the TRS major program.

Tie to student’s major area(s) of interest: The student selects the essay topic in consultation with the TRS493 instructor and prospective essay advisor.

Summarize the Major program (and other curricular) skills, methodology, and knowledge required for the capstone:

Skills: Information literacy tools; oral and written communication skills; depending upon the nature of the research project, the student also may need to utilize skills in quantitative analysis.

Methods: Standard TRS research techniques pertinent to the particular essay topic, to be determined in consultation with the TRS493 instructor and the essay advisor (e.g., ethnography, literary criticism, historiography, linguistic criticism, philosophical analysis, social-science techniques).

Knowledge: The seminar requires knowledge across the five basic sub-fields of TRS. The research project requires in-depth knowledge of the sub-field(s) that is/are pertinent to the research question or thesis.
Core criterion/criteria met by capstone experience (select and explain all that apply):

♦ Synthesize and apply disciplinary knowledge and skills — The independent research project requires the student to utilize knowledge and skills in the discipline, synthesizing what was learned in previous coursework and incorporating it into the analysis of the research topic.

♦ Foster reflection on undergraduate learning and experience — The guest presentations by TRS faculty and the regular seminar discussions foster reflection on learning across the entire TRS major/minor program; in addition, the portfolio project requires each student to discuss key facets of her/his learning across the TRS curriculum and reflect on the value of his/her curricular and co-curricular experiences.

♦ Demonstrate emerging professional competencies — In the context of a mock professional conference, each student presents her/his research project in the seminar, followed by a peer respondent to the presentation and then a general period of Q&A. This requires students to demonstrate skills in oral communication (e.g., rhetorical design and delivery), use of technology (e.g., presentation tools), and other basic professional competencies.

♦ Apply, analyze, and/or interpret research, data, or artistic expression — The essay project requires students to generate and interpret research data. The types of data will vary depending upon the nature of the specific project. Possible sources include literary, historical, or social research data; iconographical, epigraphical, and/or archeological remains; artistic works or other aspects of material culture.

Additional Core requirements for the Major that are met by this capstone (select and explain all that apply):

♦ A course that emphasizes writing skills in the discipline — The independent research essay requires thorough grounding in research and writing standards in the field, and the peer-review and presentation-response process replicates the way scholars in TRS actual do their scholarly work and garner feedback concerning their writing projects.

♦ A course or other requirement that fosters skills in oral presentation — The research project must be presented during the seminar’s mock professional conference. Presentations are graded on content as well as delivery, rhetorical skill, linguistic fluency, and competence with presentation tools and other pertinent technology.

♦ A course or other requirement that fosters skills in the use of technology to collect and share information — Student research for the major essay requires information literacy skills, including knowledge of and facility with appropriate research databases. Design of the research presentation requires use of technology to share the data pertinent to the project.
List the program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Major and explain how the Capstone meets each of those Major program SLOs. If the Capstone does not meet all of the Major program SLOs, specify what other Major program requirements ensure that the remaining program SLOs are met.

TRS has five program SLOs:

1. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience, history, and cultures.
2. Critically analyze religious expressions in sacred texts, art, ritual practices, and ethical commitments.
3. Respect cultural and religious diversity in local and global contexts.
4. Appreciate the relationship between religious commitment and efforts to address injustice and live ethically.
5. Recognize the ways in which the Catholic Christian tradition addresses the fundamental questions of human existence.

TRS Majors must meet each of these program SLOs at an advanced level of competence, defined as follows:

1. Understands the key terms and methodologies of the diverse subfields within the academic study of religion (including biblical studies, ethics, historical approaches, and systematic theology) and is able to articulate his or her own methodological approach.
2. Applies a variety of interpretative methods (including historical-critical methods) to the Bible and to the sacred texts of at least one other religious tradition; is able to assess the strengths and weakness of these methods.
3. Compares and contrasts the beliefs, practices, or worldview of at least two religious traditions in a way that models respectful interaction with people, ideas, and cultures that are different.
4. Assesses and applies multiple religious or ethical frameworks to complex issues, with an awareness of the root causes of injustice and a commitment to address these issues and contribute to the common good.
5. Understands Catholic theological approaches to multiple fundamental questions and how these questions are related to one another.

