

North Park Theological Seminary

Student Academic Handbook

Version: 2010 - 2011

The online version of the Student Academic Handbook is the current version and supersedes any printed copies.

If unable to access the Handbook online please contact the Seminary Academic Services office and a print copy will be mailed to you.

Contact Information:

**North Park Theological Seminary
Academic Services Office**

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INTRODUCTION

The Student Academic Handbook orients North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS) students to academic policies and procedures. Students should become proficient with Blackboard, Web advisor, and the North Park Seminary Homepage, which will be used on a regular basis throughout the student's time at NPTS. Students without access to a computer or the Internet are to call the Seminary Academic Services (1.773.244.5619) or write to Seminary Academic Services Office, c/o North Park Theological Seminary, Box 14, Chicago, IL 60625. Alternate arrangements will be made for access to program information and documents.

Please read the Student Academic Handbook carefully as it details policies and procedures necessary for program progress and completion. It is the student's responsibility to identify deadlines for various matters, when forms are needed, policies for appeal, and so on. Students are responsible for maintaining and regularly updating their program progress sheets (core sheets). These are used in meetings with one's faculty advisor.

The Seminary Academic Services Office is responsible for enforcement of academic guidelines, policies and procedures. Appointments to discuss questions or practices can be made by telephone (773.244.5619) or by email (semacademicserv@northpark.edu). Modifications and exceptions are made by petition to the Office of Seminary Academic Services.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Seminary Academic Services office contacts students through their North Park email account. (Students should have their personal email address set up to link to a North Park address.)

Blackboard and WebAdvisor

Blackboard is used for course work. WebAdvisor is used to pay bills, determine one's faculty advisor, view grades, and register for classes. WebAdvisor provides information to students regarding User Account Information, financial information, Financial Aid, Registration, and Academic Profile. Students may also access and edit personal information. (Instruction in the use of WebAdvisor is given at Orientation, and is available on the web site.)

Testing During Orientation

Before the week of Orientation, new students will receive information about the Bible Exam, Midwest Ministry testing, and other matters related to entry into Seminary.

Registration: General Information

North Park Theological Seminary uses the WebAdvisor online registration system. To register for courses at NPTS go to [login to WebAdvisor](#). Students can only register for classes when the registration period has been opened. Reasons for why a student maybe unable to register may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Full Enrollment
2. Course Cancellation
3. Holds on Account due to
 - a. Tuition
 - b. Rental Accounts
 - c. Library Accounts
4. Registration period has not been opened
5. Prerequisites for class not fulfilled
6. Instructor approval required
7. Online Registration Deadline has expired

WebAdvisor cannot be used to register for the following options:

1. Cross Registration
2. Directed Studies
3. Courses requiring permission of the Instructor

Brandel Library

To assist in academic research NPTS students have full access to Brandel Library. Brandel Library is located directly behind the Seminary building Nyvall Hall. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the various catalogs, books, databases, and articles the library offers.

<http://www.northpark.edu/Brandel-Library.aspx>

Computer Lab

A computer lab is located in the basement of Nyvall Hall and is available to NPTS students during stated hours. The computer lab is accessed with one ID card. Should access problems occur contact Campus Security at (773) 244-5780 or (773) 244-6200. Should you need the use of a computer, printer, or scanner outside posted hours, use the computer technology located at Brandel Library.

Academic Calendar

The Seminary Academic Calendar provides important dates for the academic year (when classes begin and end, registration dates, add/drop dates, holiday breaks, graduation application dates, final examination dates, special lectures, commencement, and so on). Students are to make note of all deadlines related to program matters and graduation. Access the Academic Calendar at this page <http://www.northpark.edu/seminary/academics/>

Academic Year

NPTS academic year is comprised of 3 semesters—Fall (August-December), Spring (February-May), and Summer (June-August). During January (J-Term) various on-campus intensives are offered in one or two weeks. J-Term is considered part of the Spring semester for purposes of registration. Summer Semester typically includes courses offered through the Center for Spiritual Direction, language intensives, and Theological Reflection Modules. **Please note Summer Semester courses may not meet for the full 10 weeks of the summer term.**

Recording Classes and Other Events

No one may record a class or other event without permission of the instructor or event coordinator.

Student Loan Information

Direct ALL inquiries concerning student loans to NPU Student Services (Tel. 773.244.5560 Email. financialaid@northpark.edu)

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Core sheets for degree programs are available on the Seminary web site. Students are responsible for using them in scheduling and advising. Students are ultimately responsible for the completion of their individual program requirements and maintaining and updating their core sheets. However, a variety of academic resources are available:

- The Seminary Catalog which details the individual degree programs, certificates, and course descriptions.
- The Student Academic Handbook, which outlines the necessary procedures and policies with relevance to completion of their individualized degree program.
- The Seminary website provides assistance with detailed course offerings, degree programs, and curriculum management.
- Faculty advisors who can provide assistance with course planning, preparation, and completion.
- Office of Academic Services in Nyvall Hall, 773.244.5619 or semacademicserv@northpark.edu

After admission to NPTS, students are assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors are NPTS faculty who know the degree programs and can be called upon with questions in relation to course planning, the call process, questions about seminary, and overall guidance or encouragement. Students are encouraged to consult their faculty advisor at least once in each academic year to avoid potential difficulties with degree program completion. Students can locate their faculty advisor on WebAdvisor. If an advisor is not listed, contact Seminary Academic Services at semacademicserv@northpark.edu. Visiting students may contact the Seminary Academic Services office for advising.

Typically, a change of degree program does not require a change in advisor. However, if either the student or the faculty member desires a change in advisor, this change is to be requested through the Seminary Academic Services office. During a sabbatical leave, the faculty member's advisees may be assigned to another faculty member.

Academic Load

Each semester, academic load should be carefully evaluated by the student and the academic advisor to ensure opportunities for community involvement and quality academic work. While attending NPTS students are encouraged to manage their time and to take into consideration

obligations such as work, family, church, and so on. Typically, first-year first-semester students may not enroll for more than 16 credit hours. Students on academic probation (GPA less than 2.5) may not register for more than 10 credit hours.

Credit Hours/Academic Load Level

1-7 Hours—Part Time Student

8+ Hours—Full-Time Student

STUDENT STATUS

Typically, students register for 13-16 credit hours per semester.

Visiting Students

Visiting students take courses for credit but are not enrolled in a degree or certificate program. Visiting students are not restricted in the number of courses they may take over time. However, if a visiting student chooses to apply for a specific program of studies, **all** requirements identified for completion of that program must be completed *regardless of the number of courses completed as a visiting student*. Among other requirements are Midwest testing, Degree Candidacy and End of Studies, Residency, Field Education, and so on. **Therefore, a student is not encouraged to take courses for credit as a visiting student unless he or she will within one year apply for a specific program of studies.** If the student does not intend to complete a specific program, it is more cost effective to register as an auditor. There is no cap on the number of courses taken for audit.

