Class Information

Day and Time: Mon 4:45–7:15 PM
Room Number: E204

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Ty Kieser
Instructor Email: tkieser@criswell.edu
Instructor Phone: (214) 818–1306
Instructor Office Hours: Mondays 12–2 PM; Thursdays 2–4 PM; Sign up here

Course Description and Prerequisites

This course prepares students for academic success through instruction on the research process, research strategies, thesis topic selection, familiarization with form and style for papers and theses, use of library materials, computerized databases, and bibliographic resources. Attention is given to research writing, communication, and documentation.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1) Navigate scholarly resources, citations, and tools efficiently and prudently.
2) Develop and defend a research strategy that exhibits charity and erudition.
3) Execute clear, nuanced, and charitable scholarly contributions.

Required Textbooks

Anizor, Uche, *How to Read Theology: Engaging Doctrine Critically and Charitably*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. (978-0801049750)

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say*. 6th ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2024. (978-1324070030).

Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. (ISBN: 978-0830851317).

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th ed. Revised by Wayne G. Booth, et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. (ISBN: 978-0226430577).

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 5th ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2018. (ISBN: 978-1624666544).

Course Requirements and Assignments
1) **Participation and Discussion Preparation** (25%; 2.5 pts each): Students will engage with the readings carefully and they will serve as a key touchstone for our discussion in class. The format/structure of these is largely up to the student so long as it prepares you to engage in discussion and it can be submitted on Canvas. At minimum, students should have 5 discussion points for every class rooted in 5 key quotes (or strings of thematic quotations) from the readings. Please include the quotes AND your points of discussion. These might include clarifying questions, application questions, criticisms, comparisons, analogies, etc. These will be submitted on Canvas and are due before class begins on the day they are assigned.

2) **Workshop Items** (40%): Students will complete 11 different workshop items in preparation for 11 of our class sessions. See the point values, rubrics, and details on Canvas. These will be submitted on Canvas and are due before the beginning of the next class—e.g., if one is assigned on Monday the 4th, it must be submitted before class on the 11th.

3) **Précis** (15%; 10 + 5 pts): Students will submit a précis of their thesis or a current research paper. This précis will build off workshop items but should be edited and refined in order to reflect development in the students thinking and growth in their execution. It will be presented to the class (10 pts) in a 10–15 minutes and then edited into a final draft (5 pts). See Canvas for the rubric, expected sections, and details.

4) **Commitments of a Conversationalist** (20%): Students will develop a personal list (1,000-1,250 words [excluding footnotes]) of commitments detailing key components that students will execute in future research/writing/speaking. It need not be structured in paragraph format, but ought to engage (e.g., quote, draw from, disagree with, etc.) and cite the course readings thoroughly (including a minimum of 10 footnoted quotes). The paper will be graded on (A) engagement with readings; (B) depth and coherence of rationale; and (C) specificity and creativity of commitment. See Canvas for the rubric, expected sections, and details.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Late work
If your assignments are submitted late, your grade will be reduced by 10% for each calendar day late. However, any missed assignment may be submitted end of the semester for up to 50% credit.

Extra Credit
No extra credit will be available in this class.

Video Recording

To ensure FERPA compliance when a course is live-streamed or recorded, students can opt out of video recordings by requesting seating in a designated area off camera. Students who sit outside of this area are giving implicit permission to be recorded.

Class Attendance:

Students should only enroll in courses they are able to attend regularly.

- **On-campus** students are expected to attend class **in person** according to the course syllabus.
- Students enrolled in the **online section** must pay any applicable online course fees.
- Online students are expected to attend class **synchronously** at the scheduled time via the designated video conferencing platform, Zoom, found in the left-hand global menu in Canvas.
- Online students must have their **cameras turned on with sound muted** during class, and actively participate in discussions and activities. In order to be properly identified, students must upload a picture ID to their Canvas Account Profile *prior to the first online meeting.* For instructions on how to upload a profile picture, click here.

