

Theological Research Methods II:

Introduction to Module & Research Proposal

Dr Annang Asumang

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MASM 826 Theological Research Methods I & II

This course, made up of two parts, I and II, is aimed at providing students with theoretical and practical know how and confidence to perform worthwhile theological research in service of the Kingdom. Its interim goal is to prepare students to produce their MA thesis which is a requirement for obtaining the degree. But in the long term it will also serve as providing the foundations for future postgraduate theological research and ultimately foster a culture of consistent Christian scholarly theologians and pastoral practitioners.

The first part (Theological Research Methods I) focuses on broad foundations of theological research, acquisition and honing of research ideas, construction of topic and detailing concise research concepts. The second part (Theological Research Methods II) focuses more on the research journey, choices of methods and the construction and defense of the research proposal.

Topics covered include conceptual issues in research, research ethics, literature review, research design, techniques for data collection, tools for data coding and analysis, various qualitative methods of data collection, analysis and publication. Basic statistical methods will also be covered even though not exhaustively. Students will be introduced to the use of software in data analysis (NVIVO for qualitative research).

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Structure of the Module: Part II (Research Proposal)

1. Introduction to Research Proposal Writing
2. Efficient Literature Search
3. Reviewing the Literature
4. Designing the Research
5. Research Ethics and Challenges**
6. Practical session on Completing RP
7. Preparing for Research Proposal Defense
8. Scholarly Writing
9. Referencing, Bibliography and Everything Else
10. Summary & Research Proposal Clinic

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Learning Outcomes for this session

1. Introduction to the Course
2. The Research Proposal Form
3. Examples of Completed Research Proposal Forms

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Learning Outcome for the Course

To complete and defend a Research Proposal to the Faculty of Daniel Institute

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DI MASM Research Project Process

Step of Process	Instruction	Timeline
Research Idea, Topic & Concept Submission	Assessments for Part I	15 th March
Research Proposal Submission	Research Proposal Template must be used	31st July 2024
Research Proposal Defense	Assessments for Part II Oral Defense	Date to be announced
Allocation of Supervisor	Allocated according to faculty expertise	Date to be announced
Research Conduct & Thesis Writing	Done under supervisor	Date to be announced
Thesis Submission & Marking	Detailed instruction on thesis available	Date to be announced
MA Thesis Defense	Before faculty & external examiner panel	Date to be announced

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Assessments for Part II

- **Formative Assessment: 40% of total marks**
 - Submit Research Proposal using the provided template (download from OCW on the Research Methods site)
 - Deadline for submission: **31st July 2024**
- **Summative Assessment: 60% of total marks**
 - Oral Defense of **Research Proposal**

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DI MASM Research Project Process

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MASM826

Credit Hours
3

Level
Graduate

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Lecture Notes

# 1	Topic: STUDENTS' HANDOUT ON INTRODUCTION TO COURSE	Document: INTRODUCTION TO SEMINARS ON RESEARCH METHODS	  
# 2	Topic: STUDENTS' HANDOUT FOR LECTURE ON RESEARCH IN BIBLICAL STUDIES	Document: STUDENTS' HANDOUT FOR RESEARCH IN BIBLICAL STUDIES	  
# 3	Topic: HANDOUT FOR RESEARCH METHODS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY	Document: STUDENTS' HANDOUT ON RESEARCH METHODS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY	  
# 4	Topic: DANIEL INSTITUTE RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE	Document: DANIEL INSTITUTE RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE	  

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Rough Guide on Length of sections

- Aim for 13-15 pages length for the Research Proposal
- Arial font 12; 1.15 line spacing
- Background & Review of Scholarship: **4-5 pages**
- Research Problem and Questions: **0.5-1 page**
- Research Objectives and Contributions: **1-1.5 pages**
- Research Design and Methodology: **4-5 pages**
- Hypothesis: **One sentence**
- Structure & Timeframe: **0.5 pages**

1.0 Title

[Write your proposed thesis or dissertation title here.]

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. Title is Precisely formulated	
2. The title demarcates or delimits a sufficiently narrowly scoped and specifically stated problem for study.	

2.0 Background & Review of Scholarship

[Describe the background to your study problem here.]