Course Audits/Continuing Education

Students must complete the Seminary Special Registration/Billing Request form in order to audit a course. A student who audits a course will not receive academic credit. Students may not audit a core course to fulfill a degree requirement. Each faculty member determines the extent to which auditors are required to complete course assignments. A student who wants to take the course for credit will have priority over a student who wants to take the course as an audit. If a course is oversubscribed, auditors will be asked to drop the course.

A student who is enrolled in a course for credit may change to audit status by submitting a completed Seminary Special Registration/Billing Request to the Seminary Academic Services office. A change from credit to audit may be allowed any time prior to the fourth week of the semester. **Please note:** A student may not change from Audit to Credit after the first week of class except by petition. The completed petition form must be submitted **no later** than the end of the fourth week of class.

CHANGE OF REGISTRATION: ADDING OR DROPPING A COURSE

Once registered, use WebAdvisor to either ADD or DROP a class. **It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the ADD/DROP policy and all deadlines.** Deadlines for ADD/DROP can be located on the student academic calendar, which is posted on the Seminary Website.

Adding a Course

Students may add a course through the Friday of the first week of classes on WebAdvisor. No course may be added to the student's registration after the first week of classes via WebAdvisor.

After the 1st week of class, students are required to fill out a course addition petition signed by the instructor and to submit the petition to Seminary Academic Services office **no later than 4 p.m. Friday of the 2nd week of classes. No course additions will be made after the 2nd week of classes.**

NOTE: Simply showing up to a course does not guarantee enrollment. A student must be registered for the course to attend classes.

Dropping a Course (Not Observing Deadlines has Consequences!)

Through the first week of class students may drop their course online through WebAdvisor. After the first week, and until the drop deadline (see below), a course may be dropped **with permission of the instructor and completion of a Drop form (see Seminary web site)**. After the fourth week, the course dropped with permission will be given a grade of "W" (withdrawal) and will appear as such on the student's transcript. Courses dropped without permission will be recorded as DW (Dropped without permission) and calculated as a failing grade. **Absence from classes or notice to the instructor does not constitute Withdrawal. In each case the student will receive a DW on his or her transcript. Drop deadlines for each semester are found on the Seminary Academic Calendar.**

If the Drop Deadline is Missed: It is the student's responsibility to drop a course before the drop deadline. **Drop forms will not be accepted by the University Student Services office after the drop deadline.** Should a student miss the drop and receive a DW, he or she may petition the Academic Dean in the case of extenuating circumstances. There is no guarantee that the petition will be approved. The petition is available through the Seminary Academic Services office. In the case of a disagreement, the student may petition to the University Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC). Petition forms are available for SASC through the University Student Services Office.

Course Refund Policy

Course Refunds for courses dropped with permission will be made as follows for regular term classes and for summer language intensives (typically six weeks in duration):

- Full refund if student submits a signed drop form prior to the start of a term or by the end of the first week of class.
- 80 percent refund if student withdraws by the end of the second week of a class.
- 60 percent refund if student withdraws by the end of the third week of a class.

- 50 percent refund if student withdraws by the end of the fourth week of a class.
- No refund after the end of the fourth week, or for courses dropped without permission.

The refund policy for intensive courses will follow the above pattern for each day the course meets. **For one and two week intensives:**

- Full refund if student submits a completed Drop form by 4 p.m. on the second day of class.
- 80 percent refund if student submits a completed Drop form by 4 p.m. on the third day of class.
- 60 percent refund if student submits a completed Drop form by 4 p.m. on the fourth day of class.
- 50 percent refund if student submits a completed Drop form by 4 p.m. on the fifth day of class.
- There is no refund after the fifth day of the course, or if the course is dropped without permission.

THE HISPANIC SUMMER PROGRAM (HSP)

North Park Theological Seminary is a member-school of the Hispanic Summer Program (HSP), and ecumenical organization that annually offers two-week intensive courses during the summer primarily for Latino students. Most of the courses are conducted in Spanish by qualified Latino instructors and at a different member seminary each summer.

To see a complete list of schools participating in HSP and the summer courses being offered, go to <http://www.hispanicsummerprogram.org>. The website also explains the application process for students interested in taking an HSP course (or courses). Students may also consult with the North Park Seminary faculty member who serves as the Seminary's liaison with HSP. The faculty representative may advise the student on the program and provide application forms.

CROSS-REGISTRATION THROUGH THE ACTS CONSORTIUM AND NCTI

North Park Theological Seminary is part of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS). To see a complete list of courses that are available to students offered by ACTS seminaries, go to <http://www.actschicago.org/>. Students interested in taking a course at a particular seminary are advised to go to that seminary's web site to confirm course description and schedule.

Members of the ACTS Consortium

- Catholic Theological Union
- Chicago Theological Seminary (United Church of Christ)
- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (United Methodist Church)

Loyola Pastoral Care Institute (Roman Catholic)
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America)
McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian Church, USA)
Meadville/Lombard Theological School (Unitarian Universalist Association)
North Park Theological Seminary (Evangelical Covenant Church)
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (American Baptist Churches, USA)
Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (Episcopal Church)
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Evangelical Free Church of America)
University of St. Mary of the Lake (Roman Catholic)

The Northside Chicago Theological Institute (NCTI) was organized in 1971 for educational and ecumenical purposes by five theological schools: North Park Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein Seminary) and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Since cross-registration is impractical given the distances between the schools, the Institute offers two residential seminars each year to provide students and faculty with opportunities to engage in theological reflection in an ecumenical context. These courses are open to students of all ACTS schools. Go to <http://www.actschicago.org/> and select "Cooperative Activities" for a description of current offerings and location.

Registering for an ACTS course:

- Email the Seminary Academic Services Office and request the ACTS registration form.
- Email the completed form to semacademicserv@northpark.edu
- Upon receiving the ACTS form, Seminary Academic Services personnel will either approve or not approve the student's request for cross registration. On approval, the form will be sent to the secondary school of registration for final approval. **Students are not permitted to register for an ACTS course directly with another seminary, or to contact the secondary school's registrar or instructor regarding course availability or to gain permission to take the course. Direct all questions to the Seminary Academic Services office.**

Cross-Registration Policies

- 1) Cross-registration applies only to regularly scheduled courses during the regular academic year of each institution. It is not available during the summer term.
- 2) Students must have approval from their primary school of registration and secondary school of registration before being added to the course roster. **Simply showing up to a cross-registration course at another ACTS seminary does not guarantee registration and the student will not receive credit for the course.**
- 2) Cross-registration is not available for Independent or Directed Studies.
- 3) The cross-registration limit for NPTS students is one course per semester or approximately 20 percent of the total credits needed to complete a degree program.