The TRS493 Senior Seminar capstone course is designed to demonstrate achievement of these advanced competencies (ACs) in TRS SLOs #1–5 through the senior essay (which requires AC-SLO #1 and one of the other AC-SLOs), the portfolio project (which must address all five of the AC-SLOs), and seminar discussions.

In addition, the TRS Major currently requires a 4-hour, 4-part comprehensive examination, which requires students to demonstrate their achievement of AC-SLOs #2–5 by writing a one-hour examination essay in each of those areas of competency.

How will this Capstone be assessed? (Attach any pertinent rubrics or other assessment instruments.)

The TRS493 is assessed by means of the regular TRS department final (written) student course evaluation as well as seminar discussion of the strong and weak points of the course design and process. Student work in the capstone is assessed by means of a variety of assignments, especially the major essay and its sub-components. The most recent syllabus with assignments and grading rubrics is appended to this application.
Meeting time: Mondays 5:00–7:45 PM
Classroom: AD225
Prerequisites:
*EN103–112 or 111–112 or 114–116
*Status as TRS Major or Minor
*Instructor permission

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This capstone seminar is designed to help majors and minors synthesize and integrate the breadth and depth of knowledge they have gained through their four-year course of studies, through the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum in general and the major or minor program in theology and religious studies in particular. The various seminar sessions will reprise key topics and approaches addressed in the diverse subfields of theology and religious studies (bible, comparative religions, ethics, history, spirituality, theology, and world religions). As the end of the semester approaches, student participants will share their own current research and situate it within the wider conversation among scholars of theology and religious studies.

OBJECTIVES: Successful completion of this course will enable students to:
1. Fairly represent and evaluate different views on current issues in the fields of theology & religious studies;
2. Describe and utilize a wide range of contemporary theological & religious studies methods;
3. Use standard bibliographical and reference tools for theology & religious studies (print; digital; microform); and
4. Produce a critical research paper characterized by appropriate format, rigorous argumentation of the thesis, and thorough documentation of sources.

ASSUMPTIONS: Students are assumed to have a broad habitual knowledge of key topics and methods in theology and religious studies, drawn from their previous coursework in the field.

CLASS FORMAT: Seminar; faculty and student presentations will be complemented by active and critical discussions on the basis of primary and secondary literature.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
1. Canvas readings as pertinent
2. Article reprints (in the packet distributed on the first class day)

REFERENCE TOOLS:
• The Grasselli Library resource page for our class lists various important resources
• Dr. McGinn’s Bible web (http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/) includes links to online tools for bible, classics, and history

EXPECTATIONS: students will prepare the assigned readings before each class meeting, actively participate in class discussions, and submit written work on time. All assignments be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course. See the Course Schedule (pp. 4f) for details.

CONSULTATION: I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about your academic and research interests before class, during my office hours, or at other times by appointment. I also welcome your feedback at any time, especially suggestions about how to make the class a more fruitful experience for you.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS:

- Attentive presence at every seminar meeting;
- Active participation in discussion and all class activities;
- Careful preparation of assigned reading for each before session;
- An annotated bibliography of sources used in research;
- A critical review of a piece used in research\(^1\);
- A peer review of another student’s research paper (written and oral)\(^2\);
- A class presentation of the research project\(^3\); and
- A final research project of 15–20 pages.\(^4\)
- Occasional groups quizzes may be used to review key concepts.

FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD: In lieu of a final examination, the final examination period will be devoted to final student project presentations.

ATTENDANCE: The University expects prompt and alert student presence at every class meeting. Seminar discussion comprises a substantial component of the course grade, and one must be present to participate in discussion. Hence, students who absent themselves more than two times during the semester will have their total course grade docked one full letter grade, and then one additional grade level for each subsequent absence. If you are ill, a medical excuse is necessary to receive an excused absence. If you have an unavoidable conflict that will prevent you from meeting class, please present your documentation of this conflict before the class absence.

TIMELINESS: Absences from class do not excuse the student from timely submission of required coursework. If you anticipate you may need an extension, negotiate this before the assignment due date. Late assignments may incur a grade penalty up to one letter grade for every weekday they are overdue.