Missed Classes:

- Each instructor may decide how attendance impacts your grade and learning objectives. Details are provided within the course syllabus.
- Students are responsible for catching up on any material missed due to absence or tardiness.
  - Instructors are **not required** to allow make-up work for missed classes.

Attendance & Financial Aid:

- Students receiving **grants, loans, or scholarships** must meet participation requirements set by the college.
- It is the student's responsibility to:
  - Review relevant sections of the Academic Catalog.
  - Contact the **Financial Aid Office** for details on how attendance affects aid.
  - Understand the consequences of non-participation.

Census Period Attendance Requirement:

- Though Criswell College does not officially take attendance, it must verify that students **begin their courses** to meet federal aid regulations.
- **During the census period** (first two weeks of a 16-week semester or first week of shorter terms), students must participate in **academically related activities**, or they may be dropped from the course.

Examples of Qualifying Activities:

- Attending class in person or via live video with the instructor present
- Submitting an assignment, quiz, or exam
- Taking part in assigned tutorials, study groups, or discussion boards
- Having documented communication with the instructor about course content

Important Note:

Simply logging into Canvas or a Zoom session without participating (e.g., camera off, no interaction) **does not count** as attendance.

Canvas:

- Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based Learning Management System (LMS).
- **For online courses** at Criswell College, instructors use Canvas to:
  - Organize course content on a module basis using organizational tools within Canvas
  - Control the timing of course requirements through module control or assignment due dates to ensure that students are engaged for the full length of the semester or term
  - Accept assignments from students only inside the Canvas course (emailed assignments are not acceptable)
  - Provide written feedback on assignments only within Canvas, preferably through Speedgrader

- Use the Announcement or e-mail feature in Canvas to communicate with the students rather than by broadcasting to a class email listserv outside of canvas
- Use Zoom in Canvas for all "live" (synchronous) class sessions

Important Note:
Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at 844-358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the "I" will become an "F."

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,

- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,

- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and

- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Course Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI can be used wisely, and it should be used accordingly in this class (if it is used at all). It should NOT be used to generate text or idea (e.g., you should never copy and paste), but can be used as a referee (e.g., double checking grammar and logic) and reference (e.g., sources; however, as with any source, "trust but verify"). Basically, any use of AI that would be considered plagiarism if pulled from another person or source is strictly prohibited. Any use of AI that would be permissible if aided by another person or resource is permitted. For example, you wouldn't let your friend re-write your paper (or even an entire sentence), so you shouldn't let AI re-write you paper (or even an entire sentence).

Examples of AI-related functions you **may not use** without permission:
- Text Generation – You may not use AI to generate text for use in an assignment.
- Substantial revision – you may not use AI to revise your content beyond grammar and syntax
- Outline Generation – You may not use AI to generate an outline for an assignment.

 AI-related tools you **may use** without permission:
- Spellcheck and grammar – built into Word, Pages, and Google Docs

- AI research and summarize – tools that help you find sources to cite, such as the new AI tools built into Logos Bible Software.)

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at Criswell College Mental Health Resources, and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access a wide range of academic resources and receive research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on the second floor of the Education Building.

Login credentials for accessing the library's databases are emailed to students near the beginning of each semester.

For more information or assistance, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu or visit www.criswell.edu/academics/wallace-library/.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and build confidence. All tutors are recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) they are qualified to support the student body. To meet with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly at https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter. The Tutoring Center is located in room E203 of the Education Building.
 For questions, email tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

August 18th — Introduction
Read: Webster, "Habits" [recommended]

1) Research

August 25th — Topics
Read: Kibbe, *FTTT*, 9–76
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Kibbe Part 1
Assignment: Workshop Item #1: Topics and Texts (due before next class)

September 1st – Labor Day (No Class)

September 8th — Sources
Read: Kibbe, *FTTT*, 77–148
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Kibbe Part 2
Class: Library Resource Meeting — Meet w/ Valeri Knighten
Assignment: Workshop Item #2: Patterns and Gaps (due before next class)

