

SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPERS
AND THESIS PROJECTS

SUBMITTED TO THE STUDENTS OF STS
IN PREPARATION FOR
RESEARCH AND WRITING PROJECTS

BY
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The following guidelines have been prepared for students pursuing formal theological education. These guidelines provide formatting standardization for all research papers and thesis projects at Shepherds Theological Seminary (STS). The guidelines assist in writing with excellence, forming adequate thesis statements, articulating clear and coherent arguments, and communicating with proper literary style. They are aimed at developing research and writing skills, so that students may present scholarly, professional, and orderly accounts of their academic studies.

On July 1, 2011, Shepherds Theological Seminary adopted *The SBL Handbook of Style* as the standard formatting guidelines for all formal research papers and theses. Most of these standards apply to both semester papers and theses. However, some formatting features are unique to the thesis and are discussed separately. In 2014, SBL published a second edition of their handbook, hereafter referred to as *SBLHS2*, which is now the current STS standard. The present 2024–2025 STS Guidelines supersede any prior STS guides or other academic formatting standards. The STS Guidelines are for formal research papers and do not apply to internship or apprenticeship projects, informal book reviews, or other general class assignments.

The standardized abbreviations and formatting for SBL are found in *SBLHS2*, a printed copy of which the Jackson Library maintains for circulation. The eBook version of *SBLHS2* can be downloaded from the Jackson Library website, as well as the condensed version, “Student Supplement for the SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition.” Questions and points of clarification regarding formatting should be directed to the STS Librarian. For questions on style beyond what is found in these STS Guidelines or *SBLHS2*, students should make use of the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

FACULTY CHANGES TO GUIDELINES

Any STS faculty member may require different formatting standards or may adjust a portion of these guidelines within their respective classes. For example, some faculty may elect to include a table of contents page while these guidelines do not require a contents page in a regular semester paper. The professor may ask for both left and right justification whereas left justification is all that is currently mandated. The professor may require issue numbers for journals whereas only the volume number is presently required. In these and other such cases, always follow the stipulations of your professor. There are also a few cases identified below in which STS departs from *SBLHS2*. Students who are preparing manuscripts for publication or submitting articles to journals should consult the respective publisher’s style standards. Students should be aware that some professors are more concerned about English grammar rules than others (e.g., the use of the split infinitive or adverbs splitting verbal phrases). While there may be some lingering debates among English grammarians, the best policy is to follow whatever rules the professor prefers.

Key Formatting Guide

Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

QUICK TOPICAL GUIDE TO GENERAL FORMATTING

Abbreviations

Consult chapter eight of the *SBLH2* for standard abbreviations of significant academic theological works. Both bibliographies and footnotes can utilize abbreviations for series names, journal titles, primary sources, and many standard reference works. If an abbreviation is not found in *SBLH2*, or the SBL Online resources, students may either write out the full title or create an abbreviation page as part of the front matter (especially for theses). Abbreviated journal titles are always italicized, while commentary series titles are not.

Bibliography

The bibliography consists of all relevant resources consulted by the student. Relevancy means that these materials contributed to the student's understanding of the subject matter and other immediately related issues. The bibliography includes all the works so consulted, even if not cited in the paper or referenced in a footnote. The bibliography should not be divided into sections, such as "Books," "Periodicals," "Lexical Aids," "Commentaries," etc. When citing the exact same author for multiple entries, use **6 en dashes** plus a period, i.e., ———. Co-authored works appear after single authored works and begin with the full entry formatting.

Documentation

All STS research papers should be adequately documented using footnotes. Documentation should not be limited only to instances of direct quotations. A summary statement of an author's position, even when reworded by a student, should be introduced properly and documented with a citation and bibliography entry. Students are responsible for following community and public standards against plagiarism. Avoiding plagiarism includes giving adequate acknowledgement even when paraphrasing or borrowing the general thoughts of others. See Booth, *Craft of Research*, 201–4, for additional definitions of plagiarism. Italics may be added to a direct quote. In such cases, the footnote should state "emphasis added" after the page number. If there are italics in the original, the footnote should state "emphasis original."

Font and Size

All semester research papers and theses must use 12-point, Times New Roman font. Bold lettering is only used in headings. Use italics instead of quotes when specifying a technical term, a key phrase, or words from foreign languages (e.g., German, Latin). Use Greek or Hebrew text instead of English transliterations. Although several fonts are available with Bible software like Logos, the SBL Greek and Hebrew fonts are preferable because they are in Unicode format and are available for free on SBL's website.

Footnotes

Students should generally use their word processor's footnoting defaults. Unless stated otherwise by the professor, footnotes should be in 10-point, Times New Roman font. Footnotes must always begin on the same page as the footnote marker within the text. Students may need to add a blank line (using a hard return) at the bottom of a page in order to bring a dislocated footnote back to its proper page. It is acceptable to have footnoted material run over from a previous page; this is indicated on the second page with a longer footnote divider. Each footnote should be indented by a ½ inch and be single spaced, with a single blank line of space between footnotes.

Headings and Subheadings

A heading should not be used without a parallel heading of the same level to complement it (just like when outlining). As much as possible, make the headings grammatically parallel. For most semester papers (about 12–15 pages), the only headings that are needed will be primary headings such as: INTRODUCTION, HISTORICAL ANALYSIS, LEXICAL ANALYSIS, CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS, and CONCLUSION. Avoid long heading titles. The following illustrates the various levels of headings, particularly as used in a thesis project.

Primary: Centered, All Caps	CHAPTER 1
1 st Level: Centered, Bold, Headline Caps	Statement of Method
2 nd Level: Centered, Headline Caps	Historical Survey
3 rd Level: Left Margin, Bold, Italics, Headline	<i>The Ancient Era</i>
4 th Level: Left Margin, Headline	Papias

Margins and Justification

Use 1-inch margins all around the page (top, bottom, left, right) for semester papers. The thesis project is different, changing the left margin to 1 ½ inches. All papers are left justified, including block quotes. Indentations are ½ inch to the right, both for new paragraphs in the body of the paper, the first line of footnotes, and the second line of bibliographic entries. Block quotes are also indented ½ inch from the left margin. Never leave a heading orphaned at the bottom of a page or without at least one sentence of text below each heading to introduce the next material.

Online Resources and Documentation

Students should keep backup files or physical printouts for all online materials cited. Research papers and theses should make minimal use of online materials such as newsgroups, blogs, or publications that are not peer-reviewed. Wiki and/or non-academic sites should not be used. Materials gleaned from the Internet should follow the online style formatting examples below.

In contrast to other online materials, when citing the full-text PDF versions of journal articles found in online databases, cite these as if they were the print version. Semester papers may cite from a Kindle version by using the Kindle chapters or other section markers. However, for a thesis students *must* locate and use the printed version. As a general rule, if physical copies are readily available in the library, then use them instead of a digital version.

Pagination

Page numbers are not shown on the title page. If the professor requires a table of contents for a semester paper, pagination is not required for the contents page itself (but see below for different thesis rules). Begin pagination with the body of the paper, starting at page 1. Numbers are located at the bottom center of the page. Continue pagination consecutively through the bibliography. An appendix or additional material is also numbered consecutive after the paper's body, and before the numbering for the bibliography.