- 4) Cross-registration is typically to fulfill elective requirements. Permission from the relevant Field Chair of North Park Theological Seminary is required for a cross-registered course to fulfill a core requirement in a degree program. Without approval in writing, the course will count towards the student's elective credits.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES AND DIRECTED STUDIES

The Independent Study is an opportunity for graduate students to work one on one with a member of the faculty related to an area of interest that is not part of the regular curriculum. A Directed Study relates to a course currently in the curriculum. The student may request a Directed Study through the Seminary Academic Services Office when a particular course required for program completion is not available to the student in a timely manner.

Independent Studies

Independent Studies do not satisfy core requirements. Since faculty are limited in the number of independent studies they can supervise, both the professor and the academic dean of the Seminary must sign off on the study. The following policy statements govern the Independent Study:

- 1) A student may request an Independent Study in any of the Fields, providing that she/he possesses the necessary prerequisites and has maintained a 3.0 cumulative GPA or better.
- 2) An Independent Study is not to replicate a course in the current catalog.
- 3) In consultation with the professor of record, the student completes a syllabus for the Independent Study and submits it to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean approves all Independent Studies.
- 4) Upon completion, the student must have demonstrated to the professor's satisfaction that the requirements of the Independent Study have been fulfilled. The professor submits the grade on Web Advisor.
- 5) A student may take one Independent Study in any given semester.
- 6) Independent Studies may be offered on a pass/fail basis.

Directed Studies

The student confirms with the Seminary Academic Services Office that a particular course is required for program completion and whether or not a substitution may be approved. Academic Services personnel work with the student, the Field, and course instructor to determine how the Directed Study is to proceed. The following policy statements govern the Directed Study:

- 1) A Directed Study is approved only if a course required for program completion is not available to the student through the regular semester schedule and if a faculty member is available to direct the study. In some cases, if funds are not available to reimburse the faculty member, the request will be denied.

- 2) The instructor prepares the syllabus for the Directed Study which may follow the syllabus for the normally scheduled course.
- 3) About 90-100 hours of work are expected for completion of the course. Upon completion, the student must have demonstrated to the professor's satisfaction that the requirements of the Independent Study have been fulfilled. The professor submits the grade on Web Advisor.

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Attendance

Students are expected to be prompt and regular in attendance at all scheduled classes. Arrangements must be made with the instructor concerning short-term illness. In the case of longer illnesses or emergencies the student should notify the Seminary Dean of Students. If an academic leave of absence becomes necessary, contact Seminary Academic Services.

Academic Leave of Absence or Permanent Withdrawal (see below under Enrollment Status)

Consult Seminary Academic Services personnel if it becomes necessary to withdraw from all courses. Such withdrawal will be counted as a leave of absence or a permanent withdrawal. The requisite paperwork will be copied to the Dean of Students.

Course Evaluation

Student participation in course evaluations is critical to the ongoing quality of theological education at North Park Theological Seminary. At present, end of course evaluations are completed online through Blackboard. The end of course evaluation is anonymous and confidential. The online course evaluation is posted two weeks prior to the end of the course session and up to two weeks after the exam week.

To access course evaluations through Blackboard

- Connect to the internet
- Type **blackboard.northpark.edu** in the address bar
- Log into Blackboard – using your NPTS Log-in
- Click on the **My Courses** tab towards the top of the screen
- Course evaluations for the courses for which the student is enrolled will be located on the right side of the screen.

Students unable to access the Internet may contact the Seminary Academic Services office for a print copy.

Course Substitution

Normally, substitutions are not granted for required courses. However, the student may petition to have a course substitute for a required course if the substitution is in the same Field and typically in the same subject matter. Petition forms are available on the Seminary web site.

Greek Proficiency Exam

If it has been more than one year since a student has taken Greek prior to enrolling in Greek Exegesis, he or she must pass a proficiency exam to register for the course. Contact the Seminary Academic Services office for details.

Undergraduate Courses

Seminary students may take up to six credits from the undergraduate curriculum with permission. These will count as elective credits. The undergraduate professor of record will determine the nature of additional course work for graduate credit. Certain restrictions may apply for students holding a scholarship.

Dual Degree Programs

North Park Theological Seminary offers several Dual Degree programs with the School of Business and Nonprofit Management (SBNM). The following policies and procedures apply to Dual Degree programs:

1. Students must apply for a specific dual degree program through the Office of Seminary Admissions.
2. Students must be full time enrolled in Seminary each semester (8 credit hours) in fulfillment of the Seminary portion of the dual degree.
3. Students may take no more than three (3) SBNM courses per semester.
4. The dual degrees will be awarded at Commencement only upon completion of both degrees.
5. If a student drops out of the dual degree program, but chooses to complete one or other of the degree programs, she/he must re-apply to the relevant school for admission to the degree.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT SERVICES

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of a public entity.

See <http://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm> for the statement of the Act as amended in 2008.

Accommodation for Disabilities

NPTS accommodates students with special needs that affect capacity to complete a program of study. The student must submit a letter, documenting the disability, from his or her physician, other approved professional, or authorized agency, to the Seminary Academic Services office during the first month of his or her first semester. If a student is in need of housing

accommodations, the recommendations stated in the documentation must clearly state the housing needs and requirements of the student. Specific arrangements are made in discussion with the student, the Academic Dean, academic services personnel, and the instructor(s). Specific accommodations include the following:

- Note taker
- Tape Recorder
- [Tutoring](#)
- Extended time on tests
- Calculator
- Quiet testing area
- [Writing Center](#)
- Individual appointments
- Class relocation
- Appointment relocation

In any semester, the Seminary Academic Services office must be notified at least two weeks in advance in order to pursue needed accommodations or services. Additional support is available, upon request for the Seminary Academic Services office, from the NPU Student Services Office.

Accommodations Grievance Procedure

In the event of a disagreement between student and faculty, or with another NPTS or university employee, over an issue of the aforementioned accommodations, the student should first meet with the faculty member or other NPTS or university employee to seek resolution. If unsuccessful, the student may submit an appeal to the Seminary Academic Services office. If necessary, the appeal will be forwarded to the Seminary Academic Dean who is the final arbiter of the appeal. In cases of appeal, the faculty member's peers may be asked by the Academic Dean to decide as to the merit of the appeal. The student has the right to be represented by and/or to appeal to legal counsel.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Information for Students

As an enrolled student your educational records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Release of your educational record is not allowed without your prior written consent. If you wish to have your educational information released to a spouse, parent(s), guardian(s), or a specified third party you must complete the FERPA release form and return it either by fax (773) 244-6244 or by mail to:

North Park Theological Seminary

*3225 West Foster Avenue, Box #14
Chicago, Illinois 60625*

Without the release form on file, records will not be released, even to a spouse or parent(s). Examples of Educational Records include, but are not limited to, student's telephone listing, grades, transcripts, student billing, financial aid award, discipline and/or medical treatment records.

