Writing Handbook and Thesis Guidelines

2019-2020

North Park Theological Seminary

For additional assistance please contact:

- Your course professor, to interpret an assignment
- Your thesis advisor
- Kris Bruckner, NPTS Writing and Academic Support kbruckner@northpark.edu to give feedback on writing style and thesis formatting.
- Dr. Stephen Spencer, NPTS Seminary Librarian srspencer@northpark.edu to assist with sources for research papers and projects
INTRODUCTION

North Park Theological Seminary is a graduate institution, with high expectations regarding written assignments. The following information will help you understand the paradigm for many aspects of your work and the academic expectations of your professors. The strategies for time management, reading for meaning, etc., will also help you to work in a measured, efficient manner -- to avoid a backlog of work at the end of the semester.

You are responsible for the information in this handbook regarding style and formatting of your papers, including citations. It is essential to begin your work with a clear understanding of the specific expectations for your papers regarding form. It is also essential to remember that any paper in any class should be a direct, specific, and clear response to the assignment given by your professor. If you are unclear on an assignment, always begin by reading the syllabus carefully, and then by asking clarifying questions of your professor.

North Park Seminary uses Turabian style for all papers, unless you instructed otherwise by your professor. You should purchase the latest edition of Turabian and refer to it for the details of proper formatting. Use the sample pages at the end of this document to see what a page with footnotes and a bibliography should look like. If you are using parenthetical notes, use a reference list at the end of the paper, rather than a bibliography.

Kris Bruckner kbruckner@northpark.edu provides academic support for all seminary students and can assist you with writing or reading questions or issues you may have. Her blog posts on seminary writing can be found at https://www.thearange.blogspot.com
The one credit class (online) Academic Writing is an additional resource for those looking to go deeper in improving their writing for seminary work. Register for MNST 6105 11 during the fall or spring semesters.

Dr. Stephen Spencer, srspencer@northpark.edu (#6241) the theological librarian, can assist you with research for papers or projects.

The seminary website has additional online resources that may be helpful, including a digital version of this handbook https://www.northpark.edu/seminary/academics/student-resources/
| CONTENTS |
|----------|----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| *Time Management During the Semester* | 4 |
| *Essential Questions Before, During and After You Read* | 4 |
| *General Guidelines for Writing Papers* | 5 |
| *Style Guidelines* | 5 |
| *Guidelines for Research and Integrative Papers* | 6 |
| *Write with Verbs in Mind--Keywords for Clear Writing* | 6 |
| *Incorporating Outside Sources to Avoid Plagiarism* | 7 |
| Commonly Used Abbreviations from the SBL Handbook of Style | 10 |
| Resources for Seminary Research and Writing | 12 |
| *Thesis Guidelines* | 13 |
| *Thesis Rubrics* | 15 |
| *Sample Thesis Acceptance Page* | 17 |
| *Sample Thesis Body of Text with Footnotes* | 18 |
| *Sample Bibliography in Turabian Style* | 20 |
Time Management During the Semester

- **Start early and divide each task into parts (reading, projects, or papers).** Break into small, manageable parts, and then complete each one. Make the results measurable so you can see your progress.
- **Set specific goals for each unit of time.** When you fill in your schedule, be specific about what you plan to accomplish in each research or writing session.
- **Utilize periods of maximum alertness.** Work during the time of day you feel most alert, refreshed, and relaxed. After 1½ hours to 2 hours of study, take a break to maximize concentration.
- **Utilize odd hours of the day for studying.** Plan and establish the habit of using small bits of time for studying.
- **Do it now.** If you notice yourself procrastinating, plunge into a task. Even a small task will move you down the road to completion.

Essential Questions Before, During and After You Read

**What is the bibliographic information** for the book, chapter, or article?
- If you are doing reading or research for a paper, create a full citation
- Include the title, author, editor, page numbers, publisher, and date

**What is the title?**
- What does it tell you about the topic or subject?
- What do you already know about the subject?
- What do you expect it to say?

**Who wrote it?**
- What are the author’s credentials or affiliations (where do they work, have degrees from)?
- What might be his/her prejudices or perspectives?
- What is the author’s other work related to the subject?

**What information is crucial to you?**
- What are the main points, or theses (scan table of contents and sub-headings)?
- What is the evidence that the author gives to sustain the thesis or theses?