To start pagination on the second page of a new Word file, add a section break at the top of page 2 (the first page of the body) using the Layout tab, then Breaks, and then the Next Page option. Double click the page number to open the footer. At the top, the tab for Design is opened. Unclick the Link to Previous button. For other page numbering needs, open the footer again, right click on the number, and select page number options.

Secondary Sources

Do not quote from one source citing another source if that original source is available. This applies to anything cited in an encyclopedia or dictionary. Thesis writers should be willing to visit several libraries and use the interlibrary loan services to avoid such double citing. Students are not required to cite original works if they are in another language (e.g., Gadamer's *Truth and Method* in German). Use the best scholarly translations whenever possible (e.g., Loeb, Battles).

Selection of Resources

Students should use a variety of resources including general reference materials (dictionaries, encyclopedias), primary sources, secondary works (e.g., systematic theologies), specialized works (monographs), *Festschriften* or general collections of essays, scholarly or peer-reviewed journal articles, and theses or dissertations. Internet resources must be of academic quality. Students should exercise discernment and evaluate their resources for their respective research value. Be sure to consult the ATLA database for book reviews of any work that forms a major part of a research paper's discussion.

Software and Hardware Requirements

A computer with a professional word processor is mandatory for preparing research papers or theses. Microsoft Word is the approved standard for both PC and Mac environments. Students should familiarize themselves with the various features, shortcuts, and formatting tools in those programs. Incorrect formatting due to the student's inexperience with the software is grounds for a lower grade. Students are responsible for any malfunctioning equipment and empty ink cartridges.

Spacing

The body of the text is double-spaced. Block quotations, footnotes, abstracts for theses, and bibliographies are all single-spaced. Footnote and bibliographic entries are separated from each other by one blank line. There should be two blank lines when transitioning from one section heading to another. There is only one blank line between a new heading and the subsequent text. Semester papers may be emailed or printed out. If uploading to Canvas, save the file as a PDF. Printed papers and theses should be printed single-sided.

Style

Research papers are written in a formal style. Unless stated otherwise by the professor, do not use the editorial “we,” the first person (“I, my, me, us, our”) or other indirect references to yourself (“this writer”), or the second person (“you, your, y’all”). Avoid using overly preachy or hyperbolic language. If you introduce a statement with a phrase like, “Some scholars believe,” you must have a footnote citing more than one source to prove it. Do not exaggerate or make undocumented claims.

Paragraphs must be at least three sentences. Generally, if a sentence extends longer than three lines, then divide it into two sentences. If a paragraph extends longer than a page, divide that paragraph at least once. If a section extends longer than three to five pages, consider adding subheadings.

Always use introductory or transitional sentences when moving between subheadings, and between headings and subheadings. Do not end a page with an orphaned heading. Either move the heading to the next page with a hard return or reduce the amount of text above it enough to pull the body up at least one line of text below the new heading.

Begin enumerations with “First,” rather than “First of all” or “One.” Do not use contractions, such as “don’t” or “won’t.” Avoid ending sentences with a verb (e.g., “is”) or a preposition (“to” or “with”). Use [sic] after a quoted word that was misspelled in the original text. Retain the same tense as much as possible throughout the paper. Use italics as needed for emphasis, but do not include exclamation points.

Make your writing clear and concise by only using necessary words. Seek clarity, not wordiness. For example, “He is a man who is very ambitious,” easily condenses into “He is very ambitious.” Use the active voice whenever possible. See Williams, *Style*, 116–9, for more examples and responses to wordiness. Avoid using large quotations of Scripture. This is perceived as “padding.” Do not fill papers with verses written out; just cite the phrase relevant to the immediate study.

Titles and Thesis Statements

The title should express, in the clearest possible terms, the subject matter of the thesis. Avoid the extremes of short, cryptic titles, as well as unnecessarily long, ostentatious titles. Eye-catching titles, arcane allusions, and clever gimmicks are rarely suitable for research papers. Omit superfluous phrases (e.g., “An Intensive Examination of”). It is preferable that students do not use Greek and Hebrew words in their titles unless absolutely necessary. If used, these should not be transliterated, nor should they be one of the first five words of the title. Students should focus the scope of their study, avoiding general categories (e.g., “The Atonement”).

For the thesis claim, limit the paper to a particular issue, argument, or research topic. For argumentative papers, a good thesis statement is a true/false propositional claim that is subsequently supported by evidence and warrant. A thesis claim asserts a viewpoint. Good research papers always include an outlined method or procedure by which the thesis statement will be defended. For an original research project, a good thesis statement should answer a specific research question.

Order of a Semester Paper	General Order of a Thesis
Title Page	Title Page
	Blank Sheet
	Copyright Page [Not for STS]
	Acceptance or Approval Page
	Dedication page [Not for STS]
Contents [Optional – ask your prof.]	Contents
List of Tables or Illus. [Optional]	List of Illus. and/or Tables [Optional]
	Forward, Preface, Acknowledgements.
List of Abbreviations [Optional]	List of Abbreviations [Optional]
	Abstract
Body of the Paper	Body of the Paper
	Appendix [with approval]
	Glossary [Not for STS]
Bibliography	Bibliography

A Brief Note on Library Use and Protocol

Never write in a library book for any reason. Some books do have underlining or highlighting already in them. These were typically donated or purchased this way. However, students should not, under any circumstance, write in, highlight, or annotate a library book.

ABBRIDGEMENT OF *SBLH2* WITH STS DISTINCTIVES

2.1.2.1 **Non-English Fonts**

SBL offers its own Greek and Hebrew in an effort to standardize Unicode for non-Latin alphabets. These fonts can be downloaded from: <http://www.sbl-site.org>.

2.1.3 **Formatting**

Use the same font style throughout the entire paper.

Do not use the word processor style option menu for creating sections or headings. Left justification only, but some professors may ask for both right and left justification.

2.1.3.2 **Indentation**

The first line of the first paragraph in each new section is not indented, but justified to the left margin. Subsequent paragraphs within the section are indented the traditional ½ inch.

2.1.3.3 **Block Quotes**

Indented ½ inch on left margin; left justification only. Do not use quote marks.

Used for quoted matter of *five lines or more*. Indent the whole block. Use single spacing.

Insert footnote at the end of the quote. Introduce block quotes like any other quote.

2.1.3.4 **Dashes**

There are three types of dashes. The regular dash, or *hyphen*, separates words (e.g., “post-exilic”). The *en dash* separates numbers like page ranges, years, and verses (e.g., 1 Cor 1:4–5). The *em dash* separates words or clauses, particularly subordinate clauses (“Interpretation—after the Enlightenment—changed dramatically”). Do not use a hyphen to break a word at the end of a line.

2.1.3.5 **Spacing between Sentences.**

There is only one space after all punctuation marks. The same applies to numbered lists.

2.1.3.8 **Notes**

Use the processor’s References, Insert Footnote feature; don’t manually create notes.

4.1.1 **Commas**

Include a comma before the last element of a series (e.g., “Jacob, Joshua, and Moses”).

Use commas when introducing a quote with a verb, but not when introducing with “that”

Commas are not included with a restrictive, essential, or defining clause, however non-essential clauses can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

Commas precede conjunctions (e.g., or)

Commas are used after an academic degree, but not after a nominal suffix like Sr.