FERPA: General Guidance for Students, Faculty and Staff

FERPA is a Federal law that applies to educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under a program administered by the U. S. Department of Education. The statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the Department's regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

Under FERPA, schools must generally afford students who are 18 years or over, or attending a postsecondary institution:

- access to their education records
- an opportunity to seek to have the records amended
- some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

Access to Education Records

Schools are required by FERPA to:

- provide a student with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her education records within 45 days of the written receipt of a request
- provide a student with copies of education records or otherwise make the records available to the student if the student, for instance, lives outside of commuting distance of the school
- redact the names and other personally identifiable information about other students that may be included in the student's education records.

Schools are not required by FERPA to:

- Create or maintain education records;
- Provide students with calendars, notices, or other information which does not generally contain information directly related to the student;
- Respond to questions about the student.

Amendment of Education Records

Under FERPA, a school must:

- Consider a request from a student to amend inaccurate or misleading information in the student's education records;
- Offer the student a hearing on the matter if it decides not to amend the records in accordance with the request;

- Offer the student a right to place a statement to be kept and disclosed with the record if as a result of the hearing the school still decides not to amend the record.

A school is not required to consider requests for amendment under FERPA that:

- Seek to change a grade or disciplinary decision;
- Seek to change the opinions or reflections of a school official or other person reflected in an education record.

Disclosure of Education Records

A school must:

- Have a student's consent prior to the disclosure of education records;
- Ensure that the consent is signed and dated and states the purpose of the disclosure.

A school MAY disclose education records without consent when:

- The disclosure is to school officials who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests as set forth in the institution's annual notification of rights to students;
- The student is seeking or intending to enroll in another school;
- The disclosure is to state or local educational authorities auditing or enforcing Federal or State supported education programs or enforcing Federal laws which relate to those programs;
- The disclosure is to the parents of a student who is a dependent for income tax purposes;
- The disclosure is in connection with determining eligibility, amounts, and terms for financial aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of financial aid;
- The disclosure is pursuant to a lawfully issued court order or subpoena; or
- The information disclosed has been appropriately designated as directory information by the school.

Annual Notification

A school must annually notify students in attendance that they may:

- Inspect and review their education records;
- Seek amendment of inaccurate or misleading information in their education records;
- Consent to most disclosures of personally identifiable information from education records.

The annual notice must also include:

- Information for a student to file a complaint of an alleged violation with the FPCO;
- A description of who is considered to be a school official and what is considered to be a legitimate educational interest so that information may be shared with that individual; and
- Information about who to contact to seek access or amendment of education records.

Means of notification:

- Can include student newspaper; calendar; student programs guide; rules handbook, or other means reasonable likely to inform students;
- Notification does not have to be made individually to students.

Complaints of Alleged Violations:

Complaints of alleged violations may be addressed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Complaints must:

- Be timely submitted, not later than 180 days from the date you learned of the circumstances of the alleged violation
- Contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, including:
 - Relevant dates, such as the date of a request or a disclosure and the date the student learned of the alleged violation;
 - Names and titles of those school officials and other third parties involved;
 - A specific description of the education record around which the alleged violation occurred;
 - A description of any contact with school officials regarding the matter, including dates and estimated times of telephone calls and/or copies of any correspondence exchanged between the student and the school regarding the matter;
 - The name and address of the school, school district, and superintendent of the district;
 - Any additional evidence that would be helpful in the consideration of the complaint.

**Print the following page if you desire to complete and submit
the Release of Information Form**

North Park Theological Seminary Authorization for Release of Information

Under federal legislation, namely the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), I understand that my educational records cannot be released without my written permission or without a Parental Affidavit of Dependency certified by my parent or guardian.

I, _____ hereby authorize release of my educational
(please print name)
records by North Park Theological Seminary to the following people for the purpose of academic and educational progress:

Name of person	Relationship	SS# last four digits only
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Authorized individuals will be required to give the last four digits of their Social Security Number each time they contact North Park Theological Seminary to receive information pertaining to educational records. Unless the Seminary or University official that is contacted has direct access to the student release form, the official may not release information immediately upon request. In this case, a follow-up call or meeting will be scheduled with the authorized party.

This authorization will be in effect from the date this release was signed until I notify North Park Theological Seminary, Office of Academic Services in writing that I want to rescind my consent and/or I withdraw or graduate from the institution.

Please add any additional notes or comments as necessary.

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Student ID# _____

Send completed form to NPTS, Office of Academic Services

GRADING POLICIES

Grades are issued shortly after the conclusion of each term and posted on WebAdvisor. Students can access grades through their personal account after grades have been submitted by faculty. Unless otherwise indicated on the course syllabus, the following criteria apply:

A Superior work (A= 95-100; A- = 93-94)

This grade applies to exceptional work, the quality achieved through excellence of performance, not merely the fulfillment of the course requirements.

B Above average (B+ = 91-92; B = 88-90; B- = 86-87)

This grade applies to meritorious work, definitely above average, applied to more than the fulfillment of requirements.

C Average (C+ = 84-85; C = 80-83; C- = 78-79)

This grade applies to average work that still fulfills the course requirements.

D Unsatisfactory (D+ = 76-77; D = 72-75; D- = 70-71)

This grade, while indicating the student has completed a course, is to be understood as reflecting below average work. Course work receiving this grade will not be counted toward a degree.

F Failure (69 and below)

To receive credit in the subject the course must be repeated.

I Incomplete (see below)

This course is counted as an F in the calculation of GPA until the student's work is completed and submitted.

AU Audit

Students not taking a course for academic credit will receive an AU.

P Pass

This grade is based on evidence of completed assignments, regular attendance, and participation activities required by the instructor. A grade of P does not affect one's Grade Point Average (GPA).

F Failure

A failing grade in a Pass/Fail course *is calculated in a student's Grade Point Average*. Pass/Fail courses become part of the student's permanent record and will be taken into account in assessing the student's level of achievement.

Taking a Course as Pass/Fail

The following policies govern the pass/fail option:

- Courses approved as pass/fail are listed on the Seminary web site. Students may indicate their intent to take a course as pass/fail at the time of registration. (See Seminary Academic Services personnel to register for a course approved as Pass/Fail.)
- If a course is not listed as approved for pass/fail, the student must submit a completed petition to the Seminary Academic Services office. The petition form is available at the Seminary web site.
- A student may change the status of a course from letter grade to pass/fail if the course is identified as approved for pass/fail. The student must submit a request in writing or by email to the Seminary Academic Services office.
- No more than 1/3 of any student's courses (counted by number of courses, not by number of credit hours) shall be taken as pass/fail system. Spiritual Formation courses are not included in the computation.
- For the course to be graded as pass/fail, the request for change of status, or the petition must be submitted to the Seminary Academic Services office no later than the end of the **7th week of classes (or by 4 p.m. of the fourth day of an intensive course)**.

Grade of Incomplete

A grade of incomplete or I is granted only when a student can demonstrate sufficient cause for not completing the course work on time. Such cause includes illness, disability, emergency and/or unforeseeable circumstances. Incompletes are not intended as ordinary extensions of time to complete a course, but granted only under **extraordinary circumstances**. The professor is NOT obligated to grant the request for an incomplete.