RESPECTFUL PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to come to class ready to work. It goes without saying that this includes refraining from eating, use of cellular devices, or other modes of distraction; dressing for a working environment; engaging in respectful (if challenging) conversation; and staying on task for the entire class session. The class meets over an extended period, so we will have a short break in the middle of each session to allow time for refreshments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The University expects that students will submit their own original work and properly cite sources for their ideas, including the Bible, web pages, handouts, class notes, and ideas from other students. This includes properly citing direct and indirect quotations, and also any ideas you learn from other sources—including Scriptural ones. A good, basic rule to follow is “when in doubt, write it out.” We will spend some time during the first class session discussing specific examples, whether or not they need citations and, if so, what is the proper format for those citations. If specific questions arise during your research and writing, I am happy to work with you on this point.

\(^1\) See the “Critical Review” assignment description, attached (p. 8f). A more detailed description (with links to sample reviews) is available at [http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2CriticalReview.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2CriticalReview.htm).

\(^2\) See the “Peer Review” assignment description, attached (p. 10). Basically the same how-to information is available online at [http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2PeerReview.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2PeerReview.htm) and a handy evaluation chart can be found at [http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/PeerReviewForm.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/PeerReviewForm.htm).

\(^3\) This will be discussed in class on the first day. To refresh your memory, see the “Class Presentations” description at [http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/Seminars/Presentations.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/Seminars/Presentations.htm).

\(^4\) You may want to consult this guide to composing your thesis ([http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2Thesis.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/How2s/How2Thesis.htm)). You may also find useful the grading protocol for the assignment ([http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/GPs/ThesisPaperGP.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/Bible/AcademicExcellence/GPs/ThesisPaperGP.htm)).
Keep in mind how you do your work. E.g., do not “loan” papers or other assignments to friends; this counts as academic dishonesty, too, and you face the same penalties as those who take the assignments and submit the ideas as their own. If you work with other class members to prepare an assignment, be sure to credit other persons’ ideas so it will not look like you have copied their notes. See the JCU Student Handbook for further information. Any student who violates academic integrity will earn an “F” for the course.

GRADING: All class assignments (even discussion posts and other electronic submissions) are graded based on both form (grammar, syntax, orthography, etc.) and content (significance of ideas, clarity of argument, substantiation of claims, breadth of evidence, etc.). Specific grading criteria and protocols are included on the attached handouts for each of the major written assignments. Unless otherwise specified, all references should follow the humanities-style format specified in The Chicago Manual of Style.

20% APPA: Attendance, participation in, preparation for, and attentiveness during class presentations and discussions. This presumes thorough and timely preparation of all assigned readings.

10% Critical review of one crucial book-length study, one foreign-language article, or two English-language articles relating to the topic of and/or the primary method(s) you intend to use in your research essay.

10% Peer review of another student’s research paper (5% written; 5% oral response)

60% Research project
  • 05% Proposal
  • 05% Annotated bibliography (12–15 entries with abstracts) on your topic and method(s)
  • 05% History of research or sentence outline
  • 05% Rough draft
  • 05% Second draft
  • 05% Oral presentation of your project (10–15 minutes)
  • 20% Final draft (15–20 pp.)


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5 The project proposal, outline, rough draft, and second draft are graded on an O/S/U scale. The annotated bibliography, oral presentation, and final draft are graded on the typical A–F scale.

6 The project proposal will include four components:
1. The title indicating the selected topic (text, site, theme, or other negotiated focus);
2. A statement of your intended thesis;
3. An abstract (100–150 words) sketching the intended line of argumentation, approach, and methodology; and
4. A preliminary select bibliography including 6–10 journal or encyclopedia articles relating to your subject and/or approach and 6–10 pertinent monographs and commentaries. NO Internet sites are permitted at this stage of the project.