Commas are used prior to a nominal suffix in the bibliography (which follows the first name or middle name, but not the last name).

4.1.2 Quotation Marks

Outside of periods and commas, but inside question marks (unless if part of the quote), colons, and semi-colons. Verbs prior to quotes receive a comma (e.g., He replied, “No.”). An original quote within a double quoted citation becomes single quoted, unless part of a block quote, which then retains the original marking.

4.1.3 Ellipses (...)

Three evenly spaced periods are usually formed automatically in Word by pressing the period key three times. Add a space before and after the three periods (e.g., John ... studied Hebrew). If ending a sentence with an ellipsis connecting to another sentence, add the final punctuation mark immediately after the cited section, prior to the ellipsis mark (John knew them.... He saw them before.).

Do not use ellipsis points before or after a quotation, even if it is a partial sentence. SBL allows for capitalization of the first word in a mid-sentence quotation without having to designate with brackets.

4.1.5 Block Quotes of Primary Texts

If block quoting a primary text, use parenthetical citation at the end of the block quote but outside of the final punctuation. For regular sentences, use parenthetical citation inside the punctuation. See also, *SBLH2*, 6.1.3.6.

4.1.6 Possessives

For plural nouns, place the apostrophe after the s or es ending.

For proper nouns ending in s, add both the apostrophe and another s (e.g., Jesus’s)

4.1.8.1 Similar Citations

If citing similar or parallel references, simply use a comma with the conjunction prior to the last item in the list. E.g., Rom 2:3; 6:5; 10:12, and 15:9.

4.1.8.2 Dissimilar Citations

If moving between chapters and verses, or other non-parallel lists, add a semicolon. E.g., Rom 2:3, 5, 8; 6:5, 7; 10:12; and 15:9–10. See also *SBLH2*, 8.3.1 for an example.

4.2.4 Inclusive Numbering (for general numbers, pages, and verses, but not for years or inclusive sections of primary texts)

When number ranges are joined by an en dash, the last number may be abbreviated by omitting repeated digits (e.g., 310–18 instead of 310–318).

<u>First Number</u>	<u>Second Number</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Below 100	Use all digits	3–10, 71–72, 96–117
100 or multiple	Use all digits	100–104, 600–613, 1100–1123
101–109, and multiples	Changed part only	107–8, 505–17, 1002–6
110–199, and multiples	Two or more digits	321–25, 415–532, 1536–38, 1496–504, 13792–803

4.3.1 **Bias-Free Language** (contra *SBLH2*, 21)

The use of generic ‘he’ is fully acceptable; contrary to SBL’s claims that the generic he is “increasingly unacceptable in current English usage.” However, students should be aware of such issues before submitting manuscripts to publishers outside of STS.

4.3.2.4 **Italics**

Use italics instead of quotations for emphasis, technical terms, and foreign language terms. Only the first use of the emphasized term needs italics; subsequent references do not. See *SBLH2*, 24–25 for terms that do or do not get italics (e.g., *a priori*; *merkabah*).

4.3.3.2 **Ancient Persons**

The first occurrence of an ancient personal name typically is accompanied by the dates of that person’s life, especially when dealing with church fathers or famous individuals. For example, “Martin Luther (1483–1546).”

4.3.3.6 **Events and Concepts**

Do not capitalize names of biblical, religious, or theological events and concepts (e.g., atonement, creation, the exodus, tabernacle, temple, virgin birth).

4.3.4.1 **Bible Designations**

Capitalize the substantival term Bible or Scripture, but not the adjectival terms biblical or scriptural. Capitalize each book of the Bible and any major sections (e.g., Pentateuch, the Gospel of Matthew), but do not capitalize genres (e.g., psalms of ascent, an epistle). It is better to just say Galatians rather than the epistle, or letter, to the Galatians.

4.3.4.2 **Names of God**

Divine titles are capitalized, but generally not the second term in an expression (e.g., King of kings, Father, Immanuel, Lamb of God, Messiah, Lord of lords).

There is some flexibility with theological titles: both bread of life and Bread of Life.

Note that the trend for SBL, as stated frequently throughout, is towards lower case.

4.3.4.3 **Divine Pronouns**

Contrary to *SBLH2*, capitalization of pronouns used for the triune persons of the Godhead (e.g., He, His, Him) is up to the preference of the professor or student. Note that the trend with many publishers and Bible translations (cf., ESV) is towards lower case.

4.3.5.6 **Capitalization Key**

See *SBLH2*, 37–52 for a general survey of terms to capitalize or not.

4.3.7.1 **Dates**

The day-month-year format is becoming the international standard, but STS students may continue the American month-day-year format. AD and BC are regular font, without periods (e.g., “Constantine’s council (AD 325) ended;” “Rome marched in August of 20 BC”). Do not add “th” or “nd” to days of the year.

Note that STS does not use BCE or CE, but students may have to use these if publishing.

5.0 **Transliterating and Translating**

Use the Greek and Hebrew character fonts; there is no need to transliterate. English translations of words or phrases should be done in quotation marks and be enclosed in parentheses following the Greek or Hebrew. For example, “Paul frequently uses the Greek word *σάρξ* (“flesh”) when referring to sinful human nature.” Once a word has been so defined, use only the Greek or Hebrew term from then on.

6.0 **Rules for Notes and Bibliographies**

Consult chapter six of *SBLH2* thoroughly when writing notes and bibliographies. Bibliography entries are identified by: last name comes first; the second line(s) is indented; and the full page-range of an essay or article is included. Footnotes are identified in that: the first line is indented; they begin with the author’s first name; they use commas or semi-colons in place of most periods; they abbreviate expressions like editor and translator; they use a parenthesis for the publisher information, and they give the actual page from where the citation comes from. The first footnote entry contains all pertinent information while all subsequent citations get a shortened entry. Titles of four words or less need not be shortened.

6.1.1 **Sequence of Information**

In a bibliography: Author; title of chapter or article or book; editor and/or translator; edition (but not if the 1st); volumes (total number if citing the whole set); series title or journal volume; city; publisher; date; page numbers. In footnotes: Colons (:) come before page numbers of journal articles and are only used in a footnote when citing the full article. Otherwise, use a comma in a footnote when citing a single page or portion of an article. Also, use a colon to separate volume numbers from page numbers within sets. For book footnotes, all publication information appears inside the parenthesis. Note that series titles in footnotes are placed outside of the parentheses.

6.1.2.1 **Author and Editor Names**

There is no need to find and fill out a full name if the author typically goes by a first name initial. Follow the publisher’s lead here (e.g., D. A. Carson, not Donald A. Carson). If an author publishes under two different names, select the one typically used in academic works and use this one in all references (e.g., N. T. Wright, not Tom Wright). Include one space between initials of names (but not within states or degrees).

6.1.3.1 **Subtitles**

Use a colon and space to separate a title and subtitle, but not a period, comma, or dash. The subtitle is capitalized even if beginning with a particle (e.g., *Paul: An Apostle*) Exclamation points or question marks ending titles do not need additional punctuation.

6.1.3.2 **Formatting Foreign Terms and Abbreviations in Titles**

Italicize foreign terms within a title to match the rest of the title. Ampersands (&) are converted to “and,” and digits in titles are spelled out (e.g., “2 becomes “Two”).