**Once you have finished the article, chapter or book reflect on:**
- How does it relate to what you already know and to your assignment?
- Did you find the argument convincing on its own terms?
- Can you think of information that makes you doubt the main point(s), even if the essay argued it well?
- How does the essay relate to other things you have read, that is, how does it fit in the historical literature?
General Guidelines for Writing Papers

- **Start early.** Have an organized timetable for reading and research (35%), writing (40%) and editing (25%).
- **Read your syllabus, and all related course supplements, before you begin.** If your paper is based on course reading, be sure you understand the nature of your writing assignment before you begin to read. A summary or precis requires primarily a description of the author’s points and arguments, not your opinions.
- **When you analyze or critique an author’s work, your response should deal with how effectively or convincingly they made their case,** not whether you thought it was a worthwhile project.
- **Organize your material** into a detailed outline. You will write more clearly and efficiently if you know exactly what you are going to say.
- **Avoid long (or frequent) quotations.** Use a direct quote only if it states a point more powerfully than you could in a summary or paraphrase.
- **All sources must have a citation (parenthetical or footnote).**
- **Edit your work.** After you have written a rough draft, allow time to re-write for flow, logic, and clarity (global revision). Then edit for spelling, grammar, etc. (local revision). Professors expect a document free of careless mistakes.

Style Guidelines

- **For papers more than 5 pages, include a title page,** with centered title, your name, course name, professor’s name, and the date. Shorter papers should have this information on page 1, single spaced, in the top left-hand corner.
- **Double space your paper** on one side only, with one-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12-pt. *(A thesis requires the left-hand margin to be 1.5 inches, to allow for binding.)* If your professor instructs you to single space, use block paragraphs, with a double space between each paragraph. No indentation is necessary if you are using block paragraphs.
- **Use quotation marks** around exact quotes of one or two sentences. Quotes of 3-5 sentences should be indented and single-spaced in block form, and double spaced before and after the quote. Quotes longer than 5 sentences should generally be avoided. Introduce quotes smoothly and appropriately into your text (See page 8)
- **Source citations.** Any research that appears in your paper must be given proper credit. If you do not clearly show the source of your information, it will be considered plagiarism. This is a very serious offense, and may result in failing a course, or in the case of repeated incidents, expulsion from seminary.
- **Include proper documentation of sources.** Follow the Turabian 8th edition style guide unless you are instructed otherwise. Turabian allows for the use of either footnotes/bibliography or in-text parenthetical/reference list citations. Use the sample pages included in this document as a guide.
- **Include a bibliography (if you are using footnotes) or a reference list (if you are using parenthetical notes)** that properly lists all your sources.
- **Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.** Do not use contractions.
- **Use gender inclusive language** when referring to people in general. Use he or she interchangeably, never he/she. Be courteous and sensitive to your audience.
Guidelines for Research and Integrative Papers

- **For a research paper, decide on a thesis or topic** for your project **before** you begin your research. What specific question will you ask of each source?
- **Focus and limit your research** to make your writing easier. Do not seek out or include information outside of your chosen topic.
- **Compile a working bibliography.** Use books, articles, and/or reliable websites and any other pertinent resources. Be sure to keep excellent bibliographic information for each source, to avoid plagiarism.
- **Begin reading in your subject, assessing, and taking notes as you go.** Ask yourself pertinent questions about the author’s assumptions, premises and beliefs. Be aware of how an author or source fits within the larger body of material on the subject. Take notes, paraphrasing and summarizing important facts and concepts. Note additional sources provided by the author, as these may prove useful in your own research. Keep your notes organized.
- **Prewrite.** Brainstorm, free-write, make lists, draw diagrams; use whatever strategy works for you to begin making connections between the ideas and information you’ve been reading.
- **Select the cluster of information and ideas which most interest you.** This will help you restrict a broad subject.
- **Be issue-oriented.** Stick to your points. Don’t try to simply summarize your research. Exclude extra information which does not directly pertain to your argument. Be focused, clear and specific.
- **Be logical and persuasive.** Think about your paper as an opportunity to convince your reader. Make an argument and keep your voice distinct from that of your sources.
- **Balance the discussion.** If scholars debate the issues involved, you should analyze and critique the main positions. (i.e., summarize a position, and then give the pros and cons)

Write with Verbs in Mind -- Keywords for Clear Writing

Your writing is expected to DO something—to have some sort of action! The following verbs will help you use movement and direction in your writing and will also help you do what is asked in an assignment which uses one of these terms.