The background section should indicate what research has already been done and what remains to be done, thus creating a natural orientation to your research problem.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have done sufficient preliminary investigation to identify a genuine research question, problem, or objective	
2. I have demonstrated familiarity with existing research in the field	
3. I have presented a plausible rationale for the study	

3.0 Research Problem and Questions

[State your research problem and main questions here]

State the main problem your research will seek to resolve as clearly and directly as possible. If appropriate, list the subordinate questions that must be answered in order to solve the main problem.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have done sufficient preliminary investigation to identify a genuine research question, problem, or objective	
2. I have demonstrated familiarity with existing research in the field	
3. I have presented a plausible rationale for the study	

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4.0 Research Objectives and Contributions

[State the objectives of your research here]

The objective is to solve the main problem. If you succeed in solving your main problem, state what you will have done.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have clearly stated the motivating factor[s] behind the proposed research.	
2. I have explained the reasons for the research and what the student hopes to achieve must be clearly stated	
3. I have provided some of the theoretical and / or practical contributions of the study to Christians, Church and Society	

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Purposes vs Objectives

Purposes

- Reason for the research
- Long term
- Broad and abstract
- Single or two

Objectives

- Goals to achieve through the research
- Short term
- Concrete and measurable
- Several

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Example of Purpose

- The purpose of this study is to determine what a socio-rhetorical analysis of the Epistle of Jude might reveal regarding the best way in which false teaching in Ghanaian Churches may be addressed.
- There are reasons to suggest that the contextual background of the contemporary Ghanaian Christian Church bears some similarities to the background of Jude's recipients. For example.....
- This is especially so in the sense of continued emergence of heterodox teachings some of them motivated by financial and sensual interests.
- Accordingly an analysis of how and why Jude employed his letter to address this situation may have relevance and application in the context of Ghana

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5.0 Research Design and Methodology

[Describe your research design and methodology here]

This should cover the following five sub-sections except where they are not needed:

- 5.1 Choice of Design and Justification
- 5.2 The Methodological Steps
- 5.3 Research Participants
- 5.4 Research Tools
- 5.5 Planned Research Analysis

Be as explicit as possible about how you will solve the research problem. (You may or may not find it necessary to divide 'design' and 'methodology' into two sections.)

5.1 Choice of Design and Justification

[My Self-Assessment of the Methodological Choice & Justification](#)

	Yes /No/NA
1. Clear Statement of the discipline of the study and explanation of why	
2. I have given explanation of the research design, namely, literary and or practical, and if practical whether qualitative, quantitative or a mixed method design	
3. **I have provided a theoretical framework of hermeneutics of the study – positivism, realism, interpretivism or pragmatism	
4. I have made a clear statement of the method (e.g. Exegetical, Socio-historical, Literary, Theological, Biblical Theology, Osborne's, Systematic, Dogmatic, Osmer, Browning, Appreciative Inquiry, Case Study, and so on) to solve the main research question	
5. I have provided explanations of advantages of the chosen method and merits of any modifications	

5.2 Methodological Steps

My Self-Assessment of Methodological Steps

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have delineated the methodological steps with clarity	
2. The steps align with the subsidiary questions	

5.3 Research Participants

My Self-Assessment of Research Participants

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have clearly stated the Criteria for selection of participants	
2. I have described and justified the sampling method and procedure (random, cluster, or purposive sampling)	

5.4 Research Tools

My Self-Assessment of the Research Tools

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have clearly indicated which research tools to be utilized for data collection, (e.g. literature study, interviews, surveys, focus groups, participant observations, questionnaires, and so on)	
2. Where study is Exegetical, I have identified specific exegetical tools – lexicons and other language tools, translations, dictionaries, identified commentaries, encyclopaedias, and online resources	
3. Where study is Systematic, identification of specific scholarly dialogic partners, the primary resources from them and clear delineation of the process of collation of concepts from the sources	
4. I have provided sample interview/survey questions as required	
5. I have indicated which tools for collecting data such as Personal Observations for specific features of phenomenon, Videos, Survey Monkey or Linkert Scale.	

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5.5 Planned Research Analysis

My Self-Assessment of Planned Research Analysis

	Yes /No/NA
1. If statistical quantitative, I have indicated how statistical analysis will be conducted	
2. If data recording (audio or video) is being employed I have provided explanations of transcription process, triangulation, coding and classification	

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6.0 Hypothesis

[Write out your hypothesis here]

State your best guess as to what the outcome of the study will reveal concerning the research problem.

My Self-assessment of Hypothesis

In my view, my hypothesis is reasonable and coherent

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7.0 Structure and Timeframe

[Outline your thesis structure and timeframes here by completing the table.]