7 See the annotated bibliography assignment description on p. 8.

8 See the Canvas site for a how-to handout and sample histories of research.

9 The basic outline for a research project is as follows:
1. An introduction including the thesis statement, your methodology, and a brief history of research;
2. The body of the paper, which provides a clear line of argumentation in favor of your thesis and provides substantiating evidence in its favor;
3. The conclusion summarizing precisely how you have proven your thesis, and highlighting what avenues for further study remain; and
4. A select bibliography of items relevant for the research.
FACULTY ESSAY ADVISOR: The final essay project requires you to work with an essay advisor (in addition to the seminar instructor) selected from among the full-time TRS faculty. You are expected to have at bi-weekly meetings with your essay advisor to help plan and monitor progress toward completing your project. Your essay advisor will provide feedback to you and to the seminar instructor concerning your performance on every stage of your research paper: project proposal, annotated bibliography, history or research or sentence outline, first draft, second draft, and final draft. I will serve as “second reader” for the essay and give you additional feedback at each stage of production. Your advisor will recommend a grade for your final draft, which the instructor will take into consideration in assigning your grade for the final essay. Ultimately, however, the instructor is responsible for assigning course grades.

FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE JCU COMMUNITY: John Carroll University is committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive campus community. Incidents of bias can and should be reported on the Bias Incident Reporting Form available at [http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/](http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/). In oral and written work, faculty and students are expected to avoid stereotypical or biased language, whether with respect to gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or some other personal characteristic. Minimally, this means inclusive language is required in all written work.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability (learning, psychological, sensory, physical, or medical) you may be eligible for accommodations as determined by the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). To investigate this possibility, contact the SSD Director (phone: 216-397-4967; office: AD 7A, on the Garden Level of the Administration Building, behind Einstein’s). Keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive so it is best to register at the beginning of each semester. Only accommodations approved by SSD will be recognized in the classroom. Please contact SSD if you have further questions.

TRS RESOURCE CENTER: The Department of Theology & Religious Studies is committed to fostering student excellence throughout the curriculum. TRS Graduate Assistants work closely with faculty to support students in any course offered by the department. TRS GAs can provide a sounding board as you grapple with course ideas or other challenges; suggest various study and reading strategies; give advice on assignments and research projects; discuss lecture material or readings you find difficult; host review sessions for exams (upon student or instructor request); and provide many other forms of instructional support. TRS tutors are available Monday and Tuesday afternoons, 3–5PM, in the TRS office suite (B250), and at other times by appointment.

JCU WRITING CENTER: The Writing Center (in OC 207 or at [http://sites.jcu.edu/writingcenter](http://sites.jcu.edu/writingcenter)) is a free academic resource staffed by undergraduate and graduate students from all areas of study who have completed training to assist you with your writing assignments. Writing Center consultants can help with everything from brainstorming to citations. Please bring the assignment description and any other relevant information to your consultation, as well as a print copy of your initial draft. The Center accepts walk-ins, but to avoid the wait, you can schedule an appointment: in person, by phone (x4529) or by email (writingcenter@jcu.edu). In addition to weekly daytime hours in OC 207, the Writing Center also offers After-Hours services from 7–9 pm on Sundays and Wednesdays in Grasselli Library Seminar A.

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10 “Bias” is defined as “intentional or unintentional actions against someone on the basis of an actual or perceived aspect of their identity.” Such actions may occur in classrooms, residence halls, or elsewhere on campus.
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

PDF copies of the assigned readings will be posted on the course Canvas site. This schedule is up-to-date as of 31 August 2015. Please check the Canvas site for potential changes, particularly concerning the guest speakers and their assigned readings.

1. **M 08/31** Introduction: Review syllabus, seminar agenda, purpose, strategies, etc.
   The importance of aesthetics and ascesis in theology & religious studies research/writing
   **Writing Workshop:** How to compose a formal project proposal

   **M 09/07** Labor Day — No class
   Due: Research Paper Topic. Also suggest which faculty member might best advise you on this topic.