September 15th — Reading
Read: Anizor, *How to Read Theology*
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Anizor

September 22nd — Technology
Watch: Introduction to Zotero [link]
Watch: Intermediate Introduction to MS Word [link]
Watch: Advanced Introduction to MS Word [link]
Watch: Introduction to shortcut keys [link]
Watch: Introduction to OneNote [link]
        †another program can be substituted for any of the above with permission

2) Writing

September 29th — Naming the Conversation
Read: Graff & Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say*, 1–122
Assignment: Graff & Birkenstein Part 1
Assignment: Workshop Item #3: Trial Theses (due before next class)

October 6th — Entering the Conversation
Read: Graff & Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say*, 123–305
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Graff & Birkenstein Part 2
Assignment: Workshop Item #4: Annotated Bibliography & Ranked Readings (due before next class)

October 13th — Student Development Week
Read: Perman, *What's Best Next*
Assignment: Workshop Item #5: Research Plan (due before next class)

October 20th — Research and Writing Test Cases
Skim: Turabian, *AMFW*, 16.1–17.8
Student Selections from four different formats – (1) article, (2) one book, (3) one dictionary entry, (4) one
        historic source
Assignment: Workshop Item #6: Formatting & Footnotes (due before next class)

October 27th — Revision
Read: Turabian, *AMFW*, 9.1–13.4
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Turabian
Assignment: Workshop Item #7: Revision (due before next class)

November 3rd — Style
Read: Pinker, *Sense of Style* [PDF]
Read: Williams & Bizup, *Style* [PDF]
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Pinker, Williams & Bizup
Assignment: Workshop Item #8: Style (due before next class)

3) Reasoning

November 10th — Analyzing Argumentation
Read: Weston*, Rulebook for Arguments*, 1–50
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Weston Part 1
Assignment: Workshop Item #9: Argument Exercises (due before next class)

November 17th — Argumentation Test Cases (No Synchronous meeting)
Read: Two Relevant Articles or Chapters — Selections made by students
Assignment: Discussion Preparation — focus on the nature/structure of the arguments (and not the content)
Assignment: Workshop Item #10: Literature Argument Demonstration (due before next class)

November 24th — Thanksgiving (No Class)

December 1st — Art of Argumentation
Read: Weston*, Rulebook for Arguments*, 51–100
Assignment: Discussion Preparation, Weston Part 2
Assignment: Workshop Item #11: abstract (due before next class)
Reminder: Précis Presented next week

December 8th — Arranging Argumentation
Assignment: Present Précis
Assignment: Commitments of a Conversationalist (due December 12th at 11:59 PM)
Assignment: Précis Final Draft (due December 12th at 11:59 PM)

Workshop Descriptions

Workshop Item #1: Topics and Texts (3 pts)
   – Name 3 topics and 3 subtopics of each topic that you're interested in
   – Determine one key piece of recent research (i.e., last 10 years) for each subtopic
   – Briefly narrate why you are interested in three of these subtopics

Workshop Item #2: Patterns and Gaps (3 pts)
   – Select 10 sources relevant to one of the subtopics above
   – Discern the general significance of each source for the subtopic*
            *you don't need to read these all cover to cover; look at the synopsis, table of contents,
            introductions, and book reviews
   – Name at least 3 patterns and the gaps that you see from these sources
        o Example genres of "patterns" and "gaps"
        o Methodological: most scholars use X method or Y method, not Z method; most scholars
          investigate X topic through Y theologian or Z theologian, not J theologian
        o Evidentiary: most scholars think X because of Y reason, not Z reason
        o Material: most scholars affirm X or Y, not Z

Workshop Item #3: Trial Theses (4 pts)
   – Provide 15 potential theses for your project
   – Select 3 of the most distinct theses and narrate the uniqueness and significance of each, using a few
     sentences for each.

