

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY STUDENTS

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A Research Paper

Presented to

Dr. Michael A. Milton

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In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of

MASTER OF DIVINITY

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by

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## **Introduction**

Independent Study Student's final research paper should state a summary of the reading and research done and the theological and pastoral-practical lessons learned.

Begin your Introduction by speaking of your reading and research. Transition the reader (I am the first reader, the second reader could be the Dean, or for that matter, ultimately, the accrediting agencies) into the paper.

Example: The work that I have undertaken in this independent study led to these major outcomes in my life and ministry.

Now. As you go forward in writing, remember to footnote any remarkable assertions you make, any quotes, and be certain to include:

References to the books you read

Citations from at least two peer-reviewed journal articles (from ATLA or JSTOR or Google Scholar, etc.).

Also, remember to transition from one major heading to the other. Each transition statement should be linked to the Introductory Statement. For example,

In this independent study course in church planting and church revitalization I employed the required readings and my own research to arrive at a new level of understanding in the subject. This paper seeks to describe the reading research, reflect on the theological implications of my study, the spiritual impact amount life, and the vocational implications for me as a pastor.

## **The Reading and Research**

Use this first section to write about your reading and research. You may provide not only a list of what you read, but how you "followed the footnotes trail" to conduct deeper research. How did this bring about deeper learning on your part? How were the readings helpful or not? What kind of research did you conduct as a result of the course?<sup>1</sup>

## **Theological Reflection**

In this section, the student will provide theological reflection on both the readings and research. You can find an article on theological reflection here: [What is theological reflection and](#)

[critical thinking and how to use it in a graduate-level research paper?](#)

### **Spiritual Formation**

Your reading and research should have led you to prayer and to the deeper time of reflection about your life as a disciple, as a future ministry of the gospel, and as a disciple maker of others. How did this course impact you as a believer? Did it help you in the goal of fulfilling God's mission in the world today? This is a section where you can talk about the more personal side of your reading and research.

### **Vocational Formation**

This independent study course should have, likewise, contributed to your understanding of "self" in relationship to your vocational goals. If you are going to be a pastor in the local church, you should answer the question, "how does this better equipped me for the work of pastoral ministry?" If you're going to be a missionary, an educator, and administrator, or if you're going to use your theological education to further a vocation in law or medicine or business you should, similarly, speak to how this course has helped you.

### **Conclusion**

A good conclusion will restate your introductory thesis or statement, reiterate the major points of your paper, and provide a compelling closing statement that signifies the enduring legacy of this course in your ministry or in your life as a believer in Jesus Christ.

The bibliography that follows is merely an example. This example includes journal articles as well as a book. Your bibliography should also include a bibliography that you created during your study as well as required readings. You should have at least two peer-reviewed journal articles in your bibliography.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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