



WINEBRENNER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

“Winebrenner equips leaders for service in God’s Kingdom.”

Term:

Course: IS 5100; Foundations for Seminary Studies

Instructor:

Phone:

Email:

Office/Contact Hours:



COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this Seminary orientation course, students demonstrate an understanding of graduate-level research, critical thinking, writing, and computer skills through the completion of a series of in-class, out-of-class, and online assignments. They complete initial institutional requirements, are incorporated into the community, and demonstrate proficiency in using academic tools and facilities. Students who do not demonstrate the minimum institutional standards of graduate-level research, critical thinking, writing, and computer skills will receive remediation in appropriate areas through the Office of the Chief Academic Officer. This course must be scheduled during the initial semester of matriculation for all students entering a program. *(1 credit hour)*

COURSE OUTCOMES

Outcomes: By the conclusion of this course, learners will:

1. demonstrate initial proficiency using academic tools and facilities;
2. engage in critical thinking and writing;
3. gain familiarity with academic writing styles and types; and
4. develop initial skills in graduate-level research.

PRIMARY COURSE TASKS

To aid in achieving the course outcomes, learners will:

1. be oriented to Populi, Teams, and the Digital Theological Library;
2. complete a Digital Theological Library Discovery assignment;
3. read a textbook assigned by the Instructor;
4. write a reflection paper using your degree program's approved writing style, properly incorporating citations.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

For MACC students only: (Note: these texts are listed in the APA format):

Austin, J. A. and Austin, J. T., II. (2020). *Surviving and thriving in your counseling program*. American Counseling Association. ISBN 978-1556203923.

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (7th ed.). Author. ISBN 978-1433832161.

For MDiv, MAPT, and ICS students only: (Note: these texts are listed in the Turabian format):

Zacharias, H. Daniel, and Benjamin K. Forrest. *Surviving and Thriving in Seminary: An Academic and Spiritual Handbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-57799-778-8.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-226-43057-7.

SUGGESTED BUT OPTIONAL READING FOR STUDENTS

Camp, P. G. (2009). *Finding your way: A guide to seminary life and beyond*. Cascade Books. ISBN 978-1-60608-252-2. (This entry is in the APA format. **A helpful text for all students.**)

Doyle, Terry and Todd Zakrajsek. *The New Science of Learning: How to Learn in Harmony with your Brain*. 2nd ed. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2019. ISBN 978-1-62036-657-8. (This entry is in the Turabian format. **A helpful text for all students.**)

Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012. ISBN 978-0830839759. (This entry is in the Turabian format.)

Shore, Z. (2016). *Grad school essentials: A crash course in scholarly skills*. University of California Press. ISBN 978-0520288300. (This entry is in the APA format.)

Other texts or suggested reading may be listed on our Populi course site.

METHODOLOGY

Student-centered learning methods used include self-guided lessons, experiential learning activities, class and small-group discussions, didactic teaching, interaction with reading assignments, class handouts, chats and discussion posts, pop quizzes, reading quizzes, multimedia, video lectures, PowerPoint presentations, written assignments, in-class and out of class assignments, development of critical thinking skills, demonstration of desired skills, and purposeful experiences.

EVALUATION AND GRADE SCALE

Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+	99-100%
A	94-98%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-73%
F	Below 70%

A course grade of F will not meet the requirements for degree credit.

Pluses and minuses are regularly assigned. The student's GPA is determined by dividing the total points by the number of trimester hours completed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Format for assignments follows the writing style for your degree. (APA for MACC; Turabian for MDiv, MAPT, and ICS.) Both writing styles include 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced text, page numbers, appropriate documentation of sources, a Bibliography (Reference List for APA), and a title page. *(Please refer to your required writing manual for more details. Sample papers for both writing styles are available on Populi > Home > Groups > Active Students > Files.)* Unless specified, you may use first person in your writing. All written work must be submitted as a Word.docx document.

PLEASE NOTE: Class discussions are powered and enriched by everyone processing and sharing what has been discovered from assigned reading, from personal experiences, and from in-class interactions. Learning is synergistic; it deals with abstract or theoretical ideas that have not yet been fully understood or internalized, and constructing learning and mastering concepts requires the community of learners sharing together—verbally. It's not a repetition of facts; if that's all we were interested in we could just do a quiz on the reading and be done. It's not a debate or an argument or posturing. Our class sessions are where we all can ask questions, make assertions, share concerns or doubts, express opinions, navigate new ideas, and encounter new ways of thinking. Everyone's input is vital to the learning environment. Quiet observation may have its place for most of the class session, but failing to contribute meaningfully is virtually the same as being absent from class.