To obtain an incomplete for a course, the student secures instructor approval and signature on the Incomplete Form available on the web site. The deadline for instructor approval is end of business day, the Friday before final examinations. The Form must be given to the Seminary Academic Services office. One copy will be sent to the student's advisor and another placed in the student's file.¹ The (I) is recorded at the time grades are due. The student must complete an Incomplete by the end of the following semester, after which the I (Incomplete) will become an F (Fail). Students who receive an Incomplete in the Spring semester have until the end of classes the following December to complete the work. Students who receive an Incomplete in the Fall semester have until the end of classes the following May to complete the work. A student who requires an additional extension must secure the permission of the instructor and submit the new date for completion to the Seminary Academic Services office before the grade deadline, or the grade reverts to F (Fail).

Grade Reduction for Late Papers

For papers that are past due but do not fall under the Incomplete policy, the course instructor determines penalties.

¹ Students are encouraged to keep a copy of ALL communication from the Seminary and University for about three years after they graduate.

Honors

Any degree seeking student who graduates with a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or above will be recognized as graduating with “High Honors.” Graduates with a GPA of 3.74 to 3.5 will be recognized with “Honors.” The calculation is based on grades for all but the final semester. Honors students wear gold cords at graduation designating their status. Honors status is not granted for certificate students. The diploma will show the honors status achieved after the final semester.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Grade Point values are based on a 4 point scale and are as follows:

A	4 points
A-	3.67
B+	3.34
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.34
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.34
D	1.0
D-	.67
F	No points.

The student is encouraged to monitor his or her GPA each semester as it is the indicator for such matters as change of status to Academic Probation, withdrawal of scholarship privilege, and so on.

Procedure Concerning Grade Disagreement

The student meets first with the faculty member to discuss the disagreement. The student may submit, in writing, a description of any unresolved disagreement over a grade to the Academic Dean who brings the issue to the Academic Cabinet. Similarly, the faculty member may ask the Academic Cabinet to decide as to the merit of the disagreement. The appeal is submitted to the Academic Cabinet through the Academic Dean’s office. The Academic Dean is the final arbiter of the disagreement.

TRANSCRIPTS

Students may request an official copy of their NPTS transcript online or in person. Emailed requests are acceptable only if the email includes the scanned transcript request form or letter with your signature of authorization. To request a transcript online, go to <http://www.northpark.edu/Alumni/Services-Benefits-Transcripts/Transcripts.aspx>

When completing the form, provide your current phone number and email address. Transcript requests cannot be made over the phone. To speak to someone regarding the transcript

request procedure, call 773-244-5560. If necessary, contact the Seminary Academic Services office for assistance.

The first copy of the official transcript is free of charge. For subsequent copies a \$5.00 processing fee is charged for each transcript. The NPU Student Services office accepts cash (walk-in only), check, or Visa/MasterCard (include the cardholder's name, account number, expiration date and the 3-digit verification number from the back of the card). Transcript requests are typically processed within 3-5 business days. For same day service (within 24 hours or while you wait at NPU Student Services office), the fee is \$10. The \$10 fee is required even on your first "free" copy if you request same day processing (the next request would then be at no charge).

To access an "unofficial" transcript of grades go to WebAdvisor.

- Login to the Student menu
- Under **Academic Profile** click on Transcript

There is no fee for the unofficial transcript. It is available up to six months after graduation.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

A student in **good standing** is admitted to a degree or certificate program, is currently enrolled, has a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or greater, has not been dismissed from the institution for any reason, and does not have a hold on their account from any office.

Academic Probation

A student is placed on academic probation when his or her cumulative grade point average falls below 2.5 (on a 4-point scale).

Students Admitted on Academic Probation. The academic progress of a student admitted on academic probation is reviewed at the end of the first semester. Students admitted on academic probation may be required to register for Academic Writing in their first year, and may be limited in the number of credit hours taken per term.

Current Students Placed on Academic Probation. Students whose GPA falls below 2.5 will receive a letter from the Academic Dean which will outline conditions and expectations particular to each student. The faculty advisor and academic services personnel monitor the progress of the student. Students who improve their cumulative GPA above the minimum standard at the end of the following term will be removed from academic probation. Students who improve their GPA above 2.5 for the semester but who fail to raise their cumulative GPA above the minimum will continue on academic probation.

The Dean of Students receives notification of all students on academic probation. The Dean of Students will notify the student of any restrictions on his or her activity.

Any student who is on academic probation for more than two consecutive semesters (except for extenuating circumstances) will be dismissed from studies at North Park Theological Seminary. Initially, the Academic Dean and the student will discuss the dismissal. If extenuating circumstances are indicated, a consultation will be arranged with the student, the Academic Dean, the student's faculty advisor, and the Dean of Students which may result in a decision of non-dismissal. In this case, the student will prepare a contract related to steps that he or she will complete to remove the probationary status. If the contract is not accomplished, dismissal will follow.

If a student is dismissed for academic reasons, she/he may petition the faculty in writing after one year for re-admission. The petition is submitted to the Seminary Academic Dean who presents it to the faculty who will consider such petitions on a case-by-case basis.

Change of Degree

Students who desire to change to a different degree program must complete a *Student Petition for Change of Degree* form. Students must talk with their advisor prior to filing the petition. The petition must include the reasons for desiring a change in degree. IN some cases, a petition for change of degree may be reviewed by the Academic Cabinet. In cases of Dual Degree, the School of Business will be consulted.

Degree Candidacy

After 24 credit hours, students apply for degree candidacy to the Seminary Student Services office. *See the Student Services Handbook for a description of the evaluation processes for Degree Candidacy and End of Studies.*

Degree Completion

Degree programs are to be completed within a seven year period. In certain circumstances, and with permission of the faculty, the term limit may be extended by an additional year. No more than three (3) extensions can be taken. After the tenth year, the student will be dropped from her/his program and must re-apply. He/she typically will be required to retake certain courses or to undergo repeat testing (e.g., Midwest Ministries testing).

Approved Academic Leave

A student may apply for an academic leave for one or more semesters up to the limit of four consecutive semesters (two academic years). *No extensions of academic leave will be approved beyond four consecutive semesters.* An approved academic leave stops the seven-year degree completion "clock" for the period of the approved leave. Once the student resumes her/his program, the seven-year program completion "clock" restarts. (See Degree Completion above.) While on an approved academic leave, and therefore not actively enrolled in classes, the student is not withdrawn from his or her academic program.