- **ANALYZE** Break into separate parts and discuss, examine, or interpret each part.
- **COMPARE** Examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences.
- **CONTRAST** Show differences. Set in opposition.
- **CRITICIZE** Make judgments. Evaluate comparative worth.
- **DEFINE** Give the meaning; usually a meaning specific to the course. Determine the precise limits of the term to be defined.
- **DESCRIBE** Give a detailed account. Make a picture with words. List characteristics, qualities, and parts.
- **DISCUSS** Consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue. Write about any conflict. Compare and contrast.
- **ENUMERATE** List several ideas, aspects, events, qualities, reasons, etc.
**EVALUATE**
Give your opinion or cite the opinion of an expert. Include evidence to support the evaluation.

**ILLUSTRATE**
Give concrete examples. Explain clearly by using comparisons or examples.

**INTERPRET**
Comment upon, give examples, describe relationships. Explain the meaning, then evaluate.

**OUTLINE**
Describe main ideas, characteristics, or events.

**PROVE**
Support with facts (especially facts presented in class or in the course texts).

**STATE**
Explain precisely.

**SUMMARIZE**
Give a brief, condensed account. Include conclusions. Avoid unnecessary details.

**TRACE**
Show the order of events or progress of a subject or event.

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**Incorporating Outside Sources to Avoid Plagiarism**
Outside sources provide proof of or support for your argument and demonstrate your awareness of expert information on your topic. You can use a summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation to bring in an outside source, *weaving* that source into your own writing. You must connect the outside source to what you are saying by introducing the source and explaining its relevance, creating a smooth, integrated, logical document. Do not let the sources “write” the paper, but rather interpret and analyze the various positions you have found in your research. **Incorporating and citing sources correctly is how to avoid PLAGIARISM.**

**Summary**
A summary is a condensed version of a larger section of work, such as a chapter of a book. A summary shortens the original material significantly, but it must include both the context and all of the original author’s key ideas. A summary must be objective, representing the author’s ideas with precision. Your analysis should not be included within the summary, but rather precede or follow it. Summarize the author’s idea, and THEN have a “conversation” with his argument. Your comments should follow the footnote, so that the reader does not confuse what the original author said with what you think about it. Use summary sparingly and be careful to rework the author’s ideas in your own words and syntax. A summary should be introduced in the text and followed with a footnote.

**Paraphrase**
Paraphrase is the most common method used to incorporate an outside source into your own words and syntax. As with a summary, the author’s ideas must be accurately restated. A paraphrase generally *expands* the original statement, perhaps explaining it more fully. As with a summary, you must introduce and integrate the source into your argument smoothly, yet distinctively. Use a footnote at the end of the source’s idea.
Guidelines for Summary and Paraphrase

- Read the original passage at least three times to ensure that you understand the author’s meaning. Be sure to read the passage in context.
- The paraphrase or summary must be written in your own words. Put the original away, allow some time to pass and then write your paraphrase from memory. It should not “sound like” the original but should “mean” the same thing.
- Write a paraphrase of the paraphrase. This will also help you to remove your words from those of the original author.
- When working with more than a few sentences, follow the order or sequence of ideas in the original.
- Capture all the essential meaning. To keep from leaving something out, count the ideas in the original, and then count the ideas in your paraphrased version.
- Do NOT twist, alter, or change the author’s intended meaning.
- Aim to capture the author’s meaning as exactly as possible, but in your own words. Your paraphrase or summary should blend in smoothly with everything else you have written in your paper.
- NEVER make a “mirror image” of the style in the original passage. Do not just fill-in-the-blanks with synonyms. Paraphrasing is not an exercise in word substitution, but an act of translation. This means you need to change the syntax, sentence structure or word order, as well as how it is said.
- Use a footnote, endnote or parenthetical citation following your summary or paraphrase to give proper credit to the source. Even though it is not a direct quotation, the idea belongs to someone else and must be acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

Direct Quotations

You use a direct quotation when you intend to comment on the passage directly – especially a biblical text or piece of literature, when you are appealing directly to authority, or when the language of the original cannot be surpassed; you couldn’t say it more clearly, succinctly or with more style.

