

# THESIS HANDBOOK

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A Handbook

Prepared for

Students of

Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary

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Updated June 2020

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challenges them towards faithful living, while at the same time standing as a prophetic witness against those aspects of the culture that oppose the significance of the cross” (D. Eagle, 2002).  
The success of a constructive thesis proje

In addition to the Thesis Adviser, a second faculty member will be appointed to read and comment on the thesis. The Second Reader may be in a related field. The student may request a particular second reader when submitting the thesis proposal.

Final appointment of the Thesis Adviser and Second Reader will be made by the Dean, in consultation with the Thesis Coordinator and the Proposal Defense Committee, following approval of the thesis proposal.

## **DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL**

The initial work put into the development of a good proposal will go a long way toward the successful completion of the thesis. Students are expected to have read the appropriate literature and be conversant with the major issues in their field.

### **Meeting**

Each year the Thesis Coordinator schedules a meeting designed to help students explore the opportunities and challenges of writing a thesis. All students interested in writing a thesis are strongly encouraged to attend before submitting a proposal. Topics include academic expectations, proposal development, choosing advisers, and alternatives to writing a thesis.

In the year prior to graduation, the student will prepare a thesis proposal in consultation with the Adviser. After the Adviser approves the proposal it will be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator for preliminary review. If all the parts of the proposal are in place, the Thesis Coordinator, with the dean, forms a faculty committee to review the proposal. The student meets with the committee to present the proposal and respond to questions. Following the meeting, the Proposal Defense Committee will respond to the proposal, approving it or requesting clarifications or changes. Upon approval, the Dean will confirm the Adviser and assign a Second Reader.

**-8 pages)**

1. Working Thesis Title
2. Tentative Table of Contents
3. Introduction/rationale for the Thesis

The student should address the reason for interest in the topic and its significance. A brief literature review should be included to demonstrate awareness of previous work or literature on the topic. Clearly state the research problem, question, or hypothesis. This should not be more than one paragraph and should contain one sentence that can stand alone as the thesis statement or question. It should either be a question the thesis will answer, a hypothesis the thesis will seek to prove, or a model the thesis will construct.

4. Outline of Methodology

Here, the student indicates the type of methodology which the thesis will employ such as library research or field research (e.g., survey, ethnography), and the means for data collection and analysis.

5. Tentative Expected Conclusions

Finally, the student lists the kinds of findings and results that are likely to emerge from the research.

6. Selected Bibliography

Materials listed should represent each of the major divisions of the thesis and include journal articles. A good bibliography will have a minimum of 50 entries.

Examples of proposals done by previous students are available on reserve in the library. Current

March 15 (October 15)

A Complete working draft submitted to the Adviser.

April 10 (November 10)

Submit a revised full draft (including changes suggested by a grammarian) to the Adviser for approval. If approved, submit full draft to Second Reader.

by May 1 (by December 1)

Prepare abstract and complete defense.

Note: A defense will be scheduled only after the thesis has been passed for defense by the Adviser.

Before graduation

Final corrected copy to be submitted to Adviser for signature.

Final signed copy to be submitted for electronic copying one (1) week before graduation.

### **tensions**

After two registered semesters if a student does not finish they will receive an extension of 1 semester (no fee); if the thesis is not finished that semester the student will need to enroll in a 0-unit "Continuous Registration" section in order to continue and will be charged the amount equal to 1 unit of credit. (Note: summer session counts as a semester.)

A thesis must be completed, i.e., a final signed copy turned in before graduation in order for a student to participate in commencement exercises. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

## **THESIS FORMAT AND STYLE**

Maximum length of the body of the thesis is 120 pages. Minimum length is 100 pages. Appendixes and Bibliography may go beyond the stated boundaries.

There are three acceptable style manuals for preparation of theses. M.F.T. students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (7th Edition, c2019) in preparation of theses. O.T. and N.T. students are encouraged to use *The SBL Handbook of Style*. All other programs may use MLA, Chicago, or APA and shall conform to the latest edition of the style manual. *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses*, by Carole Slade and Robert Perrin, is recommended. The student is responsible for any corrections to be made if the format, mechanics, and style are incorrect.