2. **M 09/14** Engaged Biblical Hermeneutics
   Read:
   • Mary Ann Tolbert, “A New Teaching with Authority: A Re-Evaluation of the Authority of the Bible” 168–89 in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, edited Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998). **Writing Workshop:** Composing comprehensive examination essays
   Due: Project Proposal
   **Writing Workshop:** How to compile an Annotated Bibliography

3. **M 09/21** Ecclesiology (Guest: Professor Edward Hahnenberg)
   Read:
   • Edward P. Hahnenberg, “A Wider Witness: From ‘Lay Vocation’ to the Call of Missionary Discipleship.”
   Due: Annotated Bibliography
   **Writing Workshop:** How to write a critical review

4. **M 09/28** The Plowshares Movement (Guest: Professor Kristen Tobey)
   Read:
   • See Canvas site
   Due: Critical Review
   **Writing Workshop:** How (and why) to construct a history of research

5. **M 10/05** Asian Religions (Guest: Professor Paul Nietupski)
   Read:
   • See Canvas site
   Due: History of Research or Project Outline

6. **M 10/12** Models of Critical Scholarly Engagement
   Read:
   DUE NEXT WEEK: First draft of research paper

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NB: The Canvas “Writers’ Toolbox” includes “writing workshop” materials that will be used at various points throughout the semester, as stated in this schedule. Workshop documents also count as assigned reading for the given session.

Post the topic you have chosen as the focus of your research project, and a short discussion of why you made that choice.
7. M 10/19 Islamic Eschatology (Guest: Professor Zeki Sarıtoprak)
   Read:
   Due: First draft of research paper
   Writing Workshop: Editing your work

8. M 10/26 Ethics (Guest: Professor Paul Lauritzen)
   Read:

9. M 11/02 Church History (Guest: Professor Joseph Kelly)
   Read:
   Due: Second draft of research paper
   Writing Workshop: How to peer review

10. M 11/09 Rhetorical Strategies for Writing and Presentations in Theology & Religious Studies
    Knowing your audience; taking the message to the street; addressing the “so what?” question
    Read:
    • See Canvas Site
    Due: Written peer review of student-colleague’s essay
    Writing Workshop: Planning a paper presentation

11. M 11/16 Theological Anthropology and Spirituality (Guest: Professor Elizabeth Antus)
    Read:
    • Elizabeth L. Antus, “‘Why Batter My Worthless Heart?’ How Toxic Shame Disrupts Sarah Coakley’s Account of Spiritual Vulnerability.”
    Due: Outline of class presentation of research project
    Writing Workshop: Eloquentia Perfecta

12. M 11/23 Writing Consultation — Time to work individually and together on refining your essays as you approach the final draft
    Writing Workshop: Preparing for comprehensive examinations

13. M 11/30 Class presentation of research projects
    Read: Texts pertinent to the scheduled presentations (see Canvas site)
    Due: Final draft of research paper

14. M 12/07 Class presentation of research projects
    Read: Texts pertinent to the scheduled presentations (see Canvas site)

15. M 12/14 Class presentation of research projects
    Read: Texts pertinent to the scheduled presentations (see Canvas site)
    Complete in Class: Final Course Evaluation

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13 Submit two copies, one to the instructor and one to the seminar colleague who will peer review your essay.
ASSIGNMENT #1: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
How to Compile an Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography includes all the elements of a standard bibliography as well as “annotations” for each bibliographic entry. The annotations essentially are miniature abstracts of the books and articles included in the bibliography. For a more extensive discussion of abstracts, including suggestions about how to compose them and a few samples, see http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/bizwrite/abstracts.html. For some sample annotated bibliographies, see the links under the course Canvas site’s “Writers’ Toolbox.”

Composition
1. Start with your Select Bibliography, which has been compiled in accordance with The Chicago Manual of Style humanities format.
2. Compose informative abstracts of each of the books and articles you have listed. (If your Select Bibliography lists more entries than required for this assignment, you need only abstract the required number. The other entries can be left un-annotated.)
   1. Edit each abstract so it is as brief as possible while retaining the essential data you wish to convey.
   2. Article abstracts should be about 75–100 words; book abstracts about 150–250 words.
   3. Include an assessment of the significance of the piece you are abstracting, for your own research and for the field as a whole.
3. Incorporate the annotations after each bibliographic entry, and there you have it!