<i>Chapter Title</i>	<i>Chapter Description</i>	<i>Target Date</i>
1.	▪	
2.	▪	
3.	▪	
4.	▪	
5.	▪	

My Self-Assessment of Structure and Timeframe

	Yes /No/NA
1. The structure is complete and has logical progression	
2. The timeframe is realistic	

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8.0 Bibliography

[Insert a preliminary bibliography of at least **10** sources.]

My Self-Assessment of Bibliography

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have Correctly formulated the bibliography according to Turabian requirements	
2. The bibliography covers sufficient (at least 10) seminal, relevant, recent (within last 10yrs) titles	

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9.0 Ethical Clearance

Indicate the process of acquiring consent and where required signing of ethical approval here.

My Self-Assessment of Ethical Clearance

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have provided clarification of Ethical issues of the study	
2. I have explained how consent will be obtained from participants	
3. Where needed, I have submitted signed completed Ethical Clearance certificate	

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Background & Review of Scholarship

- Every postgraduate research is aimed at making contribution to scholarship
- Every postgraduate research is focused on solving a problem which is of interest to scholars or shedding light on that problem
- Background & Review of scholarship section of the RP is devoted to demarcating the scholarly terrain of the problem and therefore how the research is related to that terrain
- If the problem has not been of interest to scholars, the researcher should use the section to demonstrate that based on other scholarly interests this problem must also be of interest to them.

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Why must this topic be of interest to scholars?

A Practical Theological Strategy to improve the Mid-Week Service attendance at the ICGC Wisdom Temple Branch

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Interest of Scholars in Mid-Week Services

1. Scholars are interested in activities, methods and factors which contribute to spiritual formation and growth among Christians
2. Scholars are interested in means and methods by which the Church effectively organizes evangelistic programs
3. Scholars are interested in rigorous use of methods for investigating problems to do with the Church, in relation to both its spiritual and numerical growth through group meetings and evangelism
4. As the mid-week service is one means of achieving these, scholars must also be interested in investigating its efficacy and improving effectiveness

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If the problem has not been of interest to scholars, the researcher should use the Background and Review of Scholarship section to demonstrate that based on other scholarly interests this problem must also be of interest to them

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Background & Review of Scholarship section of the RP is devoted to demarcating the scholarly terrain of the problem and therefore how the research is related to that terrain

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2.0 Background & Review of Scholarship

[Describe the background to your study problem here.]

The background section should indicate what research has already been done and what remains to be done, thus creating a natural orientation to your research problem.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have done sufficient preliminary investigation to identify a genuine research question, problem, or objective	
2. I have demonstrated familiarity with existing research in the field	
3. I have presented a plausible rationale for the study	

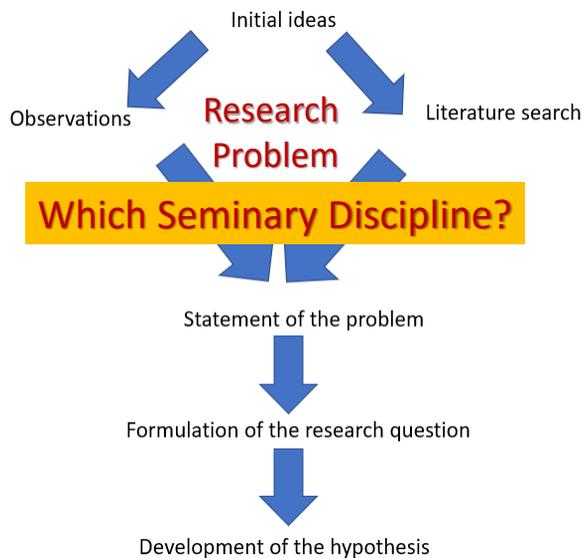
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The Problem Statement

A concise single sentence (at most short paragraph) statement, question or objective which articulates the problem within its scope that the research seeks to answer

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Defining the Research Problem



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Characteristics of a Good Research Problem

1. Interesting to the Researcher.
2. The scope of the problem is manageable (not too broad) by the researcher (focus on narrowing down to specific and manageable).
3. The researcher has the knowledge ,time and resources needed to investigate the problem.
4. The problem can be researched through collection and analysis of data
5. Investigating the problem has theoretical or practical significance.
6. It is ethical to investigate the problem.