1. *Approved Academic Leave:* Students may interrupt their studies at NPTS for the purpose of an academic leave, which might include a temporary transfer to another seminary, for no more than four consecutive semesters (two academic years).
2. *Application for Academic Leave:* Students submit a form to the Seminary Academic Services office, identifying the reasons for the leave, what he/she expects to do during the absence, and the expected date of return. The Academic Dean and, if necessary, the Academic Cabinet review the application and approve or reject the request. Application must be made in the semester preceding the desired beginning of the leave to allow time for review of the application.
3. *Scholarship Status:* Scholarships are not held for students during academic leave of more than one semester in length. Students will need to re-apply for financial aid after one semester of approved academic leave.
4. *Housing:* Because a student must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) credit hours to remain in student housing, he or she may not stay in Seminary housing while on academic leave.
5. *Return from Academic Leave:* Students absent for four consecutive semesters must resume studies under the curriculum in place at the time of return. Students who return within one to three consecutive semesters of leave may continue their program under the catalog in place at the time of their matriculation.
6. *Academic Probation:* Students on academic probation may request a leave of absence subject to all conditions above. On return to studies, a contract must be submitted with the letter of request to return to studies indicating ways by which the student intends to improve his/her academic performance and raise GPA to 2.5 or higher.

Withdrawal from Studies

Students who intend to permanently withdraw from studies must submit a form stating this intent to the Academic Dean and the Dean of Students and Community Life. The form is placed in the student's academic file. The student is responsible for assuring proper withdrawal from all courses and obtaining clearance from various departments such as financial aid, student accounts, the library, and seminary housing.

Inactive without Approved Academic Leave

A student who has not been enrolled for two consecutive academic semesters without receiving approved leave will be automatically withdrawn from the institution. Re-admission to Seminary programs must be done subsequently through the Academic Services office at North Park Theological Seminary.

Re-admission after an Extended Absence

Students returning to studies after an approved academic leave within the time specified on their leave application, need not reapply. Students who have withdrawn or were withdrawn due to inactivity are required to reapply through the Seminary Academic Services office if it has been ten years. Anyone seeking admission to Seminary programs after more than ten years absence is required to apply through the Seminary Admissions Office. *Course work older than ten years will not be applied to a degree program.* (The ten years applies from the date the course is completed at NPTS and transcribed.) In

some instances, if a student passes a competency examination (for biblical languages), can document or otherwise give evidence that he/she has engaged in continued education and/or service in the subject area of the course work that is beyond the ten year limit, this course work *may* be accepted. Courses older than ten years, taken at another institution, will not be accepted as Advanced Standing or Transfer Credit.

ADVANCED STANDING

Advanced Standing is not an entitlement and may be withdrawn at any time. Advanced Standing consideration is available for students whose undergraduate cumulative GPA is **3.00 (on 4.0 scale)** or higher, and where courses being considered received a grade of B or higher. Typically, Advanced Standing is granted where the bachelor's degree is from an accredited institution with a major or minor in Bible, Theology, Religion, or a Ministry field. Advanced Standing is available if undergraduate work is deemed comparable to NPTS course requirements and if the following criteria are met.

Advanced Standing applies only to seminary degrees, not to the non-seminary portion of the Dual Degree.

- Advanced Standing does not apply to Field Education.
- The maximum amount of Advanced Standing credit for each degree program follows:
 - Master of Divinity—15 credit hours
 - M.A. in Theological Studies (MATS)—10 credit hours
 - M.A. in Christian Formation (MACF)—10 credit hours
 - M.A. in Christian Ministry (MACM)—7 credit hours
- Students can receive Advanced Standing for no more than **one (1) core course** in each of the areas of Bible (excluding Biblical Languages), Theology, Spiritual Formation, and Church History, and no more than **two (2) core courses** in the areas of Ministry/Christian Formation.
- Additional Advanced Standing, up to **six (6) credit hours**, will be designated as elective credits.
- Courses completed and transcribed more than ten (10) years previously will not be considered for Advanced Standing.

Applying for Advanced Standing

Current students must request an Advanced Standing evaluation within the first academic year. Normally, Advanced Standing evaluations are not conducted during the Admissions process. Incoming students must have a completed application on file and have received a letter of acceptance before Advanced Standing will be considered. It is the student's responsibility to request an Advanced Standing evaluation from the Seminary Academic Services office. The student must submit the following:

- 1) A web link to the undergraduate catalogue or hard copy of each course description.
- 2) *If requested*, the syllabus for the course(s).
- 3) In some cases, the reviewer may request copies of completed assignments.

Upon completion of the evaluation of a student's previous course work, a copy of the Advanced Standing form indicating awarded courses and a letter from the Seminary Academic Dean will be sent to the student by email—unless hard copy is requested. Contact Seminary Academic Services at semacademicserv@northpark.edu if there are any questions about the evaluation.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Current students and applicants may be eligible for transfer of credit for graduate level study completed at other accredited institutions. Transfer of credit is not automatic. Students seeking transfer of credit, or who wish to transfer to NPTS from another accredited theological institution may be asked to present a letter of good standing from the institution.

Transfer of Credit Policies and Procedures

Policies

- A student may request transfer credit for courses equivalent to courses at NPTS. Only courses with content that closely approximates core courses will be accepted as transfer credit for NPTS' core requirements.
- No more than one-half of the courses required for a NPTS degree may be granted by transfer of credit. Transfer of credit beyond this limit may be granted only in special circumstances. The request must include a rationale for permitting further credit based on such factors as ministry experience, personal references, academic excellence, or other relevant information. All requests will be reviewed by the Seminary Academic Cabinet.
- Students will complete all requirements for the degree (e.g., candidacy and end of studies reviews) and are required to complete the residency for their degree program. Residency requirements are as follows:
 - Master of Divinity—30 credit hours
 - M.A. in Theological Studies (MATS)—24 credit hours
 - M.A. in Christian Formation (MACF)—24 credit hours
 - M.A. in Christian Ministry (MACM)—21 credit hours
- Courses completed and transcribed more than ten (10) years previously will not be accepted as transfer credit.
- Consideration for transfer of credit is available for students whose cumulative GPA is 2.5 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) at the transfer school and at NPTS at the time of the request; and where courses being considered received a grade of C or higher.
- Field Education credits will be evaluated by the Field Education Office.
- In no case, can a student earn an MDiv degree and a second Seminary level master's degree in less than five (5) consecutive years.

Procedures:

Current Students. A current student may submit a request for Transfer of Credit after completion of their first semester (or four courses) and before the end of their first full year of study (or eight courses). The student must submit the following:

- 1) A web link to the graduate catalogue or hard copy of each course description at the transfer school.
- 2) *If requested*, the syllabus for the course(s).
- 3) In some cases, the reviewer may request copies of completed assignments.

Applicants. In certain circumstances, a transfer of credit review will be completed for an applicant to NPTS, but only after a completed application has been received. Admissions Office personnel will submit a request to the Seminary Academic Services Office for a Transfer of Credit review. In this case, Admissions will provide the following materials.