Guidelines for Direct Quotations

- Choose a quote that supports your point with force. It should be interesting, well-stated, full of evidence, and a strong reinforcement to your argument.
- A direct quotation should be identical with the original. If you leave out words in the beginning, middle or end of a quotation, indicate this deletion by using ellipses. “. . . like this.” “You should . . . like this.” “A great man once . . .”
- Introduce quotations carefully. Introduce a quotation by citing the author’s name and then using an appropriate verb, such as: states, asserts, explains, or demonstrates.
- If only part of the quotation is relevant to your paper, you may use a portion of a sentence. However, the sentence the quotation fits into should make sense as a complete sentence.
- When quoting material that is quoted (a quote within a quote), use single quotation marks inside the double quotation marks. In the citation, this material
would be indicated by the following: (quoted in Author’s last name, page number).

- Use quotation marks for a quote within your text. Such quotes should be no more than 2 sentences long. If you use a longer quote (3-5 sentences) insert it in block form and single space. Double space before and after the block quote. There are very few occasions when you will use a quote which is longer than 5 sentences.

- Use properly formatted citations for the source of your quote. See Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, for details.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the intentional or accidental use of someone else’s ideas or words without giving that person credit. It is not only blatant or obvious “borrowing,” such as copying a lengthy passage from a book or article. It also includes a variety of subtle forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to:

- Copying another author’s syntax, language, or wording without giving credit
- Failing to document the source of ideas or language another author has used
- Failing to document the original source of ideas or language you first used in another paper
- Having someone else write your paper for you
- Getting too much help on a paper
- Turning in a paper you wrote for another class

It is simple enough to eliminate plagiarism by giving credit where credit is due. Simply note to whom ideas and passages belong and where you encountered them. If information is common knowledge, or is found in several different sources, then you do not have to cite it. If it is not, or you are unsure, cite it.

**A Few Reminders Concerning Turabian Citation Style**

- While the body of the paper is in 12-pt. font, footnotes should be in 10-pt. font, indented five spaces on the first line, single-spaced within, and double spaced between.
- The second time you cite a source in your paper, and for consecutive uses, you may use an abbreviated note.
- *Ibid.* should only be used when a fuller citation appears on the same page, or just above the note. Do not use *ibid* to refer to a note on the prior page.
- When biblical books appear in parenthesis and footnotes, they should be abbreviated. See the summary below for correct abbreviations.
### Commonly Used Abbreviations from the SBL Handbook of Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Bible</th>
<th>HB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Testament</td>
<td>OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Testament</td>
<td>NT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Abbreviations of Modern Versions of Scripture (SBL Handbook of Style)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Standard Version</td>
<td>ASV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Bible</td>
<td>JB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King James Version</td>
<td>KJV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Living Translation</td>
<td>NLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
<td>NASB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New English Bible</td>
<td>NEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New International Version</td>
<td>NIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible</td>
<td>NJB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New King James Version</td>
<td>NKJV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
<td>NRSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised English Bible</td>
<td>REB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
<td>RSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today’s New International Version</td>
<td>TNIV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Abbreviations of Old Testament Books (SBL Handbook of Style)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis</td>
<td>Gen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>Exod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>Lev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>Num</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td>Deut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>Josh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>Judg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Samuel</td>
<td>1-2 Sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Kings</td>
<td>1-2 Kgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Chronicles</td>
<td>1-2 Chr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>Ezra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>Neh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>Esth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td>Ps/Pss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>Prov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>Eccl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
<td>Song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Isaiah  Isa
Jeremiah  Jer
Lamentations  Lam
Ezekiel  Ezek
Daniel  Dan
Hosea  Hos
Joel  Joel
Amos  Amos
Obadiah  Obad
Jonah  Jonah
Micah  Mic
Nahum  Nah
Habakkuk  Hab
Zephaniah  Zeph
Haggai  Hag
Zechariah  Zech
Malachi  Mal

Abbreviations of New Testament Books (SBL Handbook of Style)
Matthew  Matt
Mark  Mark
John  John
Acts  Acts
Romans  Rom
1-2 Corinthians  1-2 Cor
Galatians  Gal
Ephesians  Eph
Philippians  Phil
Colossians  Col
1-2 Thessalonians  1-2 Thess
1-2 Timothy  1-2 Tim
Titus  Titus
Philemon  Phlm
Hebrews  Heb
James  Jas
1-2 Peter  1-2 Pet
1-2-3 John  1-2-3 John
Jude  Jude
Revelation  Rev
Additional Resources for Seminary Research and Writing

**General**
Barber, Cyril J., and Robert M Krauss, Jr. *An Introduction to Theological Research*.

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*.