1. Participation in Teams Class Sessions (10 points each, total of 40 points: four Teams sessions in the trimester.)

Students are expected to arrive on time for a total of four Teams class sessions (Weeks 1, 3, 6, and 12), follow Teams etiquette as described by the instructor and this syllabus, remain for the total time of the class, and actively participate in the discussions. Students should download the MS Teams app (part of the Microsoft Office Suite available to students) and access it through UF Net, the secure login area for the University of Findlay. Please note: you must use the Teams app, not the online version.

2. Completing Asynchronous Lessons (10 points for each completed Lesson, total of 60 points: 6 asynchronous lessons in the trimester.)

Lessons are completed at your own pace and must be completed in the order they are presented. Lessons consist of videos, discussion boards, viewing PowerPoints and “handouts.” Lessons are made available **one month prior to the official start of the term** and are considered part of the orientation to seminary. Students are urged to complete the Lessons prior to the first online Teams meeting.

When a discussion is required, students are expected to **write a post, read all other posts, and reply to at least one other student’s post**. A discussion post should be a minimum of 200 words and must use proper grammar and spelling. **Two of the discussions are automatically graded at 10 points each on the date the discussions close.**

3. Digital Theological Library Discovery Challenge Assignment (30 points)

In one of the Lessons a Digital Library Discovery assignment will be assigned and must be completed by accessing the DTL, filling out a Word document (provided in the Lesson) using the writing style of their degree program, and submitting the finished Word document through Populi. **Due Week 4.**

4. Reading and Reflection Paper (KPI 6) (30 points)

Students should be reading their assigned text (listed under Required Reading) early—preferably before the trimester begins—and finishing up on or before the second Teams class session in Week 3 of the trimester. Students will write a 3–5-page reflection paper (600-1,200 words) on that assigned text following the provided guide sheet (found in the lesson), writing in the writing style of their degree program and demonstrating proper citation skills. **Due Week 6 but you are encouraged to submit your Reflection Paper at any time after you have reviewed my comments on your DTL assignment. The earlier you submit your Reflection Paper, the more quickly you will be prepared for writing in other courses.**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week/Session	Topic	Readings
<p>Pre-Course Orientation and Training Lessons</p> <p>Try to complete all six lessons before our first Teams meeting.</p>	<p>Lesson 1: Introduction to Foundations for Seminary Studies, Program Outcomes and KPI, Populi, Teams, and more</p> <p>Lesson 2: The DTL—what is it and why is it so important?</p> <p>Lesson 3: Time Management</p> <p>Lesson 4: Writing Styles, Writing Assignment Types, Research, Citations, and Academic Integrity</p> <p>Lesson 5: Reading Well—Reading Wisely</p> <p>Lesson 6: Reflection Paper assignment instructions, tests and quizzes on Populi, and other details</p>	<p>You are encouraged to get a good start on your reading and try to get it completed by our first or second Teams class session.</p> <p>Remember, MACC students read:</p> <p>Austin, J. A. and Austin, J. T., II. (2020). <i>Surviving and thriving in your counseling program</i>. American Counseling Association. ISBN 978-1556203923.</p> <p>MDiv, MAPT, and ICS students read:</p> <p>Zacharias, H. Daniel, and Benjamin K. Forrest. <i>Surviving and Thriving in Seminary: An Academic and Spiritual Handbook</i>. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017. ISBN 978-1-57799-778-8.</p>
<p>Class Session 1 (Week 1)</p>	<p>Class Session 1 – 7:00-9:00 pm: Course introduction, seminary essentials preparing your mind, heart, and family; Program Outcomes and Course Outcomes; Q&A and Discussion</p>	<p>Work to complete your reading by our first or second Teams class session.</p>
<p>Class Session 2 (Week 3)</p>	<p>Class Session 2 – 7:00-9:00 pm: Q&A and Discussion</p>	<p>Your assigned reading should be completed in time for our second Teams class session. DTL discovery assignment due.</p>
<p>Class Session 3 (Week 6)</p>	<p>Class Session 3 – 7:00-9:00 pm: Q&A and Discussion</p>	<p>Use these weeks to write your Reflection Paper. Due this week.</p>
<p>Class Session 4 (Week 12)</p>	<p>Class Session 4 – 7:00-9:00 pm: Final Q&A and Discussion</p>	

DIGITAL DELIVERY GUIDELINES

(Since all of this course is digitally delivered, the following guidelines should be followed.)