- 1) Copies of official transcripts. (Note that quarter hours are not computed at par with semester credit hours. Quarter system credit hours are converted to semester hours by dividing the number of quarter credit hours received by a factor of 1.5)
- 2) Access to the applicant's file
- 3) Any special requests such as the need for a speedy review
- 4) The applicant seeking transfer of credit must also submit the following:
 - A web link to the graduate catalogue or hard copy of each course description at the transfer school.
 - *If requested*, the syllabus for the course(s).
 - In some cases, the reviewer may request copies of completed assignments.

Prospective Students. No student receives a transfer of credit review without a completed application to NPTS. However, in rare cases, a prospective student may receive a transfer of credit review before completing an application. Prospective students will be considered on a case by case basis. The prospective student must submit the materials as indicated above.

Upon completion of the evaluation of a student's previous course work, a copy of the Transfer of Credit Form indicating awarded courses and a letter from the Seminary Academic Dean will be sent to the student by email—unless hard copy is requested. Contact Seminary Academic Services at semacademicserv@northpark.edu if there are any questions about the evaluation.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

North Park Theological Seminary supports an academic environment consistent with its values and mission. In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, appropriate designated authorities within the Seminary will inquire into and, if necessary, review such cases according to the principles, policies, and procedures outlined in this Handbook.

Categories and Definitions Explaining What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating on Quizzes, Tests, and Examinations

Individual or group activity for the purpose of dishonestly obtaining and/or distributing testable information prior to, during, or after an examination. Examples of dishonest activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Looking at an examination paper or answer sheet of another student.
- 2) Obtaining, prior to the administration of a test, unauthorized information regarding the test.
- 3) Possessing or distributing a test prior to its administration.
- 4) Using any unauthorized materials or equipment during an examination.
- 5) Cooperating or aiding in any of the above.

Plagiarism

Any attempt to represent the words or ideas of another (whether published or unpublished) as one's own. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Using the words of a published source in a written assignment without appropriate documentation.
- 2) Presenting as one's own the ideas and/or arguments from another source, including an Internet source.

See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/> for a more comprehensive discussion of issues related to plagiarism. (Last accessed October 2009)

Alteration of Academic Records

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Changing documentation in the Records Office (by computer or any other means).
- 2) Changing entries in an instructor's grade book.
- 3) Changing an answer to an already-graded academic exercise in order to falsely negotiate for a higher grade.

Reusing Work Done for Another Course

Work produced for one course cannot be used to satisfy an assignment in another course. If work in one course is used to inform part of an assignment in another course (e.g., building on previous research), the student must cite his or her work in the same way as any other source.

Sabotage

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Stealing, destroying, or altering another's academic work.
- 2) Hiding, mis-shelving, mutilating, or otherwise abusing library materials to keep others from using them.

Substitution

Using a proxy, or acting as proxy in an academic exercise. Examples of substitution include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Taking an examination for another student
- 2) Doing homework assignments for another student

Procedures to be followed in Cases of Academic Dishonesty

If an instructor has reason to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, the instructor will do the following:

1. Prepare a letter describing reasons for suspicion of the infraction.
2. The letter is discussed with the student(s).
3. If the suspicion is proved unwarranted, the letter may be included in the student's file with a note describing the resolution or conclusion of the issue.
4. If the suspicion is verified, the Academic Dean, in consultation with the instructor, determines an appropriate penalty.
5. The student is informed of the penalty and his or her right to appeal.
6. The instructor, and if necessary the Academic Dean, meets with the student to discuss the penalty and any appeal. The student has the right to invite a student colleague, his or her faculty advisor or other faculty member, a staff member, or cultural representative to this meeting.
7. The Dean of Students will be notified of any penalty and/or remedial work.
8. All letters, emails, and reports generated by the various meetings will be placed in the student's file.

One or more of the following penalties may be imposed once academic dishonesty has been confirmed. Any previous infractions will be considered in the imposition of such penalties:

- 1) A failing grade on the examination, paper, or project.
- 2) A failing grade in the course.
- 3) Suspension from the Seminary for a determined period.
- 4) Expulsion from the Seminary

The student has the right to appeal the penalty. The appeal must come within two weeks of receipt of the verdict. The student submits a letter with supporting documentation to the President and Dean of the Seminary. The President and Dean convenes a committee consisting of two faculty members appointed by the President and Dean from among faculty not currently teaching the student. The committee shall also include two representatives of the student's choice.

The Committee may

- 1) Reverse the finding and dismiss the penalty.
- 2) Confirm the finding and the penalty imposed

The decision of the President and Dean is final.

GRADUATION

Application for Graduation

Students expecting to graduate must apply the semester before and by the stated due date. See the academic calendar for due dates. Graduation audits will be returned to students within three (3) weeks of the application due date.

Graduation Requirements

Students are responsible for knowing the particular graduation requirements for their individual degree programs. All the following conditions must be met before the Board of Directors will recommend the candidate for a degree:

- 1) Complete the required semester hours of academic course work.
- 2) Complete all Field Education or Thesis requirements
- 3) Complete the residency requirement for their specific degree.
- 4) Achieve the minimum cumulative GPA for their degree program. No grade under a C- will be counted toward the degree.
- 5) Complete all testing and evaluation (i.e., End of Studies).
- 6) Complete all Incomplete work.
- 7) The candidate may participate in May commencement if there is an agreement with the Field Education office that field education requirements will be completed by the following August. The August date will appear on the student's diploma.
- 8) Pay in full all accounts and fees for the Seminary.

Commencement

The Commencement for the Seminary takes place in May. The Seminary does not have a December commencement. Students who complete their studies in December have the option to participate in the Commencement ceremony with the University or to return to campus for a Seminary May Commencement. Students who graduate in December, whether or not they participate in the May commencement, will have a December date on their diploma.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES

Program Review

After completing 1/3 of the credit hours in their program, students may request an informal audit of their academic progress toward completion. Submit this request to Seminary Academic Services.

Tutors

The Seminary offers free tutoring on a limited basis to international students and to students who need assistance with biblical languages. Students who desire a tutor should contact their faculty advisor or the Seminary Academic Services office.

Academic Writing Workshop

A one day seminar is offered for academic support. Contact Kris Bruckner at kbruckner@northpark.edu for information about the workshop. .

MNST 5101 Academic Writing

This course covers a variety of topics such as learning styles, study habits and skills, time management, and so on. This course is offered for one credit. In most cases enrolling in this course is voluntary. However, some students may be required to take this course as a condition of acceptance, academic testing or academic probation.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

Since North Park Theological Seminary is a graduate level institution, all work should meet graduate level expectations. In general this means all work should demonstrate superior research, convincing articulation of facts and ideas, and proper referencing and documentation of resources.