6.1.3.3 Capitalization of Titles in English

Capitalize all parts of the title except articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions. However, still capitalize the first and last word in both titles and subtitles.

Capitalize all words in a hyphenated term unless the non-first word is an article, coordinating conjunction, or preposition.

Prepositions include both single words (e.g., between) and phrases (e.g., according to)

Articles – a, an, the; Coordinating conjunctions – and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet

Prepositions – about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, beyond, but, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, and without.

6.1.3.4 Capitalization of Titles Not in English

Capitalize only the first word of the title or subtitle and any words that would be capitalized in a normal sentence in that language.

For language-specific guidelines, see *SBLH2*, 6.1.3.7–9.

6.1.3.6 Primary Sources

Do not footnote a primary source, but rather include it in the text/body within parentheses.

6.1.4.1 Names of Presses

Omit references to Press or Publishing Company, except for universities or if omission results in ambiguity or awkwardness (e.g., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company reduces to Eerdmans, but Oxford University Press does not reduce). Omit “Ltd.” or “Co.” Unlike titles, retain the ampersand in a publisher’s name (e.g., T&T Clark).

If two publisher locations are given, select the one listed first on the copyright page; do not list all publisher locations.

6.1.4.2 Cities

SBLH2 does not include cities and/or states universally. Sometimes just a city is given, and at other times, neither city nor state is needed. Consult the list on pages 77–82 of *SBLH2*. The SBL guideline is to omit states if the city is a larger, well-known location. However, STS students are allowed to include all states or no states at all, so long as they are consistent.

6.1.6 Electronic Sources (see also below under 6.2.25)

If citing a Kindle edition or e-book, or DOI, place this information as the last element. If a DOI is provided, use that instead of a URL.

Note that articles obtained from databases, such as EBSCO or Galaxie, should be treated as if printed versions. If citing a PDF e-book that is identical to the print edition, simply cite as if print.

If citing a URL, do not add a hyphen at the end of a text line. If there is a need to divide the URL to fit on a second line, make a division before a period or slash.

For online content, there is no need to include the date accessed.

6.2 General Examples

For STS, use the Word default settings for generating footnotes in Times New Roman font. Footnotes are single-spaced within the note, but double-spaced between separate footnote entries. Contrary to *SBLH2*, indent the first line of a footnote ½ inch.

“Translated” appears in the bibliography, but becomes “trans.” in a footnote.

“Edited by” is used in a bibliography when citing a book’s editor in contrast to a contributing author, but “ed.” or “eds.” are used in all other cases.

Cite the original copyright date unless reprinted by another publisher.

“Rev. and enl.” appears in the bibliography, but they are both lowercase in the footnotes.

Reprint becomes Repr., or repr., respectively.

Use 2nd, 3rd, 4th ed., for editions (not 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.).

Multi-volume works use the complete number of volumes followed by “vols.” in bibliographies (e.g., “2 vols.”), while a footnote indicates the volume as a number followed by a colon and the page number(s) being cited (e.g., “2:415”).

However, multi-volume works that have different titles for each volume use “Vol. 2 of” in bibliographies, while the footnote is lowercase.

6.2.3 Multiple Authors

If there are *more than three* authors, “et al.” may be used after the first name in a footnote, without a comma. However, list out all names in the bibliography.

6.2.12 Articles in an Edited Volume

The examples on pages 86–87 of *SBLH2* are very important; learn them well. A chapter in a “views” book would use this format as would any essay in an edited collection of materials.

If citing more than one distinct work from a collection of essays, once the first full entry has been made, a second article can be noted with a shortened entry and by retaining the editors and shortened title of the first full entry information.

6.2.14 Citing an Introduction, Preface, or other Front Matter

Treat these like individual chapters in a collection or Festschrift, with quotes (*SBHL2*, 6.2.12–13).

6.2.25 Electronic Books

Cite the digital format at the end of the publication information for the bibliography.

Cite actual pages in the footnotes. If pages are missing, cite the chapter or location.

If the print version is available in the library, cite that work and its pages.

¹Jacob L. Wright, *David: King of Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Kindle edition, ch. 4, “David’s Monarchy.”

²C. N. Spiracy, *The Nephilim are Returning!* (Xulon Press, 2012), Nook edition, ch. 1.3.

6.3.1 **Journal Articles**

Only give the volume number and year; it is not necessary to include issue numbers or seasons unless the journal is not paginated consecutively in a single year.

E.g., *JETS* 4 (1990), but not *JETS* 4/1 (Fall 1990).

6.3.4 **Book Reviews**

For most book reviews, such as those found in the back of theological journals, use the formatting for Untitled Reviews. Article-length reviews are treated as articles.

6.3.6 **Articles in an Encyclopedia**

Include each individual article from an encyclopedia separately in the bibliography. This would apply also to volumes with multiple contributors, like “views” books.

6.3.7 **Lexicons and Theological Dictionaries**

Note that rules for lexicons or theological dictionaries are different from 6.3.6 (above). Theological dictionary footnotes include the contributor’s name and the words covered (e.g., A. Sand, “παρίστημι,” *EDNT* 3:41).

Lexicon footnotes cite the title abbreviation, then s.v., then the original word (e.g., *BDAG*, s.v. “Ἰσραήλ.”).

For bibliographies, provide the multivolume work itself, not each article or essay cited.

6.4.2 **Loeb Classical Library**

Treat in-text citations like biblical passages by using a parenthetical notation.

For footnotes, simply use a short entry of name, abbreviated title, volume and page.

For the bibliography, cite the whole series/set of that ancient author’s works.

6.4.5 **ANF and NPNF series**

All footnotes are short entries with name, book/writing, and page, but then also include in parentheses the abbreviation for the set with volume and page of the set itself.

For the bibliography, cite the whole ANF or NPNF set just once.

6.4.9 **Commentary Sets and Series**

Treat like a book but with the addition of a series name after the title.

But unlike a book, do not include series editors.

6.4.15 **Online Publications**

For academic writing, avoid citing blogs or any website content that is not peer-reviewed.

However, when citing such material is necessary, include in the references the author, entry title (inside quotes), the name of the website, the dated posted (but not the date accessed), and the URL.

⁵ I. N. Hans and Ian Franz, “Pump-A-Tude,” *The Arnold Blog*, 10 June 2112, http://thrash.metal/wall_of_marshalls.net.

⁷ I. R. Maiden, ed., “Diagrammatical Analysis of ‘Run to the Hills,’” n.d., http://ESP.EC-1000.LTD_Deluxe.BlackCherry/Peavy6505.112combo.com.

7.2.2.1 **Alphabetization** (for an index or bibliography)

Begin with numbers, then letters. Capitals and diacritics are ignored.

If the name contains a particle (e.g., John Van Seters or Gerhard von Rad), alphabetize according to the capitalized particle, but not by the lower case.

8.1.1 **Postal Abbreviations**

Use the two-letter postal codes where both letters are capitalized and there are no periods.