Teams Online Meeting Etiquette

Students attending class via Microsoft Teams should do so in a distraction free environment and a learning posture. Taking class while driving or engaged in other activities that requires direct attention should be avoided. **For class sessions** you will need your computer with camera and microphone and a stable Internet connection. Your instructor recommends using a desktop or laptop that is stationary to avoid making your classmates “seasick” with a moving image of you on the screen. **It is optimal that you can look straight into the camera rather than down or to the side to give everyone in the class session a sense that we are all “present” and looking at each other.** It is not considered good online etiquette to have only your face or the top of your head visible; try to have your face centered in the screen. You can have the session on one side of your screen and take notes or view documents beside it in a split screen.

Except during breaks, all cameras should be turned on and you must be present; no blank screens or avatars during class session except for normal personal breaks. **Exercising, walking on a treadmill, driving your car, or rocking in a chair can also disrupt the classroom environment; please refrain from engaging in distracting activities during class sessions.** Students may eat when necessary as long as your mic is muted and you are not causing a disruption. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, please mute yourself until ready to speak to avoid having the class disrupted by background noise.

You may use headphones if background noise is present or if your microphone causes feedback. **Participation grades do include students’ attentiveness and active conversational interaction.**

Secure Environment

An adequate and appropriate learning environment is necessary when working within digital delivery systems. Students must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students should attend class meetings in a distraction-free environment that is secure from inadvertent breaches of privacy and confidentiality.
- Students should attend class from a webcam equipped computer or tablet with keyboard and use headphones if background noise is present.

THE SEMINARY POLICIES FOR PAPERS AND LATE WORK

All work is due to the instructor on or before the final day of class, according to the syllabus schedule.

Late Work During the Term.

A student who submits assigned written work late during the trimester, when the lateness is not due to a serious illness or death of a family member or extreme life/ministry situations outside his/her control, and reported to the instructor at the time of the late submission, will have his or her grade on such late work reduced a total of 10% for the first week's lateness (from one to seven days). The reduction will be an additional 10% for the second week's lateness (from eight to fourteen days, for a cumulative total of 20% penalty); and another 10% for the third week's lateness, after which the grade on the late work becomes an F. This same policy will also apply to scheduled examinations or tests. Students may petition the instructor in writing for an exception to this policy. When such exceptions last longer than the initial one week, the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) shall be notified by the instructor.

Individual instructors may have a stricter policy provided they consult with the CAO to make a final determination. It must be clearly stated in the syllabus with corresponding reasons for the exception such as multiple assignments building on each other.

Coursework extensions are negotiated with the course instructor during the term. Late work may not be submitted after the end of a term without filing a request for a course extension of the course through the CAO no later than one week prior to the end of the term.

DISABILITY INFORMATION

If you are a student with a diagnosed disability, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor and the CAO at least one week prior to the beginning of each trimester so that reasonable accommodations can be made. Students with approved ISAPs are responsible for providing each of their instructors with a copy of their ISAP and having a careful conversation with each instructor regarding how the ISAP can best be followed within the specific parameters of the course. See the Graduate Catalog for the full policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the personal responsibility of students to represent as their own work in reports, papers, or examinations only what they are entitled to honestly present. Violations of academic integrity include dishonesty and plagiarism. If a student violates the standard on academic integrity, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action determined by the instructor and CAO.

A growing concern in graduate work is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to compose or contribute to some or all written work. Please be aware that this is considered plagiarism. Doing respected, scholarly work requires that the work submitted is the learner's own, original work. Something written by AI is not considered the original work of the learner, but the work of the AI. Academic integrity at Winebrenner requires that all learners submit work that is their own.

Using helpful tools or apps to check spelling and grammar are permissible. For example, tools like MS Word autocorrect, spell-check, grammar-check features, or the Grammarly app can scan for errors and may make suggestions for edits. A translation app may help improve the readability of a paper for those whose first language is not English. However, using a translation app to improve another translation app can appear to be plagiarism. These helpful, rule-based, non-generative AI programs are very different from an AI program that composes writing from a few suggestions.

There are some educational benefits of using generative AI, so Winebrenner does not unilaterally prohibit all use of AI. Generative AI may only be used in very specific courses and assignments with the express permission of the instructor of record.

Your instructor has specified the following parameters for this course:

AI tools can be used to improve writing flow and content. It is the student's obligation to ensure that all such use is noted with a citation for each instance.