Format
1. At the left margin, insert a header with your name and the date you compiled the annotated bibliography. At the right margin, insert page numbers in the format “Page x of y.”
2. Make sure all your bibliographic references are complete, accurate, and conform to The Chicago Manual of Style humanities-style bibliographic citations.
3. Single-space the document within entries, but double-space between them.

Grading Criteria
The assignment will be graded on the following criteria:
1. Accuracy: Bibliographic references and abstracts give complete and accurate data on the referenced work.
2. Clarity: Abstracts are written in clear, direct, inclusive, and formal English free of grammatical, punctuation, spelling, and syntactical errors.
3. Economy: Abstracts present succinct and accurate synopses of the referenced works, including the structure, thesis, and key terms for each.
4. Evaluation: Abstracts include brief evaluations of the contributions and limitations of the piece for understanding the topic.
5. Format: The document layout fits the prescriptions of the assignment, and all bibliographic references correctly follow the The Chicago Manual of Style.

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14 The St Cloud State site highlights descriptive and informative abstracts. The assignment for this class requires informative abstracts.
ASSIGNMENT #2: CRITICAL REVIEW
How to Write a Critique of an Article, Chapter, or Monograph

Preliminary Considerations

• Length: Customarily a critique of an article or chapter should be no longer than 500 words; a book critique should be 750–800 words.

• Tone: A “critical review” does not call for a “trash and burn” approach to another scholar’s work. Take as even-handed an approach as possible, noting both the strong and weak points of the investigation. Do not “pull punches”; if there are factual or methodological errors, you must take notice of them. However, remember that every study makes some contribution to the field, no matter how small. As it is written, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Contents
Organize your remarks into three basic categories.\(^{15}\)

1) Synopsisize the main features of the work.
   a) What is the author’s key idea or “thesis” (i.e., what does the author want you to believe and/or do as a result of reading this article or book)?
   b) How is the analysis structured?
   c) What key terms are used, and what do they mean?

2) Sketch the author’s main supporting arguments. In the process, highlight 3–5 “quotable quotes” to help other people remember the key points.
   a) What does the author say to convince you that the thesis should be accepted?
   b) What kinds of evidence are adduced in favor of the thesis? *E.g.,*
      i) What images, illustrations, Scripture passages and/or other data are cited?
      ii) What previous studies does the author cite? Remember to note both the ones the author contests or refutes as well as those that are affirmed or used constructively.
   c) How is this evidence interpreted, both in terms of content and method? *E.g.,*
      i) How are the Scripture passages, etc., used by the author?
      ii) How are the earlier studies worked into the author’s argument?

3) Evaluate the positive contribution(s) of this study for understanding the method or topic under discussion, and point out what you see as its limitations—or even errors of fact or of method.
   a) Content:
      i) What are the most interesting arguments raised or illustrations used?
      ii) Which do you think are the most important for our studies?
      iii) Which remain unclear to you?
   b) Method:
      i) How reliable are the earlier studies on which the author bases the argument? Do you find the author’s use of them compelling?
      ii) When you compare the Scripture passages cited in the article/chapter/book with the way they are interpreted by the author, what kinds of differences do you see between your reading and the author’s interpretation? Are these differences of method, content, or both?
   c) Global:
      i) What are the three most important contributions of this article/chapter/book to understanding the topic?
      ii) What do you see as its limitations or even errors of fact or of method?
      iii) What 2–3 questions would you find helpful for class discussion of this investigation?

\(^{15}\) *NB:* These three sections should receive approximately 1:3:2 proportional attention.
Execution & Submission of the Assignment

1) The complete and accurate Chicago Manual of Style humanities-version bibliographic reference (including author, title, publication information, and page references) should be listed at the top of the first page of the review, followed by the reviewer’s name and the date the review was written.

2) The document should be submitted to the instructor, both in print and in digital form, along with a copy of the article/chapter being reviewed (or an active link to the digital version).

3) The review should be posted to the Canvas, emailed, or otherwise distributed to seminar members at least one week before the class presentation. In addition to the bibliographic information for the article or book, include on the review any pertinent references to the Bible or other seminar texts so your colleagues can prepare those passage(s) ahead of time. If there is a digital text of the work you are reviewing, include the link in the review itself so that interested parties can access the study.