<http://www.stateabbreviations.us/>

8.1.3 **Technical Abbreviations** (For the full list, see *SBLH2*, 119–121)

cf.	confer, compare	idem	the same	p(p).	page(s)
n.d.	no date	etc.	and the rest	ibid.	in the same place
i.e.	that is	vol(s).	volume(s)	ca.	circa
s.v.	(under word)	e.g.	for example		

Note: *ibid.* is not italicized. Place a comma after abbreviations (e.g., *Ibid.*, 17). Note: the use of *f.* or *ff.* is discouraged; provide the exact page or verse range.

8.2 **Abbreviating Biblical Texts**

Spell out the book title if beginning a sentence or if using independently of any verse notations, but always abbreviate biblical books (without a period after the abbreviation) in other situations.

Smaller titles like Luke are not abbreviated (e.g., 1 Cor 5:16, but not Lk. 4:2).

For the first biblical citation in a paper, include the translation in all caps, regular font, after the Scripture reference, inside the parenthesis. Unless noted, the reader assumes all subsequent scriptural references are from the same translation.

E.g., Matthew presents a righteousness greater than the Law (Matt 5:20 ESV). E.g., “Galatians 4 says that,” and “In 1 Cor 7:11–24, Paul teaches that”

See *SBLH2*, 122–123 for some common translation abbreviations.

Note: Do not include Bible translations in the List of Abbreviations or Bibliography.

8.2.2 **Parallel Texts**

When denoting parallels among the Synoptics use a space, two forward slashes, space.

Matt 11:2–6 // Luke 7:18–23. A simple reference to a parallel passage is *par.*

(2-inch margin before title)

SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

(2-inch space between elements; double space long titles)

AN EVALUATION OF ATONEMENT THEORIES

(2-inch space between elements; single space this section)

SUBMITTED TO DR. TIM MILLER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
TH503 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY III

(2-inch space between elements, single space)

BY
JAMES T. KIRK
NOVEMBER 10, 2024

(bottom margin will be at least 1-inch, up to 2-inches)

(leave a 2-inch margin from top of page)

*This sample is for a Thesis; most semester papers will only need 4-5 major headings.

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(2-inch margin before heading on the first page of each chapter; all other pages get 1 inch)

**PRIMARY HEADING
LONGER TITLES ARE SINGLE-SPACED**

The top is two inches for the first page only. There is a single blank line between the heading and the subsequent text. The left, right, top, and bottom margins are one inch, except for the thesis where the left margin is 1-1/2 inch. There is only one space between sentences. Page numbers are located at the bottom, in the middle, on all pages within the body of the paper, as well as within the bibliography. The introduction is page 1.

Indent the first line of all subsequent paragraphs after a new section. All main text should be set in the 12-point, Times New Roman font. Foreign words are italicized. Semester papers begin with the primary heading INTRODUCTION, then subsequent primary or first-level subheadings, and lastly a primary heading for the CONCLUSION. The body of the paper is double-spaced, as well as the space between a heading and its own subsequent text.

First-Level Subheading

Keep two blank lines between the end of one section and the beginning of a new section, regardless of the level of the heading. The first subheading is centered, bold, and headline-caps. Do not “orphan” a heading for a new section at the bottom of a page. Use a hard return to push the heading onto the next page. Shorter papers will not need subheadings.

Second-Level Subheading

There are two blank lines between the end of one section and the next heading. The second subheading is also centered and headline-caps but is not bolded.

Third-Level Subheading

The third subheading is adjusted to the left margin, bolded, and italicized. It is also in the headline-cap style. If needed, a fourth-level subheading is also left margin and headline-cap, but is not bolded, nor is it italicized. Be sure to properly introduce the quote.

A block quotation is any number of sentences from a direct quote that extend five or more lines of text. The whole quote is indented on the left margin ½ inch. Block quotes are single-spaced and do not receive quotation marks. If there are quote marks within the original quote, these remain in the citation. There is a regular double-space setting off the block quote from the text before and after it. The footnote goes at the end of the block quote. There is no indentation within the block quote itself.¹

After a block quote, return to a double-spaced text, justified to the left margin. Always include at least one more sentence after a block quote; do not end (orphan) a paragraph with a block quote.

Footnotes at the bottom of the page are separated by a 2-inch rule line.² Most word processors supply this line, as well as the numbering. Maintain subsequent numbering in the footnotes for semester papers but start anew for each chapter of a thesis. Make sure that the footnoted material is on the same page as the footnote in the body of the paper. When a note does fall on a subsequent page, a simple return within the last line of text should push that material to the next page, opening room for the footnote material on the appropriate page. There should not be a large blank space between the last line of text and the footnote line.³

¹ The first line of a footnote is indented ½-inch. the professor may require either a 10-point or 12-point font. Single-space within the footnote.

² There should be a blank line between each footnote entry. Word processors will automatically add a space between the footnote number and the entry.

³ To move footnotes up, right-click in the footnote region, select “note options,” then select “below text.” This should apply to the whole document.

(Leave a 2-inch margin before the Bibliography title; other bibliography pages get 1-inch)
(Note – the examples below do not include a state for larger, well-known cities)

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Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd and rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

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Brown, Colin., ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985.

Clark, David K. *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology*. Foundations of Evangelical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003.

Corduan, Winfried. "Philosophical Presuppositions Affecting Biblical Hermeneutics." Pages 495–513 in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*. Edited by Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Davids, Peter H. *The First Epistle of Peter*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
[remember, do not include a series editor with commentary sets]

Descartes, Rene. "Meditations on First Philosophy." Pages 295–329 in *Great Books of the Western World*. Edited by Mortimer J. Adler. 60 vols. 2nd ed. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990.

Josephus. *Antiquitatum Iudaicarum libri VI–X*. Vol. 2 of *Flavii Iosephi opera*. Edited by Benedictus Niese. Berlin: Weidmann, 1888.

McLay, R. Timothy. "The Goal of Teaching Biblical and Religious Studies in the Context of an Undergraduate Education." *SBL Forum*. 6 October 2006. <http://www.sblsite.org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=581>.

O'Day, Gail. "Intertextuality." Pages 546–48 in vol. 1 of *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by John H. Hays. 2 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.

Traube, Ludwig. *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung*. München: C.H. Beck, 1907.

Leave a blank line between the Bibliography title and the first entry. Justify the first line of each new entry to the left margin, then indent all subsequent lines of that entry ½-inch. See *SBLH2*, chapter 6, for a number of additional examples. Alphabetize by last name. Edited works follow authored works by the same individual. There are no abbreviations in the bibliography. Journals receive a colon and the entire page range of the article.

GUIDELINES FOR THESIS PROJECTS

STS Philosophy of the Master's Thesis

The thesis project is designed to showcase the student's research and writing abilities. The thesis demonstrates that the student can conduct scholarly research, can analyze a topic at an academic level, can articulate a clear thesis and method, and can present evidence through clear argument and appropriate literary style. While not required for programs at STS other than the MABLL and ThM, the thesis project does provide an opportunity for students to develop research skills and to pursue a line of investigation in greater depth than what is possible in a regular semester paper. The thesis also offers an occasion for the student to make a significant contribution to the ongoing conversation on a particular topic. The thesis offers a platform for future independent studies and may be used as a sample research effort when applying for subsequent degree programs.