GRADE DISPUTE

When a student wishes to dispute a grade assigned in a course, the student should contact the Chief Academic Officer. This appeal process must be started within three weeks of the grade in dispute being posted. A Committee of Arbitration will be convened, whose decision shall be final. (See the Graduate Catalog for full details.)

INFORMED CONSENT

All Winebrenner faculty members are dedicated to the educational, personal, spiritual, and professional growth and development of Winebrenner students. Faculty are in a unique position as both instructors who assess students' academic skills but also as members of the counseling profession or as licensed and/or ordained clergy with an ethical obligation to their professions. All students are cautioned that Seminary courses are not meant to be a means of personal therapy. The focus in classes is on formation, self-awareness, acquiring knowledge, and the enhancement and growth of necessary skills. Should a student disclose information indicating impairment or the potential for harm to themselves, future clients, and/or others (including animals), the faculty member may take appropriate action in accordance with the state laws and applicable codes of ethics. It is each student's responsibility to determine *an appropriate level of self-disclosure balanced with reactions* in all learning activities. A more detailed Informed Consent Statement is found in the Graduate Catalog.

Important Information as you begin your studies at Winebrenner.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

All graduate students are reminded of the sections of the Graduate Catalog that address Winebrenner's institutional mission statement, Comprehensive Assessment Plan (CAP), and the Curriculum-Wide Student Learning Outcomes (CWSLOs).

The CWSLOs are intended to foster vital qualities of knowing, being, and doing in all participants in Winebrenner graduate degree programs:

- The graduate makes decisions through a scripturally informed decision-making process.
- The graduate embodies Christ-likeness through professional dispositions.
- The graduate practices effective forms of communication in her/his ministry context.
- The graduate integrates personal reflection that leads to personal growth.
- The graduate aligns skills with principles to promote context transformation.
- The graduate engages in diverse intellectual preparation to be conversant with the larger world.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR ALL DEGREE PROGRAMS

Like the Curriculum-Wide Student Learning Outcomes, each degree program has its own set of specific Program Outcomes. All students should become conversant with the Program Outcomes for their specific degree. The Program Outcomes are introduced at the beginning of the degree program, assessed at the midpoint of study (Progress Review), and integrated more deeply during specially designed summative experiences during the final trimesters of study.

DISPOSITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

While academic expectations of students are defined in the Graduate Catalog, the Program Outcomes of each degree also suggest personal and professional dispositions—behaviors and attitudes—that students should exhibit. It is important that all students become familiar with the dispositional expectations for their degree program as well as the “Standards of Life” section of the WTS Graduate Catalog.

INTRODUCTION, ASSESSMENT, AND INTEGRATION OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Beginning of Study:

Introduction – to the program outcomes for the degree.

IS 5100 Foundations for Seminary Studies – first trimester of study

CC 5000 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health – Fall

Mid-Point in Degree Coursework:

Assessment – progress check. (See details on Progress Review listed below.)

Progress Review – Mid-point based on credit hours (MAPT and MDiv)

or specific program requirements (MACC and DMin)

End of Degree Coursework:

Integration – summation of the program.

Summative Experience – final year

Supervised Ministry (MAPT)

MDiv Capstone (MDiv)

Practicum/Internship (MACC)

Project and Defense (DMin)

PROGRESS REVIEW

As students approach key stages in their program of study:

- MDiv and MAPT – at various points in program coursework through faculty and advisor input or concern, and midpoint based on credit hours;
- MACC – at multiple points and through multiple means in the program coursework;

the Chief Academic Officer will ensure that a progress review is initiated to determine that each student's performance and integration of degree progress objectives are on track.

The progress review will be performed by faculty members in the degree program, assisted by other faculty and staff. Typically, this will include the academic advisor and one other individual with pertinent expertise.

The CAO will create a report with the following data points to help guide to the progress review:

- Current GPA
- Any Academic or Dispositional Discipline/Warning/Probation
- Multiple Flags (Resolved and Unresolved)
- Any course with a grade C or below

The progress review panel will set an interview with each student ready for the review process to discuss the student's academic and dispositional status in their degree program. At the end of the progress review meeting the panel will provide a report to the CAO recommending: 1) the student continue in good-standing, 2) a Remediation Plan (RP), or 3) dismissal from the Seminary with final approval by the Executive Director or Seminary President. The CAO will inform the student in writing of the findings of the Review Panel.

All students are subject to policies outlined in the Winebrenner Catalog.

Syllabus revised: 01/01/2026