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*.

Lunsford, Andrea A. and Ruszkiewicz, John J. *Everything’s an Argument*.

Murray, Donald M. *The Craft of Revision*.


Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*.

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

**Style Manuals**
*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition.

**Useful Links for Seminary Studies**
http://www.northpark.edu/Seminary/Academics/Student-Resources
http://www.wts.edu/resources/westminster_center_for_theolog/become_writerhtml.html
http://www.enterthebible.org/
https://www.workingpreacher.org/
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
Master’s Thesis Guidelines (2014)

Role of MATS Director (MD), Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom:
* Assigns Thesis Directors to students
* Works with Thesis Director to assign the committee of readers (2 readers)
* Serves as resource for Thesis Directors

Role of Thesis Director (TD):
* Works with the students throughout the research and writing phase of the thesis on topic, bibliography, abstract/outline, and chapters (part of this might include working with the student while s/he is enrolled in the Research Methods course).
* Makes students aware of all deadlines and procedures for both semesters (see below).
* Invites persons to serve on committee of readers (2), after discussing these with MD (usually during Thesis II).
* Serves as liaison between the student and the committee and the student and the MD.
* Coordinates the thesis defense and scheduling.
* Evaluates the thesis according to Thesis Rubrics and enters a grade for both 3 credit courses on the scale of High Pass, Pass, or Fail.
* Offers written feedback to the student subsequent to the defense.
* Completes paperwork for credit (enters grade in web advisor) for both semesters of writing.

Role of Committee of Readers (CRs):
* Committees have two readers (exceptions must be approved by MD and Academic Dean). They may be NPTS members or other appropriate experts outside the seminary faculty.
* Reads the thesis once the full draft is completed and approved by the TD.
* Serves as a resource for the student (e.g., offers bibliographic suggestions).
* Participates in the thesis defense.

Role of Academic Writing Coordinator (AWC), Kristine Bruckner:
* Meet with students enrolled in Thesis I (by appointment) to provide information on thesis formatting and style.
* Format check of one chapter of thesis during Thesis I. Students should complete this step in order to pass Thesis I
* Format approval of entire thesis during Thesis II.

Role of Student:
* Consult with MD about TD, with a topic sketch prepared.
* Follow all instructions for thesis process and completion (below), honoring all deadlines including format checks.
* Initiates meetings with TD throughout the research and writing.
* Register for Thesis I and II. Pre-requisite: Research Methods, Theo 5102 (earning a grade of B or better).
Masters Thesis: The primary goal of the master’s thesis is for the student to develop research skills. When evaluating the thesis, including the defense, primary attention should be given to how well the student has researched his/her topic (so a detailed bibliography is important), how well the student has compiled/synthesized their sources, and interacted with the material in her/his own voice. Attention is also given to writing, including presentation and clarity. See rubrics for further details. Length is between 60-90 pages, unless otherwise approved.

Prerequisite (may be done in conjunction with semester I of thesis writing) Research Methods Theo 5102.

Stages of Thesis Writing and Deadlines
Thesis Semester I (prefix from field + 7490)
To receive credit, must be completed by the last week of the semester.
1. Approved topic
2. Bibliography (minimum of 20 sources)
3. Thesis abstract & outline of chapters
4. Draft of first chapter
5. Format approval of first chapter & bibliography by AWC.

Thesis Semester II (prefix from field + 7491)
To receive credit, must be completed by the last week of the semester.
1. Complete Thesis I.
2. Submit each chapter as completed, to TD, allowing time for feedback and revision.
3. Revise chapters and resubmit for final approval by TD before full submission
4. Submission of full, revised and approved (by TD) thesis 8 weeks before the end of the semester. Thesis is then distributed to the committee and to the AWC by the TD.
5. Format Approval. The thesis will be returned to the student by the AWC, with any required revisions, two weeks after its formal submission, 6 weeks prior to the end of the semester. Revisions must be completed before the defense. Any additional revisions and a final approval will be required after the defense, before a final grade is submitted.
6. Defense. A one hour defense will be scheduled by the TD, during which time the committee can ask questions within the parameters of the thesis. Defense needs to be scheduled before the last 4 weeks of the semester.