The thesis statement need not be entirely original at the master's level, but the project should significantly engage the selected topic and demonstrate a scholarly facility with the key issues, viewpoints, arguments, and relevant literature. Whatever subject is selected, the thesis project should exhibit the student's facility with the accepted tools of biblical scholarship, whether in exegesis of a biblical text, the scrutiny of original sources, or theological analysis. The student's work should evidence academic and intellectual acumen gained through earlier courses at STS. This acumen, or collection of skill sets, should be exhibited throughout the work. The thesis project must have a clear statement of the problem to be solved and a proposed solution. These criteria rule out papers of a survey nature or verse-by-verse commentaries.

A completed and approved thesis project manifests the student's scholastic ability to:

- Research thoroughly and comprehensively on a specific subject, to evaluate major contemporary and historical contributions to that topic, and to clearly outline the various positions or viewpoints.
- Produce a logical, analytical, and coherent argument for a propositional claim along with methodological evaluation, discussion, and response to competing claims.
- Present the above research in proper literary format with appropriate documentation.

Registration

The thesis is a capstone project and should only be done during the final year of the student's studies in their respective program. Registration is conditional on the student's application to Thesis I and on approval to continue into Thesis II. See below for more details on the application process. A thesis requires two semesters of 3 credit hours each, for a total of 6 hours on the student's transcript. The student registers for RS711 Thesis I (RS761 Advanced Thesis I for ThM students) for the fall semester prior to scheduled graduation. For the spring semester, the student registers for RS712 Thesis II (RS762 Advanced Thesis II for ThM students).

Competency Requirements for the Thesis Project

Students who choose to write a thesis must demonstrate a sufficient competency level in academic research and writing. This competency is assessed at four or five stages. The first assessment is *prior* to starting the project and consists of a writing sample approved by the student's advisor. The second assessment is the prospectus, which must be accepted by the advisor (and any second reader). The third assessment is the quality of the first draft. The fourth assessment is the quality of the second draft, which may also be read by a second reader. A potential fifth assessment involves any substantial modifications to the second draft.

Quality Expectations

Students are expected to be knowledgeable and proficient in all the STS writing guidelines and formatting standards. Although occasional typos and editorial mistakes are expected in every draft, materials with excessive editorial corrections will not be accepted. It is not the advisor's responsibility to point out every typo or to provide frequent stylistic assistance. Should the first draft consist of too many editorial and/or stylistic problems, the advisor may call for committee review. In such cases, the student must demonstrate an ability to properly and thoroughly edit the first draft before continuing to the second draft. If the student cannot meet the editing and stylistic expectations, the review committee may end the project.

Students may seek outside assistance for editing their project. To prevent a possible rejection of the first or second draft, the student may employ the services of a qualified proofreader. Students should be aware that most proofreaders require financial compensation. The student must advise such readers of the STS guidelines and standards. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to master the stipulated guidelines and to prepare their work in accordance with them. The student, not the editor, is personally accountable for the submitted drafts and any erroneous documentation, plagiarism, or other problems. The advisor will only read two, or at most three, drafts of the paper. Second readers will only read one full draft (the second).

Grading of the Thesis Project

While research and writing involve the above competency stages, there are only two actual grades given to the student. One grade is for the Thesis I course. It is based solely on the quality of the first draft. The second grade is for the Thesis II course. It is based solely on the student's second draft. There are no grades given for either the prospectus or the library submission copy. The student's advisor is solely responsible for determining and posting these two grades. There is no oral defense required for the thesis project.

It is not essential that the advisor agree with the thesis statement or conclusion to the project. To fulfill the thesis project, the student must exhibit depth of research, clarity of analysis, logical coherence of argument, and communicative efficiency. The advisor may require that the student incorporate additional lines of argument, respond more adequately to counter claims, and/or do additional research in some specific areas.

An "A" grade constitutes an excellent effort; an "A-" is a job well done; a "B+" is a good paper but still shy of the mark; a "B" paper is lacking in some areas; and a "B-" is deemed as a barely acceptable effort. Submitted material that constitutes a grade of "C" or lower will be

rejected. Opportunity to resubmit rejected work is up to the thesis advisor. A prospectus that requires substantial revision may hold back a first draft in the fall semester. A late submission for the first draft may adversely affect the student's opportunity to register for Thesis II. A late second draft can delay the student's ability to receive their diploma at graduation.

If a student does not complete Thesis I with a quality first draft, that student will lose credit for the course as well as the ability to continue to Thesis II. If a student completes Thesis I sufficiently, but does not complete Thesis II, the student must fill out a Request for Extension form prior to the end of the semester and may be required to pay a small fee. The student will then have the remainder of the summer to complete the second draft for approval by the first Monday of classes in the fall. Otherwise, the student will lose credit for Thesis II and no grade will be given.

Second Readers and Faculty Thesis Committees

The second reader is a STS faculty member or approved adjunct professor. The second reader does not determine or give grades but could pause the project and call for a committee review. The advisor recommends who to have as a second reader (based on the subject matter) and secures that second reader for the student. Second readers are only required for ThM theses but are strongly recommended for all other master's theses. Only the primary advisor is listed on the project's acceptance page, not the second reader.

Second readers will read the student's prospectus and consult with the advisor regarding any needed recommendations or adjustments. If needed, a formal meeting between the student, the advisor, and the second reader may convene to address concerns with the prospectus. The student will likely need to submit a second version of the prospectus in such cases. If either the advisor or the second reader is still not satisfied with the prospectus, the project will be paused until a faculty thesis committee can convene and determine future actions.

The second reader is not involved in the first draft; only the student's advisor reads this draft. Once the advisor has read the first draft, and offered responses, recommendations, and editorial comments, the student is ready to begin the second draft. The second draft is then submitted to the advisor, who must read and approve it before it is sent to the second reader. Depending on the quality of the second draft, the second reader may simply offer additional comments and recommendations, or he may call for a formal meeting with the student and advisor to discuss the project. If mutual concerns about the project are still unresolved, a committee review will convene and arbitrate. Once the second draft is officially accepted the student will draw up the library presentation copies based on the comments and recommendations made regarding the second draft.

The thesis committee exists to decide whether the student may re-work their submitted materials and continue with their project, or whether the student has not adequately met the project expectations and should be removed from the project. Committees are made up of the advisor, the second reader, and two other faculty members of STS. Committee conclusions override any recommendations by either the advisor or the second reader. Should the committee decide to remove the student from Thesis I, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Should the committee remove a student from Thesis II, the student will be withdrawn from that course, and Thesis I will be converted on the student's transcript to a 3-credit-hour independent study elective.

SPECIAL FORMATTING FOR THESIS PROJECTS

The thesis project generally follows the previous STS style and formatting guidelines, but with some notable exceptions. Students should be conversant with above guidelines and then make the following adjustments for thesis projects. These unique features apply to all thesis drafts.

Abstract

A thesis must include an abstract that will appear after the contents page and before the body of the paper. The abstract is cited in the contents. Abstracts are limited to one page, single-spaced. Margins should match the format of the body. Use a chapter-like heading of ABSTRACT, located 2 inches from the top of the paper. Abstracts are written in paragraph form with each paragraph roughly corresponding to each chapter in the project. There are no reference citations, block quotations, or footnotes in an abstract.