4) You will be allotted 5–7 minutes for your class presentation of one critical review. Please practice the delivery so you know you will stay within the allotted time limit. If you write more than one review, any others simply get submitted to the instructor (as in #2, above).

Tips

1) Review the Grading Protocol for the assignment so you will be aware of which elements of the critique will be given more weight in the grade (see pp. 12f). It also may give you more specific ideas of how to structure your critique.

2) The web description of this assignment contains links to sample reviews. These examples are provided to help underscore the review format. Note, however, that they were for scholarly journals, which have their own style and content guidelines, so some of the questions mentioned in the foregoing outline may be omitted from a given review.
ASSIGNMENT #3: PEER REVIEW
How to Give Critical Feedback on a Colleague’s Paper\textsuperscript{16}

1. When reading the paper, shape your attitude to seek what you can learn from it: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Col 3:12).

2. Make as clear and fair a report of the thesis and evidence as you can: “…let us hold fast to what we have attained” (Phil 3:16).

3. Accentuate the positive: “…whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil 4:8). Begin the review by summarizing whatever substantive and methodological advances you see in this study.

4. You do not need to like the author nor what the person says, but you must be polite: “…get rid of such things as anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth” (Col 3:8).

5. When there are factual errors, correct them, but “let your gentleness be known to everyone” (Phil 4:5). Remember, it might have been you a few weeks ago.

6. Summarize the limitations of the study, giving positive and concrete suggestions for improvement.

7. Mention the interesting questions it raises for further research and discussion. As Paul said, “…straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal….” (Phil 3:13–14).

See the following page for details on the types of issues to address in your Peer Review.

\textsuperscript{16} Also known as “The Seven Commandments of Peer Review,” by Paul of Tarsus & Co.; edited by Sheila E. McGinn, PhD.
Aspects to Consider in Your Peer Review

1) PAPER ORGANIZATION & CLARITY OF THESIS
   Is the object of the paper unclear, somewhat clear, very clear?
   Note points where the clarity and organization is well done. Also note if there are any places where:
   a) The thesis needs clarifying or specifying
   b) Organization needs re-working
   c) Sentence structure is awkward or convoluted
   d) Paragraphing is confusing
   e) Points should be added to or deleted from the introduction
   f) Points should be added to or deleted from the conclusion

2) CONSISTENCY & CLARITY OF ARGUMENT
   Is the argument clear and purposeful, nonexistent, inconsistent, consistent?
   Note points where the argumentation is done clearly and persuasively. Also note if there are any places where:
   a) The argument is inconsistent
   b) The argument wanders/does not have a clear direction
   c) The argument needs development and/or clarification
   d) Further evidence in favor of the argument needs to be added and/or places where course data could bolster it
   e) Objections which are raised but not refuted, or objections to the thesis which are not raised and need to be addressed

3) FORMAT & STYLE
   Is the writing somewhat awkward, somewhat clear, very clear?
   Note points where the writing style is clear and elegant. Also note if there are any places where:
   a) The writing could be clearer
   b) Spelling, grammatical, punctuation, and/or syntactical errors need correcting
   c) Run-on sentences or dangling prepositions need to be eliminated
   d) Contractions need to be eliminated; numerals spelled out; etc.
   e) Errors in the citation or bibliographic format need to be corrected

4) INTEREST
   Are the ideas in this essay boring, somewhat interesting, very interesting?
   Note places where the concepts and the way they are expressed really drew your interest and made you want to continue reading the essay. Also note if there are any places where:
   a) The argument needs condensing
   b) Data learned in this course should be taken into account
   c) New ideas might be added or old ideas might be re-formulated in new ways
# Critical Article/Book/Chapter Review
## Grading Protocol

