

**Houston Graduate School of Theology**  
ID 701 Interdisciplinary Capstone  
Spring 2018  
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*Houston Graduate School of Theology equips women and men to be ministers and messengers of God's mission of reconciliation through academic excellence, personal transformation, and leadership development*

**I. Course Description**

This course is the capstone course for the Master of Theological Studies degree. MTS students in their final year or semester are required to take this course together as a cohort. A student will work under a faculty specialist to produce a capstone paper or project in the area of concentration, which will be presented to the class and then evaluated by faculty members. The students will also gather representative work from his or her MTS program for the faculty members. Two hours.

**II. Student Learning Outcomes (MTS-1, -2, -3)**

Upon completion of this course, by the completion of the capstone paper and the student portfolio of graded assignments, the student will:

- A. Demonstrate good hermeneutics with both testaments of the Bible;
- B. Demonstrate contextually sensitive theology evidencing an awareness of historical heritage of an issue;
- C. Apply these skills in a capstone paper or approved project with a special emphasis evidencing the student's focused concentration;
- D. Submit an electronic portfolio of assignments showing the coursework taken while in the program, as well as a syllabus for each course.

**III. Texts - *No Required Textbooks***

**IV. Course Requirements**

- A. The first step in the capstone course is to meet with the instructor of record to review the syllabus no later than the first week of the semester.
- B. The second step is to submit a proposal for the paper or project. The proposal should be written in academic formatting, 2-3 pages in length plus bibliography, and submitted by February 12.
- C. Once the proposal is approved, the student may begin work on an initial draft of the 20- to 25-page paper or comparable project. The deadline for the first draft is March 23.
- D. Once the draft is submitted, the student should utilize the time to prepare the required portfolio of syllabi and graded course work from the MTS degree program.
- E. The draft will be returned to the student with comments and corrections no later than April 2.
- F. The deadline for the final draft is April 16. Candidates then will schedule a meeting with a faculty committee prior to April 27.

- G. The final grade will reflect the quality of the final paper or project, presentation of the portfolio, and defense of the paper or project to the committee.
- H. The professor requires that the final paper or academic portions of the final project is written in Turabian formatting. Papers written in anything but Times New Roman, 12-point type, will not be graded. Please do not double-double spacing or use additional spacing between paragraphs. Use citations as necessary and third-person writing throughout.

**V. Grading Scale – grading criteria include, following the assignment, using proper grammar and writing techniques, and adhering to formatting (plusses and minuses may be assigned)**

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|---------------------|----------------|
| A (4.0) = Excellent | B (3.0) = Good |
| C (2.0) = Fair      | D (1.0) = Poor |

**VI. Policies**

- A. Submission of assignments on due dates as listed in the syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to meet deadlines.
- B. Turnitin.com - Each submission will be uploaded to Turnitin.com for originality checks.
- C. *Please review the Academic Catalog for requirements regarding Incompletes and Plagiarism issues. For more information on Library Services, please download the Library Handbook from the HGST website.*

**VII. Notes for Writing Assignments**

All writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. This includes matters of style and format.

The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation when more than one resource is cited. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except on pages with major headings (titles). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings (titles) require a two-inch top margin.

All students should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly for academic-style assignments. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- Avoid 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.
- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e., The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
- Grammar check works as well!
- All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.