The thesis, methodology, and principle outline of the chapters must be crystal clear in the abstract. The abstract is a capsule of: (1) the principle area of investigation and the thesis statement, (2) the lines of argument covered in the project, and (3) the conclusion of the thesis. The abstract is a self-contained summary of the whole project. It only includes information found within the project. An abstract should provide readers with a quick glance at the entire work so that they can decide whether to read further. “Abstracts should not promise, predict or tantalize; they should deliver in sum what the essay pays out in full account. The preparation of a lucid abstract is the final test of an author’s control of his material” (Funk, *Semeia* 1 [1974], 278).

See also: http://www.galaxygoo.org/resources/abstract_writing.html
<http://users.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html>

Footnotes

Footnotes retain the same font size as regular semester papers, unless the professor approves a smaller font. A unique feature of the thesis is that footnotes begin anew with each chapter. It is important for students to learn how their word processing software uses page breaks to begin new footnote numbering for each chapter while maintaining consecutive page numbering.

Headings

For the thesis, the primary heading (centered, all caps) becomes the chapter title, and all subsequent headings within that chapter begin at the first-level heading (centered, bold, headline), and then progress to the lower headings as needed. Use “CHAPTER” along with an Arabic numeral (e.g., 1, 2, 3), located 2 inches from the top of the paper. On the next immediate line, give the chapter title in all caps. Note that in the table of contents, there is a comma after the Arabic numeral, a space, and then the chapter title (all in caps).

A heading extending to a second line of text is single spaced. Always add a transitional paragraph (at least 3 sentences) between levels of headings. A heading should never appear

directly under another heading without a small paragraph of text between. This paragraph functions to restate the thesis, to summarize where the present section is located within the overall outline, to transition to the next section, and to outline various subheadings that follow.

Length of the Thesis

The accepted length of the thesis may vary slightly depending on the subject matter and quality of content. The student's advisor has final say in accepting longer papers. For the ThM thesis project, the body of the final draft should be in the range of 120–135. For all other master's degree theses, the body of the final draft should be in the range of 60–75 pages. These lengths do not pertain to the front matter (including contents and abstract), the bibliography, or any possible appendices. The advisor may refuse to read a paper that is excessive in length.

Pagination

As with regular semester papers, page numbers do not appear on the title page of the thesis. However, the thesis does include front matter (aka preliminary pages). The preliminary page numbers do appear on the blank page, the acceptance page, the table of contents page(s), and on the abstract. Preliminary pages are numbered with small roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, v, etc.) centered at the bottom of the page. Students may need to adjust the bottom margin to .8 so the numbers are not too close to the final line of text. In a thesis, the title page counts as page i, the blank page that follows counts as page ii, the acceptance page as page iii, and first page of the contents as iv. If the Table of Contents is only one page long, then the abstract will become page v. The first page of the first chapter begins with Arabic number 1, and continues consecutively through the remainder of the paper (including possible appendix, and then the bibliography).

SCHEDULE FOR THE THESIS PROJECT

Application for Thesis I and Topic Selection (Spring semester prior to taking Thesis I)

While the Thesis I course is offered in the fall semester, all students planning on a thesis project must apply during the *prior spring semester* (essentially a year before their expected graduation). The application process begins with informal meetings between the student and their prospective advisor. The student is responsible for securing this faculty member for involvement in the project. Selection of potential faculty members should be based on faculty specialization in accordance with the student's topic or subject matter. Faculty may recuse themselves from involvement in a thesis project (often due to their availability).

Admission into Thesis I should be viewed as an "opportunity earned." Only the topic matter of the proposed thesis is required at the application stage, but it is highly recommended that students be working through a preliminary thesis statement. All preliminary thesis statements are subject to change as research continues. The student's ability to carefully select a topic suitable to their interests and abilities is considered a vital research skill to develop. The thesis topic must be specific and limited in scope so that it can be treated sufficiently within the page requirements and limitations of the respective thesis projects.

A topic is not necessarily ruled out simply because it was dealt with in a previous thesis, dissertation, or monograph. A similar topic may be accepted if it presents a fresh and/or original approach to the subject matter. If a repeated topic from another STS thesis project is proposed, the student must demonstrate their distinction from that earlier work as part of their prospectus.

Independent Research (Summer prior to taking Thesis I)

During the summer months (prior to Thesis I in the fall), the student will begin researching on the selected topic. The independent research stage is where the student gets immersed into the subject matter, learns the issues and viewpoints, and identifies the major resources. Students should be taking notes at this stage. The goal of summer research is to become conversant on the topic in order to offer an intelligent and informed prospectus for the fall semester. In general, the summer self-study is the "heavy lifting" element of the project while the fall research represents more of a "toning and shaping" element to the researching phase of the project. The advisor may be consulted for recommendations on key resources, but students should be aware that many faculty members have travel, vacation, and other commitments during the summer months.

Prospectus

(Due second week of fall semester)

At the beginning of the fall semester, the student should have finalized their prospectus. The prospectus is submitted by the second Monday of fall classes. Significant research should already be completed prior to writing the prospectus and be demonstrated in a good understanding of the topic matter. The prospectus will also reflect what the student proposes to accomplish through additional research and study in the fall. The prospectus should be thorough enough that the advisor can approve the student's further study and writing efforts. Changes may need to be made to the prospectus, including such things as adjusting the thesis claim, reworking the proposed method of analysis, or reorganizing the outline. If the advisor is not satisfied with the prospectus, that faculty member will meet with the student to discuss their concerns. The student will then submit a second draft of the prospectus. Failure to include all the stipulated elements of the prospectus (see below) will result in delayed approval and possible committee review.

Once the prospectus has been approved, the student continues with their research and writing and submits the first draft of their thesis by the last Monday of fall classes. During the fall semester, students may discover the need to rework their original prospectus outline or even to adjust the thesis statement. If it appears that the project is headed in a direction distinctly beyond the approved prospectus, the student must notify their advisor of the changes before submitting the first draft.

There are several key elements to a prospectus. The Librarian maintains a sample that is available by request. The prospectus must be typed and edited. Footnotes are not necessary as the prospectus is the proposal or plan for research, not the actual research itself. The prospectus begins with (1) a standard title page, and then (2) a summary page with thesis statement and purpose (see the sample). Next, the prospectus includes sections on (3) the significance of the topic and (4) the contribution of the project to theological and biblical studies. Following comes (5) a statement on research methodology, which describes how the student will conduct the research (not the method for arguing the thesis statement). There is no need at the master's degree level to include a statement of the project's uniqueness or a statement regarding the student's access to information resources. Next, the prospectus should include (6) a content outline in paragraph form that summarizes each proposed chapter including the introduction and conclusion (much of this material should easily convert into the abstract needed for the first draft). After the content outline, the prospectus includes (7) a detailed chapter outline in a strict outline form (see example). Lastly, the prospectus includes (8) a preliminary bibliography that lists works that have been read already as well as works yet to be consulted. The included bibliography must be formatted to STS guidelines and standards. Upon approval of the prospectus, the student returns to their independent researching and writing of the first draft.