**Documentation.** There are two basic systems of documentation: 1) notes and bibliography, and 2) parenthetical reference with a list of works cited. If the notes and bibliography format is used, the student may choose either footnotes or endnotes. Endnotes are to be placed at the end of the thesis, not at the end of each chapter.

Note: Exception to *Form and Style*: If parenthetical referencing is used, a full bibliography, not just a list of works cited is necessary.

Note: If parenthetical referencing is used and an explanatory note is needed, a footnote, not an endnote should be used.

**Elements of a Thesis.** There are three categories of materials in a thesis: the preliminaries, the body of the thesis, and the reference materials. *Form and Style* provides information on sequence and content of each. **Appendix B** includes samples for title page and signature/disclaimer page. *Form and Style* has additional sample pages. If more than one sample is given, either sample is acceptable.

Further guidance on writing a thesis can be found in David Madsen, *Successful Dissertations and Theses: A Guide to Graduate Research from Proposal to Completion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009).

**Format for M.F.T. Thesis.** Because the M.F.T. program at the Biblical Seminary integrates counseling and biblical theology, a thesis in this program should reflect a graduate level integration of the counseling and theological literature regarding the pro3P G[(c)4(ounse)3(li)-3(ng a)4(nd bibl)-

## **Format Guidelines**

**Typeface.** Printer fonts which contain at least ten spaces or characters to the inch, such as Courier (10) or Times New Roman (12), should be used.

**Margins.** The margins for the body of the thesis shall be one inch. Follow regulations for spacing of chapter headings and paging as outlined in *Form and Style* or the *APA Publication Manual*.

**Spacing.** The entire thesis must be double spaced with the following exceptions: chapter titles and headings, footnotes, table and figure captions, reference list items, and block quotations. Block quotations should be used for quotes that are five or more lines in length (three or more for poetry), and are indented only from the left margin. There should be no partially filled pages except at the end of chapters. (At least two lines of text must follow a heading at the bottom of a page. If there is insuffici (threv

**Title Page.** The title page shall conform to the sample in **Appendix B** at the end of this handbook.

**Acceptance, Disclaimer, and Permission Page.** The acceptance, disclaimer and permission page shall conform to the sample provided in **Appendix B**. It shall be of the same paper and type as the body of the thesis. The following disclaimer statement will be typed on the bottom of the page: “The views expressed in this thesis are those of the student and do not necessarily express the views of the Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary.” The Adviser, Second Reader and student will sign this page.

**Copyright Page.** Placing an electronic manuscript in a library is a form of publication. As such it is copyrighted material and should have a copyright notation. For example: © 2021 your name; All Rights Reserved

**Scripture references.** If used in the text of the thesis the name of the book is spelled out. If the reference is given in parentheses it is abbreviated.

Examples: In Romans 1:16 we read, “For I am not ashamed . . .”  
“For I am not ashamed . . . to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

**Punctuation.** Use the system of punctuation and capitalization found in the version of the Bible you are using.

**Italicization.** Words italicized in an English version of the Bible are not underlined in typing, as the purpose is different in normal writing.

**Abbreviations of Books of the Bible.** The following abbreviations, taken from the *University of Chicago Manual of Style*, should be used, except for those using the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

|         |              |       |       |           |          |
|---------|--------------|-------|-------|-----------|----------|
| Gen.    | II Kings     | Isa.  | Nah.  | Rom.      | Titus    |
| Exod.   | I Chron.     | Jer.  | Hab.  | I Cor.    | Philemon |
| Lev.    | II Chron.    | Lam.  | Zeph. | II Cor.   | Heb.     |
| Num.    | Ezra         | Ezek. | Hag.  | Gal.      | Jas.     |
| Deut.   | Neh.         | Dan.  | Zech. | Eph.      | I Pet.   |
| Josh.   | Esther       | Hos.  | Mal.  | Phil.     | II Pet.  |
| Judg.   | Job          | Joel  | Matt. | Col.      | I John   |
| Ruth    | Ps.          | Amos  | Mark  | I Thess.  | II John  |
| I Sam.  | Prov.        | Obad. | Luke  | II Thess. | III John |
| II Sam. | Eccles.      | Jonah | John  | I Tim.    | Jude     |
| I Kings | Song of Sol. | Mic.  | Acts  | II Tim.   | Rev.     |

If a student's preferred language is one other than English, and a thesis Adviser, Second Reader and grammarian can be found who are fluent in that language, the thesis may be written in that language.

