Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary
TS 601/602 MTS Colloquium: Fall 2025

Updated August 20 2025

Professor: Julie Ann Duncan – Pfeiffer 332
Time: Wednesday 1:30-3:30 pm Online – synchronous meetings

Course Description

The primary purpose of the course is to aid MTS students in developing and writing the thesis. The Colloquium will also provide a space where fellow MTS students can find support and feedback, and form their own kind of academic community. Second year students will be expected to present and defend their thesis proposals within the course of the colloquium. The course will also offer tutorials with respect to various aspects of the thesis research and writing process, as well as guidance on the process of applying to PhD programs (finding a good doctoral program for one's area of interest, developing a strong application, etc.). Students with other vocational aspirations will also support one another in discerning their preparations.

Course Goals

Students in this course will:

- Receive preparation for researching and writing the MTS thesis
- Obtain guidance in building a strong course schedule for their proposed area of study
- Obtain direction on the process of applying to doctoral programs.
- Begin to build an academic community with their fellow MTS students
- Engage in peer feedback

Course Requirements

- In order to obtain 2nd-year credit (3credits) students must present their thesis proposal within this term. **Note: those presenting must arrange to have their thesis advisor present for that hour (please see to this as soon as we have set provisional dates). Presentations should include a presentation portion (25-30 minutes), and a discussion portion of 30-35 minutes.
- The thesis proposal will be posted **four** days in advance of class session (Saturday by 3 pm).
- Students are expected to read the proposal and be ready to offer constructive feedback.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to:

-- Navigate relevant databases, formulate search terms, and do research in a digital environment

-- Develop a short bibliography of essential reading that moves research interests forward

-- Assemble a portfolio for application to a doctoral program

-- Second-year students will be able to construct and defend a thesis proposal within their discipline.

Additionally students will gain experience in:

– The steps entailed in developing a thesis statement or argument

– Conversing across disciplines

– Peer review of fellow student proposals

Resource Texts (NOT REQUIRED):

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colombo, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup and William Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. **5th ed.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024. $15.75 at Thriftbooks.com.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. **9**th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. $15.99 on Amazon.com.

Yaghjian, Lucretia. *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological and Biblical Writers*. 2nd ed. London: T&T Clark, 2015.

Course Schedule

This schedule is **provisional** until we have confirmed dates with outside presenters, and until 2nd year students have chosen their dates and confirmed with their advisors. Please do not plan conflicts against our weekly meeting time until we have established the schedule of presentations.

Sept 3

Introductions
Orientation to MTS colloquium
Projection of presentation schedule
Preparation for library orientation

Visit from Dr. Kate Ott: Director of PhD Program (2:45)

Sept 10 Orientation to Library Resources – Dr. Lucy Chung, Director of Styberg Library and Emily Stensloff, Assistant Director

Students: We have been intentional about planning this session for your needs. We also invite you to submit requests for what would be helpful to you and your work. It is okay if your question is specific and particular to your research! It may have more relevance for others than you realize.

Sept 17 Writing a Thesis (Ms. Krista McNeil and J. Duncan)
Including:
More Tips on Research Methods
Guidance on Process
Strategies for Working through Blocks
Scholarly Writing as a Spiritual Practice

Sept 24 Writing a Thesis Proposal
Review handout and examples on course site

Oct 1 Research Day – Class does not meet

Short bibliography assignment for First Year students: Identify three to four *key* resources that will move you forward with your thesis idea *or* current interest (books, monographs, articles, essays, etc.). [1] Describe briefly (a paragraph for each) why they are important for you. Remember: Your research librarians are here to help, as are your thesis advisors.

- See the Canvas course site for examples from previous years
- Remember to follow proper citation format (see Chicago Style Citation Quick Guide)

Please turn in this assignment by Friday, October 3 – 6 pm (early submissions welcome!)

Oct 8 Class discussion of short bibliography assignments

Oct 15 For first year students (and anyone else who is interested)

Planning your course program
Planning your thesis credits
The scope of a thesis
Preparing for the midpoint evaluation

Oct 22 Forging a Strong PhD Application

Including such components as:

Making Contact
Writing a Research Statement
Writing a Personal Statement
Selecting a Writing Sample
Obtaining Strong Letters of Reference

[1] If you have not yet settled on a thesis topic (which is fine) this is your chance to explore something in your discipline that intrigues you. Enjoy!

Oct 29 Question and Answer Session with Garrett faculty panel -- Dr. Kate Ott and Dr. Brooke Lester

Including:

- *Process for submitting papers to regional professional conferences*
- *How to obtain book reviews*

And any questions you may wish to ask

Nov 5 Student Presentation (1 slot)

Nov 12 Student Presentations (2 slots)

Nov 19 Student Presentation (1 slot)

Nov 26 **Thanksgiving Recess**

Dec 3 Student Presentations (2 slots)

Dec. 10 Student Presentations (2 slots)

Important Dates to Keep in Mind for Fall 2025

November 1	Graduating Seniors may register for January/Spring term
November 15	All other students may register for Spring term
December 10	**Last day to apply for Spring graduation!**
January 16	Spring Independent Study requests due to Registrar

Important dates to keep in mind for Spring 2026 if you wish to participate in May 2026 graduation ceremony

February 25: Senior Graduation Meeting (exit interviews and survey)

March 23: Due date for MTS thesis *to advisor* (your penultimate draft) (*if* you wish to participate in graduation ceremony).

April 24 Due date for final approved MTS thesis to advisor, ProQuest & approval forms to Registrar (*if* you wish to participate in graduation ceremony).

NOTE: If you submit your approved thesis by May 31st, you may still graduate in the Spring of 2026!

Writing Resources

Chicago Style Citation Quick Guide

This is a handy quick reference guide for how to cite sources (from: *Chicago Manual of Style*, 18th edition). This is not a bibliography manager; it will not formulate your citation for you. Rather, you can find examples of various types of citations here.

Academic Support and Writing Services

On this site you will find several resources for academic support, writing consultation, feedback on paper drafts, proofreading, research consultation, style and citation! It is brimming with helpful information.

- For help with papers and assignments, refer to Garrett's **Formatting, Style, and Citation Guide**, which covers the basics of academic writing in one place: guidelines for formatting papers; writing style tips; examples of citations for a variety of sources, and abbreviations for books of the Bible.

-For help formatting your MTS thesis correctly see **Guidelines and Template for MTS Thesis**.

Both of these documents are posted at the top of our Canvas course site under Writing Resources, and can also be found in the "Basics of Research Writing, Editing, and Formatting" section of the *Academic Support and Writing Services* site.

Note: For additional academic /writing coaching or feedback on paper drafts, contact henry.carrigan@garrett.edu; for proofreading services, contact student.proofreaders@garrett.edu

Institutional Academic Policies

This course follows all school academic policies and procedures, which can be accessed in their entirety on the Registrar section of MyGETS at this link:

https://mygets.garrett.edu/ICS/Registrar_and_Advising/Common_Syllabus_Policies.jnz.