Regarding the prospectus acceptance, the primary role of the advisor is to offer suggestions regarding the clarity of the thesis proposition, the logic of the argument, and the fittingness of the outlined method. The advisor may also suggest additional research materials for analysis or may even require additional treatment of some topic related to the thesis claim, but not yet part of the current research. The advisor is not an editor or proofreader. The advisor may choose to schedule regular or intermittent meetings with the student through the summer and/or fall semester. However, apart from any such stipulated meetings, it is the responsibility of the student to keep in contact with their advisor during the research stages, and to seek out the advisor's assistance regarding additional resources and assistance as needed.

First Draft

(Due end of fall semester)

The first draft is due the last Monday of fall classes as a requirement for completing the Thesis I course. Students may submit the first draft earlier but should be mindful that the advisor may not read it until January. All the parts of the first draft should be formatted like a finished thesis and must conform to the instructions included in these guidelines. Students should not submit a first draft that is full of grammatical, stylistic, or analytical errors. Any first drafts objectively lacking in quality will be rejected without opportunity for resubmission. While it is expected that the first draft may require some adjustments, it should not constitute a burden for the advisor to read and critique. The advisor will read through the first draft, offering comments, suggestions, and perhaps corrections. The first draft will be returned to the student no later than the first Monday of spring classes.

Second Draft

(Due fifth week of spring semester)

The second draft is due the fifth Monday of the spring semester. The student has a full month to make any corrections, adjustments, or additions as stipulated by the advisor's review of the first draft. If such recommendations were not properly incorporated into the second draft, the advisor may call for a committee review to evaluate the project's future.

The advisor will read over the second draft, making any new comments, and then pass the project to the second reader (if applicable). The second reader will then read thoroughly and note relevant comments and responses. The paper is then returned to the advisor who will review the comments by the second reader. Ideally, the second reader will simply offer additional thought questions or minor suggestions which should easily be incorporated into the Library copy. If the second reader cannot complete his review by the eighth Monday of spring classes, then he will deliver the thesis back to the advisor and recuse himself from the project.

If there are significant differences of judgment between the advisor and second reader regarding the quality of the second draft, those two faculty members will meet and discuss their respective recommendations. If unresolved, a review committee will arbitrate and decide the future of the project. The review committee reserves the option to require a third draft that would be read by all faculty members already involved, and which would either result in approval for a grade, or grounds for removing the student from Thesis II.

The advisor will return the second draft to the student by the eighth Monday of spring classes, leaving a full month to prepare the Library copies. The student's final grade is based on the quality of the second draft, as read by the advisor(s), or a third draft if required by the review committee. The final grade for Thesis II does not take into account any corrections or adjustments that were incorporated into the Library copy. The student should not need to make substantial revisions at this point, but if such revisions are made for the Library copy, a written statement of changes, and a listing of those revisions, should be submitted to the advisor prior to his signing the acceptance page on the Library copy.

Library Presentation Copy
(Due end of spring semester)

After the second draft has been approved, the student is ready to submit two presentation copies to the library by the twelfth Monday of classes. The Library copy should incorporate any final recommendations and comments given by the advisor and/or second reader. There are two library presentation copies that will be given directly to the STS Librarian.

The first copy is a printed paper version, the second is a digital version. For the printed copy, use letter-quality printing with laser technology (ink-jet printing may still be used for earlier draft submissions and semester papers). Pages must be clean and clear of smudges or other markings. The printed copy must be on good quality, 20-pound, acid-free, 100% cotton business paper (e.g., Staples item #117390). All thesis materials should be single-sided. For binding purposes, place one blank sheet of paper at the beginning and one at the end. A third blank sheet should also be included immediately after the title page. The STS offices will use this blank sheet to create the acceptance page for the thesis.

For the digital copy, submit the full document as a PDF file that will then be saved on the STS server. Students may email this PDF copy to the Librarian, or they may bring in a flash drive so that the Librarian may download the file and then return the flash drive back to the student. Students may need to print a photocopy at the nearby office supply store.

Quick Schedule

(fill in the appropriate date or mark a personal calendar)

Due Dates	Calendar Dates	Thesis Element Involved
By end of spring semester prior to Thesis I		Secure a topic and apply to an Advisor.
Summer prior to Thesis I		Independent Research
Fall semester, 2nd Monday of Thesis I.		Prospectus is Due
Fall semester, final Monday of Thesis I		First Draft is Due
Spring semester, 1st Monday of Thesis II		First draft is returned to student
Spring semester, 5th Monday of Thesis II		Second Draft is Due
Spring semester, 8th Monday of Thesis II		Reviews of 2nd draft are due back to the student
Spring semester, 12th Monday of Thesis II		Library Presentation Copies Due

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND WRITING AIDS

Additional Sample Entries

Bibliography entries

Banks, Robert. “The Role of Charismatic and Noncharismatic Factors in Determining Paul’s Movements in Acts.” Pages 117–30 in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*. Edited by Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.

Harris, Murray, J. “2 Corinthians.” Pages 417–545 in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans-Galatians*. Edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. “Learning the Human Jesus: Historical Criticism and Literary Criticism.” Pages 153–77 in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Edited by James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009.

Rausch, D. A. “Nominalism.” Page 600 in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Edited by Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.

Footnote entries

¹ Robert Banks, “The Role of Charismatic and Noncharismatic Factors in Determining Paul’s Movements in Acts,” in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn* (ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 129.

² Murray, J. Harris, “2 Corinthians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans-Galatians* (ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 457.

³ D. A. Rausch, “Nominalism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell; 3rd ed; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 600.

⁴ This is in line with DeSilva’s treatment of Revelation 2–3 as part of the text’s use of honor discourse. See David A. DeSilva, “Honor Discourse and the Rhetorical Strategy of the Apocalypse of John,” *JSNT* 71 (1998): 79–110.

⁵ For examples of worship acts associated with the expression “call on the name of Yahweh,” Capes cites Gen 12:8; 13:4; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24–26; Isa 12:4–6; Psalms 105:1; 116:4, 13, 17 (David B. Capes, *The Divine Christ: Paul, the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures of Israel* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018], 116).

Editing, Revising, and Rewriting

A Checklist for Students¹

Reviewing the Argument:

Introduction

- The problem is presented and explained adequately.
- The various viewpoints are articulated and documented.
- The key terminology is clearly defined.

Thesis and Methodology

- The solution to the problem is given in a single-sentence propositional thesis claim.
 - Editing Note – Is the thesis too broad, underdeveloped, plural?
- A statement of any necessary qualifications or limitations
- An enumeration of the methodological steps that outline the argument to follow
 - Editing Note – Failure to ‘map’ the paper often leads to a rambling argument.
- Any needed warrants to link the evidence back to the thesis claim

The Argument Substantiated

- Evidence is relevant and its significance to the thesis claim is made explicit.
- Evidence is logical, linear, and matches the earlier stated methodology.
 - Editing Note – Transitional sentences are not optional, but essential.
- Evidence is sufficiently interactive with different views, contrary arguments, and assumptions.

Conclusion

- A concise review of the thesis claim and the methodology
- A concise summary of the previous evidence

Reviewing the Style:

- Remove awkward phrasing, and grammatically infelicitous sentence structures.
- Cut down wordy sentences; divide long sentences.
- Double-check the documentation for SBL and STS formatting standards.
- Review the basics: font size, indentation, spacing.
- Check simply subject-verb agreements and pronoun-referent connections.

¹ Adapted in part from Yaghjian, *Writing Well*, 340–1, 343.