Workshop Item #4: Annotated Bibliography & Ranked Readings (4 pts)
   – Provide an initial annotated bibliography of these three sources (from workshop #2 list)
        o An annotated bibliography should include the main argument of the text, the structure of the
          argument, a brief assessment, and a brief comment on the work's relevance for your project
          (about 400 words per source).
        o This should focus specifically on a thesis in these sources which relate to your subtopic and
          include the fundamental rationale for their conclusions.
   – List 25 sources in order of relevance to your research, using at least three categories: (1) Sources that
     you're relying upon for definitions and landscape; (2) sources that are fundamentally supportive; (3)
     sources that are fundamentally criticized/nuanced.

Workshop Item #5: Research Plan (4 pts)
   – Include each of the following (nb. multiple vocations require research, so this may be helpful whether
     you feel called to be preacher, teacher, writer, leader, counselor, etc.):
        o 30 Years — what 3 descriptions do you hope characterize your ministry/research/leadership
        o 20 Years — what 3 projects do you want to have completed (e.g., books written; class sequences
          taught; sermon series preached; initiatives administrated)

- 10 Years — what one (big) research goal do you have (include the context/occupation)
- 5 Years — plan for career: what focus/topic/virtues do you want to characterize your initial research trajectory
- 2 Years — Plan for degree+
  - Summary of your focus each semester
- 1 year
  - Monthly summary of your research —at least one task with its specified focus (e.g., particular books to read; sections to write; feedback).

Workshop Item #6: Formatting & Footnotes (4 pts)

- Properly format footnotes **and** bibliographic information for each of the four kinds of sources included here — (1) two articles, (2) two books, (3) two dictionary entries, (4) two historic sources [that are not from the same series]. These are provided on canvas
- Properly format at least two pages of drafted text (e.g., use the annotated bibliography), including: (A) at least one heading and one sub-heading, (B) at least one block quote, (C) at least one quote within a quote, (D) at least one hyphen, en dash, and em dash

Workshop Item #7: Revision (4 pts)

- Revise five pages of a classmate's writing, checking for formatting, punctuation, style, clarity, and coherence.

Workshop Item #8: Style (3 pts)

- Revise five pages of your own writing, especially for clarity and style—indicating changes through "track changes"

Workshop Item #9: Argument Exercises (4 pts)

- Complete argumentation exercises (on Canvas)

Workshop Item #10: Literature Argument Demonstration (3 pts)

- Outline the key claims in the two selected readings and indicate the necessary premises for each
- Include at least one major argument for each reading
- Include at least two supporting arguments for each reading
- Provide a brief evaluation of each argument (esp. on the validity and truthfulness of each)

Workshop Item #11: Abstract (4 pts)

- Write a careful abstract for your project
- It should be less than 300 words and include:
  - Purpose/problem statement
  - Main argument/contribution
  - Structure of the argument
  - Methodological commitments

o   Significance/implications

Précis Template

What? (Topic) *What journey are you on?*	My project focuses on 'x' question/ issue/ constructive concern/ etc.
Who? (Interlocutors) *Who are you listening to/speaking to along the way?*	My project engages and draws from . . . 　　X Theologian(s) 　　Y Sources (name ≥ 7) The main person I am trying to convince is . . . 　　Z theologian/friend/pastor and his/her _____ view on the topic
Why? (Rationale) *Why is this trip worth the effort?*	This issue is important/ interesting/ significant (to me) because . . . 　1. 'x' reason 　2. 'y' reason 　3. 'z' reason
Where? (Conclusion) *Where is the destination?*	I am going to argue: 　　Primary conclusion 　　[Secondary conclusion/contribution] 　　[Tertiary conclusion/contribution]
How? (Method & structure) *How do you navigate your way to the destination?*	In order to come to the above conclusion, I need to show that _____, _____, and _____ are true . . . 　1. 　2. 　3. 　4. 　Etc. I will present this argument according to this outline 　　1. Step 1 　　2. Step 2 　　3. Step 3 　　etc.

So What? (Implications and significance) *So what are the benefits of taking this journey—for you and for your reader?*	This paper has implications beyond the scope of my explicit argument. A few include: 1. Implication 1 2. Implication 2 etc.