Application must be made for this modification in the original thesis proposal, showing that these requirements can be met.

A five-page abstract of the thesis must be written in English by the student and made available three weeks prior to the defense so that participants have opportunity to be familiar with the thesis. The defense will be conducted in English.

### **COMPLETING THE THESIS**

As noted earlier, a thesis defense will not be scheduled until the faculty Adviser and Second Reader agree that the thesis meets a passing standard. An Adviser will not pass a thesis prior to submission of a complete full draft. It is the student's responsibility to allow adequate time for the Adviser and Second Reader to review the thesis, as well as adequate time to make any required changes or



library. If desired, the student may have copies bound at a local copy service or at Valley Library Bindery. All expenses for bound copies are the student's responsibility. (Note, for bound copies the left-hand margin should be changed to 1.5 inches.)

### **GRADING**

When a thesis is completed, a letter grade will be issued by the Adviser in consultation with the Second Reader.

The grade for the thesis is weighted as follows:

1. Written Thesis - 90%

Content - 85%

All thesis elements present  
Clear statement of purpose or hypothesis  
Appropriate methodology  
Good use of sources  
Good presentation of data  
Sound analysis  
Appropriate conclusions

Format - 5%

Text (Appropriate typeface and size, margins, spacing, etc.)  
Documentation (footnotes or endnotes, bibliography)  
Format (title page, table of contents, tables, figures, etc.)

2. Thesis Defense - 10%

Creative, incisive summary of the thesis  
Knowledgeable, gracious interaction with participants  
Ability to defend the thesis

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Offer initial counsel to students interested in writing a thesis.

1. Participate in thesis preparation meeting.
2. Consult with the Thesis Coordinator to identify topic and possible Adviser.
3. Recruit potential Adviser and receive approval of choice of Adviser from the Thesis Coordinator.
4. Prepare thesis proposal in consultation with Adviser.
5. Submit thesis proposal to Thesis Coordinator.
6. Present thesis proposal at a meeting of the Proposal Defense Committee. .
7. Research and write the thesis in consultation with the Adviser.
8. Secure and pay for the services of a grammarian unless waived by the Adviser. Referrals to recommended grammarians are available from the Thesis Coordinator.
9. Guarantee the accuracy and integrity of the thesis.
10. Make all corrections as required by the Adviser, Second Reader, or Grammarian.
11. In consultation with the Adviser, Second Reader and Thesis Coordinator, schedule a public defense of the thesis, and reserve a room.
12. With Thesis Coordinator arrange for a copy of the thesis and abstract to be made available before the defense.
13. Defend the thesis publicly.
14. Submit the corrected copy to the Adviser and Second Reader Qq0.f1 0 0 10 gq0.00000912 0 612 792 re

## **Grammarian**

1. Reads a complete first draft of the thesis to identify grammatical and stylistic errors that do not meet graduate writing standards. This may be waived by the Adviser.

## **APPENDIX**

### **SAMPLE PAGES**

The following pages are included as examples for the preparation of theses at FPUBS. They include:

1. Sample title page
2. Acceptance, disclaimer, and permission page



SALVATION IN SUBURBIA:  
A CASE STUDY OF  
THE INTERACTIONAL MODEL OF CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Divinity

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by  
William Robert Smith  
May 2020

Accepted by the Faculty of the Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree [name of degree].

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(Name), Adviser

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(Name), Second Reader

The views expressed in this thesis are those of the student and do not necessarily express the views of the Fresno Pacific University Biblical Seminary.

I grant Hiebert Library permission to make this thesis available through its online discovery service. This use is understood to be within the limitations of copyright.

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(Student) Signature

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Date