### Proper Format

1. The complete and accurate bibliographic reference to the text under review (including author, title, publication information, and page references) are to be listed at the outset of the review, followed by the reviewer’s name and the date the review was composed.
2. The bibliographic reference and all citations should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. However, citations should be inserted into the text in parentheses rather than consigned to footnotes. Since the complete bibliographic reference to the work being reviewed is given at the beginning of the review, any references to it are kept as brief as possible, typically comprising simply the page numbers in parentheses.
3. The document should be submitted in print to the instructor along with *a copy of the article/chapter being reviewed* (or an active link to the digital version).
4. The printed review should be single-spaced and formatted to fit on *one page*; word count should be included in parentheses at the end of the last paragraph.
5. The review should be posted to the Canvas, emailed, or otherwise distributed to seminar members by at least the weekend before the class presentation. In addition to the bibliographic information for the article or book, include on the review any pertinent references to the Bible or other seminar texts so your colleagues can prepare the passage(s) ahead of time. If there is a digital text of the work you are reviewing, it is handy to include the link in the review itself so that interested parties can access the study.

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<td>All other citations are complete and correctly follow <em>Chicago Manual of Style</em>, including parenthetical notes in body of review</td>
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<td>Copy of text under review (or address to an active link of the e-text) submitted with review</td>
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### Part One: Synopsis & Sketch of Main Features

1. What is the structure of the article/chapter/book?
2. What is the key idea or thesis of the article/chapter/book?
3. What key terms are used in the article/chapter/book, and what do they mean?

| 10 | Clear, succinct, and accurate synopsis of the article/chapter/book contents, including structure, thesis, and key terms (with definitions) |
| 8  | Good and accurate synopsis of the article/chapter/book contents, including structure, thesis, and key terms (with definitions) |
| 6  | Weak synopsis of the chapter article/chapter/book, omitting either its structure, thesis, key terms, or definitions |
| 4  | Poor synopsis of the chapter article/chapter/book, omitting two of the following: structure, thesis, key terms, or definitions |
| 2  | Synopsis of the chapter article/chapter/book omits three of the following: structure, thesis, key terms, or definitions |
| 0  | Inaccurate description of article/chapter/book contents, no description, or synopsis lacking all required elements |

### Part Two: Evidence & Illustrations

1. What images, illustrations, Scripture passages and/or other evidence does the author cite to support the key idea or thesis?
2. What key phrases or sentences would you highlight to conveying the author’s point of view in this article/chapter/book (i.e., some "quotable quotes" or "sound bites" to help other students remember the main concepts of this chapter)?

<p>| 5  | Succinct and accurate report of the main arguments and evidence adduced to support them; 3–5 &quot;quotable quotes&quot; illustrating the author’s key arguments |
| 4  | Good but wordy report of the main arguments and evidence adduced; 2–3 &quot;quotable quotes&quot; illustrating the author’s key arguments |</p>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diffuse report of the main arguments and evidence adduced; 1–2 &quot;quotable quotes&quot; illustrating the author’s key arguments</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barebones summary of the main arguments; little or no discussion of the supporting evidence used; no &quot;quotable quotes&quot; illustrating the author’s key arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Inaccurate report of the main arguments and/or evidence used; no &quot;quotable quotes&quot; illustrating the author’s key arguments</td>
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**Part Three: Critical Evaluation**

1. What are the most interesting points raised or illustrations used?
2. What concepts do you think are the most important for our studies?
3. What concepts remain unclear to you?
4. When you compare the Scripture passages cited in the article/chapter/book with the way they are interpreted by the author, what kinds of differences do you see between your reading and the author’s interpretation? Are these differences of method or content or both?
5. What do you see as the three most important contributions of this article/chapter/book to understanding the topic, and what do you see as its limitations—or even errors of fact or of method?

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<td>No responses to these questions, or responses based on significant factual or methodological errors</td>
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**Composition: Grammar, punctuation, spelling, Syntax**

1. Does the essay follow the standard tri-partite format for a critique?
2. Is the essay written in clear, direct, inclusive, and formal English?
3. Are the sentences free of grammatical, punctuation, spelling, and syntactical errors?

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**Total Points (of 30)**
# THESIS PAPER GRADING PROTOCOL

## A. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

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<td>Adjustments to grade?</td>
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## B. CRITIQUE OF CONTENT & PRESENTATION

### Organization

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### Format

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### Content/Clarity

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### Interest

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| Total for Part B          |   |   |   |   |   |
| Less any adjustments from Part A | | | | | |
| **Total Score for Paper**|   |   |   |   |   |

= A B C D F