Research Problem Statement



Research Questions

Constructing Research Questions

- Turn Problem Statement into the Main Question if not already
- Decide the Steps of the Methodology you are going to use
- Break the Main Question down into sub-questions, each sub-question corresponding to each step of the methodology
- Often each chapter of thesis is governed by a sub-question, but occasionally, two sub-questions may be in same chapter.
- If a sub-question requires more than two chapters to answer then it must be broken down into two sub-questions.
- Questions may need adjusting to reduce scope and refocus on outcome as the study proceeds

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NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE: THE IMPLICATIONS OF GALATIANS 3:26-29 FOR TODAY'S CHURCH

By
TOMMY GROBLER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
degree of

Bachelor of Theology (Honours)

at the South African Theological Seminary

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2.1. Research Methodology

Kevin Smith's & Noel Woodbridge's 2007 research model for **Biblical Studies** (study guide RES4121 Theological Research Methodology, page 41) will be utilized for this thesis. The Design and Methodology of this thesis consists of 5 steps, namely:

- Step 1 - The Introduction to the Thesis (the what, the why and the how).
- Step 2 - The Contextual Task

Step 2 will consider the book context consisting of the general background, historical context, literary context and theological themes. This involves reviewing a variety of commentaries dealing with these contexts.

- Step 3 - Exegetical Analysis
- Step 4 - Theological and practical significance of these passages

This step involves exploring the significance of Galatians 3:26-29 exegetical results at two levels, that is: (a) Theology (philosophical significance), expounding what this passage teaches us, about God, creation, as well as the relationship between God and creation (e.g. universal truths, harmonise etc), and (b) application (practical significance), identifying how this passage could apply to our situation today.

- Step 5 - Conclusion of the thesis

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1.3. Research Problem and Key Questions

The problem which this research attempts to address is: What are the implications of the phrase "neither male nor female" (ἄρρην, ἀρσὴν καὶ ἰθῆλιν) with regards to Galatians 3:26-29 for today's church?

The following secondary questions will assist in answering the research problem.

- 1.3.1. What is the general scholarly agreement, regarding the author, date, destination and occasion in the Epistle to the Galatians?
- 1.3.2. What are the major issues or concerns being addressed by the author, in the Epistle to the Galatians?
- 1.3.3. What did Galatians 3:26-29 mean in to the original readers, that "in Christ" there is neither "male nor female"?
- 1.3.4. What are the implications and significance of no distinction ("neither male nor female") in Galatians 3:26-29 for today's church?

A New Proposal for A Biblically Grounded Christian Social Welfare Provision
Among the Ghana Baptist Convention Member Churches in Ashanti Region, Ghana

By
Joseph Adasi-Bekoe

A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology
At The
South African Theological Seminary

January, 2018

17/06/2024

Supervisor: Dr Annang Asumang

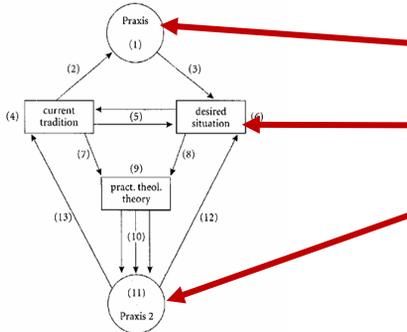
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1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Following Leedy (1993: 59-77), the research problem may thus be stated as "How can the GBC member churches develop a biblically grounded social safety net that effectively protects the poor and vulnerable members in fulfilment of the church's purpose?"

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Figure 1. The Zerfass Practical Theology Model



Source: The Practical Theology Model (Zerfass 1974: 166)

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1.4. KEY QUESTIONS

The study addresses one main and three subsidiary questions.

1.4.1 Main Question

1) How can the GBC member churches develop a biblically grounded social safety net that effectively protects the poor and vulnerable members in fulfilment of the church's purpose?

1.4.2 Subsidiary Questions

1) How effective is social protection in the current welfare scheme offering the poor members of the church?

2) What is the theological and biblical basis for Christian social welfare provision?

3) How is social welfare presently understood and practiced among the GBC member churches in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, and how can it be improved?

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3.0 Research Problem and Questions

[State your research problem and main questions here]

State the main problem your research will seek to resolve as clearly and directly as possible. If appropriate, list the subordinate questions that must be answered in order to solve the main problem.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have done sufficient preliminary investigation to identify a genuine research question, problem, or objective	
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Be as explicit as possible about how you will solve the research problem. (You may or may not find it necessary to divide 'design' and 'methodology' into two sections.)

Questions?