Format Guidelines

Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor, format is to follow Turabian. More detailed information can be found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., revised and expanded by Bonnie Biertwistle Honigsblum (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). For some courses instructors may require MLA or APA formats. See also, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Writing Research Papers

Research assignments will differ in purpose and expectations, but generally in a research paper you are expected both to provide *pertinent* factual information and to demonstrate a case. Merely providing a collage of ideas, facts, and quotations is insufficient. For example, if your assignment is to do a paper on Luther's view of the Lord's Supper, appropriate tasks would include an analysis of the debate, factual information from Luther's writings and explanations of them, and an explanation of why a particular alternative is preferable or why one cannot choose from the relevant options. If your assignment is to research a biblical text, normally you would analyze that text and the relevant facts that bear upon it, isolate and treat the issues involved in discussing that text (including important previous attempts at explanation), and provide an explanation of the intent and significance of that text. If the assignment is to devise a plan for evangelizing urban areas, relevant tasks could include showing how the characteristics of urban life alter evangelistic efforts, possibly why previous efforts have not been adequate, possibly what new ideas have been implemented, and how a biblical theology of evangelism wedded to sensitivity to urban life might offer new possibilities.

Guidelines for Papers

Papers not conforming to graduate level standards may be returned ungraded. Recognizing that each student has his or her own writing practices, the following information is provided as a general guideline to good practice.

1. Start early! Your paper will take longer than you think. Research can rarely be done quickly.
2. Determine the **purpose and the legitimate boundaries** of your study. Do not let secondary issues and extraneous material take your attention and time.
3. Do a significant amount of your research before trying to present your material. Even with the ability to cut and paste which computers offer, you cannot demonstrate your case if you do not have pertinent information at hand.
4. Where possible, and if necessary, use original sources, whether in translation or (preferably) in the original language. Do not copy a quotation (ancient or modern) from a secondary source (unless the original is unavailable); nor should you accept without examination someone else's summary of the material. **Examine the original yourself** to determine its relevance to your research.
5. After the research is completed, a preliminary outline may prove helpful.
6. A research paper is a presentation of a thesis where one attempts to demonstrate a point and persuade the reader about your convictions (unless the assignment is merely to provide a summary and description of the matter). Your presentation should highlight your main thesis or purpose(s). Many papers survey the field or deal with introductory issues and background material, but never get to a discussion of the subject or text. Provide the information and framework needed for the discussion.
7. In writing a paper you are framing an argument and, therefore, should be concerned about the **flow** of the logic. You will be greatly assisted by an introduction (displaying your purpose and its boundaries, showing the importance of the topic, and engaging the reader's interest), summaries at the end of major sections, and a conclusion. Important but subsidiary information should be placed in footnotes or appendices.
8. Do not be enslaved to the sources of your information. You are not trying to chronicle the contributions of others. You are trying to discuss an issue. Include the material of others only when they assist in **your** discussion.
9. Be sure to present a balanced discussion. What issues in your study (cultural, critical, exegetical, or theological) are debated and why? Give space to opposing views and enter into dialogue with them by analysis and critique. Avoid being overly dependent on one or only a few sources.
10. Frequent (and long) quotations should always be avoided. Quotations should be used sparingly and only if a quotation states your point more powerfully and succinctly than is otherwise possible; or if necessary to demonstrate divergence or consensus of opinion.
11. **Never plagiarize.** Plagiarism is the presentation of someone's ideas as if they were your own and involves either extensive use of someone's language or the failure to document the origin of ideas. **This is an ethical issue.** The source of any of your ideas or evidence must be documented in foot or end notes. Documenting in footnotes or

endnotes helps you avoid the charge of plagiarism by giving due credit; and you provide the reader with a map to retrace your research and find further discussion of the topic.

A more comprehensive discussion of issues related to plagiarism is found at:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/> (last accessed October 2009)

12. Be sure that the material is presented with technical accuracy. Follow a style-guide such as Turabian for factors pertaining to style, punctuation, capitalization, and footnote and bibliographic form. Always include a bibliography, but include only those items actually used in your research. Be especially careful with dictionary entries. Proofread or use spellcheck for spelling errors, typographical errors, and so on. In formal papers and theses do *not* use contractions. ("It's" is a contraction for "it is," not the possessive of "it," which is merely "its.") There *is* a difference between formal writing and conversation. Specific rules exist as well for material obtained from electronic sources. In addition to the material in Turabian see Xia Li and Nancy Crane's *Electronic styles: A Handbook for Citing Electronic Information* (Information Today, 1996) or for electronic versions of such information go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/584/01/> (last accessed October 2009)
13. Use gender inclusive language when referring to people. Such courtesy and sensitivity to audience should be presumed.
14. Pay attention to cultural nuances, avoiding unintentional negative descriptions of another culture.
15. Unless the professor indicates otherwise, papers should be **typed** or **printed** double-spaced on one side only of medium weight, white paper with one inch margins.
16. Unless the professor indicates otherwise, prepare a title page that includes course name and number, school, your name, and the date.

MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (MATS): Thesis Guidelines

Role of MATS director: Assigns thesis directors to students and works with director to form the committee of readers (2 readers). Serves as resource for thesis directors.

Role of Thesis Director: Works with the students throughout the research and writing phase of the thesis (part of this might include working with the student while s/he is enrolled in Research Methods), serves as liaison between the student and the committee and the student and the MATS director, organizes the thesis defense, makes students aware of deadlines and process, grades the thesis (can be in consultation with the committee), offers written feedback along with the grade to the student subsequent to the defense, completes paperwork for credit.

Role of Committee of Readers: Reads the thesis once the full draft is completed and approved by the director, serves as a resource person for the student (e.g., offers bibliographic suggestions), and participates in the thesis defense.

Masters Thesis: The primary goal of the master's thesis is for the student to develop research skills. When evaluating the thesis, including the defense, primary attention should be given to

how well the student has research his/her topic (so a detailed bibliography is important), how well the student has compiled/synthesized their sources, and interacted with the material in their own voice. Secondary attention is given to writing, including presentation and clarity.

Stages of Thesis Writing

Research: (often a student does stages 1-5 in one semester and 6-9 in a second semester, however this varies according to schedule and the discipline of the student)

1. Begin compiling your bibliography immediately.
2. Meet with Norma Sutton to go over correct formatting. If you wait until the end of writing, it's more work, so meet with her early.

Before the writing phase, have the following approved by your director:

3. Bibliography (for the beginning you want to have between 15-20 sources, including books, articles, internet resources, etc.)
4. Thesis paragraph – this should be a clear statement of what you are going to do/argue in your thesis.
5. Detailed outline of chapters. A full sentence outline is best. Chapter arrangement can be decided upon with director. (Theses are usually between 60-90 pages.)

Writing:

6. Turn in each chapter for approval as you complete them. Director makes suggestions for revisions.
7. Revise chapters and resubmit.
8. Submit full draft to director for approval. The draft should be fully edited and complete. The thesis does not need to go to committee members until the draft of the entire thesis has been approved by the director. The draft needs to be completed **6 weeks** before the end of the semester and distributed to the committee by the director.
9. Defense. A one hour defense will be scheduled by the director, during which time the committee can ask questions within the parameters of the thesis. Defense needs to be scheduled **before the last 4 weeks** of the semester.