*These guidelines and rubrics apply to theses written by students in any of the degree programs.
Master’s Thesis Assessment Rubrics

Assessment
Pass with Distinction: Student demonstrates excellent work in all areas.

Pass: Student demonstrates acceptable work in the majority of areas, and all areas are passable or better.

Fail: Student fails to demonstrate acceptable or better work in more than one major area below.

Rubrics Semester I
Need/Problem
1. Identifies a question/problem that is worthy of further investigation.
2. Demonstrates the significance of this question.
3. Question/problem can be addressed within space constraints of an MA thesis

Abstract and Outline
1. A direct answer to the question/problem
2. Clear (i.e. jargon-free, transparent language) and concise
3. Identifies the outline that will advance the thesis
4. Identifies method and approach of argument and analyzing sources

Bibliography
1. Identifies the sources that will form the basis of the study (and includes those in original languages)
2. Sources include diversity of gender, culture and perspective

State of the Question (Literature Review, Chapter One)
1. Review is focused (shaped by need, thesis, and approach as outlined above)
2. Insightful (e.g. identifies trends, schools, or other relevant relationships among sources, etc.)
3. Complete (to what extent is relevant literature discussed, including in languages other than English?)

Formatting
1. Format follows institutional formatting policies
2. Revisions made as required following format check

Rubrics Semester II
Thesis Writing
1. Clarity of writing
2. Strong and clear voice in dialogue with sources
3. Observes deadlines as enumerated in Thesis Guidelines
Research
1. Demonstrates research skills appropriate to topic
2. Complete (to what extent is relevant literature discussed, including non-English sources?)
3. Effective use of primary sources (in original languages? Careful analysis and contextualization?)
4. Effective use of secondary literature (critical interaction?)

Argument
1. Development of argument
2. Develops approved outline
3. Organization is clear

Defense
1. Clear oral articulation of thesis and argument
2. Demonstrates knowledge of topic
3. Answers questions fully

Formatting
1. Chapters, notes and bibliography follow Turabian 8th edition
2. Content is thoroughly edited
Accepted by the faculty of North Park Theological Seminary
Chicago, Illinois
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Theological Studies

________________________________________
Insert name here, Thesis Director

________________________________________
Insert name here, Thesis Reader

________________________________________
Insert name here, Thesis Reader
Chapter Two

How is the Theme of Wilderness Used in the Old Testament?

A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Deuteronomy 26:5-9 (NRSV)

Before we can explore the importance of the wilderness theme in the Old Testament, we must first determine the meaning of the word “wilderness” itself and to do that we must begin with the Hebrew. The Hebrew word that is translated as “wilderness” is מִדְבָּר (midbar). It is a masculine singular absolute noun. The etymology of this word is uncertain, but many scholars have suggested that there is a connection between the Hebrew words midbar and dober which means, “drift” or “pasture land.” Midbar is usually translated into English as “wilderness,” but the most frequently used synonym of midbar is מִדְבָּר (midbar). It is a masculine singular absolute noun. The etymology of this word is uncertain, but many scholars have suggested that there is a connection between the Hebrew words midbar and dober which means, “drift” or “pasture land.”

Footnotes: As you proceed, footnotes should be numbered continuously through the document. The notes below are 10-point font, same style as the text, single-spaced within, and double-spaced between. The numbers may be super-script or full size, but should be consistent throughout the document.


3Midbar can also mean “instrument of speech” or “mouth,” but this meaning occurs far less often and is outside of the scope of this paper. William L. Holladay, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 182.
“wasteland.” This synonym occurs fifty-nine times in the Old Testament. When ‘araba is used in connection with midbar, it emphasizes the negative dimensions of the wilderness and/or focuses on the geographic aspects of the place. A literal definition of midbar is simply “a place not inhabited by human beings, but where people sometimes go.” However, the meaning of the word midbar is much more broad. Midbar can be a spatial term used to indicate the geography, topography, or boundaries of a place. Geographically speaking, midbar refers to areas that are not heavily populated or inhabited, particularly the desert located in the Sinai Peninsula and the areas surrounding it. These regions contain little water so they cannot be settled in or farmed. Only nomadic tribes of people living in the open or in tents are found here.

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5 Talmon, “midbar,” 8:92-93.


7 Talmon, “midbar,” 8:97-100


9 Talmon, “midbar,” 8:91.

10 Talmon, “midbar,” 8:102


