



## DF 980 VOCATIONAL RENEWAL IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

**Semester: Summer II Erskine Online**

**Location: Erskine Online**

Monday, June 19, 2023 - Saturday, August 12, 2023

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This is a course on facing burnout and recovering meaning in the ministry.

### ***Mission Statement***

Erskine Theological Seminary, a graduate school of Erskine College, prepares men and women to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through theological higher education that is ecclesial, missional, and confessional.

### ***Course Description***

This 8-week asynchronous course will lead students through a study of the Pastoral Epistles to think theologically and biblically about the vocation of the parish pastor. Dr. Michael A. Milton, Distinguished Professor of Missions and Evangelism, is the professor of record for the course *Elective for DMIN students. Three hours of elective credit.*

### ***Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)***

My design of this course, including the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) that follow along with the individual assignments, is to assist you, the student, in advancing toward your goal(s) for ministry. Should the CLOs and/or the assignments need further clarity, I welcome your questions. It is my plan and expectation that by the end of this course, you will:

1. Carefully analyze the content of the Pastoral Epistles and make connections between the Pastoral Epistles' themes and the parish pastor's vocation.
2. Wisely interpret and apply the teachings of the Pastoral Epistles to their own lives.
3. Accurately demonstrate a critical appreciation of the Pastoral Epistles in the context of contemporary pastoral practice.
4. Faithfully formulate meaningful insights and questions in response to the material.
5. Insightfully discuss the theological implications of the content of the Pastoral Epistles.
6. Confidently teach the Pastoral Epistles to other Christian shepherds for the purpose of vocational renewal.

The Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) listed above aim to prepare MDiv students to achieve their degree program's Student Learning Outcomes SLOs 1, 2, and 3). Please refer to the current academic catalog under the MDiv program description for details on these outcomes.

### ***Bookstore Information and Reading Resources***

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks.

**PLEASE NOTE:** When ordering a book that has been published in more than one edition, make certain that you acquire the correct one (check the ISBN number when ordering); do not attempt to substitute an older edition of a required textbook.

### ***Course Resources***

In addition to the following resources, please review the appendices to this syllabus.

### *Rubrics*

- Online Discussion Board: <https://5mt.michaelmilton.org/2020/06/Online-Discussion-Rubric.pdf>
- Research Papers: <https://5mt.michaelmilton.org/2020/06/Dr-Miltons-Rubric-for-Theological-Reflection-Research-Papers.pdf>

### *Writing Resources*

- Milton, Michael A. "What is Theological Reflection and Critical Thinking?" <https://5mt.michaelmilton.org/2020/06/Dr-Miltons-Rubric-for-Theological-Reflection-Research-Papers.pdf>
- ———. "A Brief Guide for Writing Theological Reflection Papers." <https://michaelmilton.org/2014/08/13/a-brief-guide-for-writing-theological-reflection>
  - . "Writing the Weekly Theological Research Paper." <https://michaelmilton.org/2017/05/31/writing-the-weekly-theological-research-paper/>
- ———. "Academic Voice in Theological Higher Education." <https://michaelmilton.org/2021/01/19/academic-voice-in-theological-higher-education>
- ———. "The Way to Write an Online Discussion Board Post in Online Teaching and Learning." <https://5mt.michaelmilton.org/2020/06/Online-Discussion-Rubric.pdf>
- ———. "Following the Footnote Trail." <https://michaelmilton.org/2019/01/14/following-the-footnote-trail-the-deeper-learning-model-in-theological-higher-education/>
- ———. "A Philosophy of Teaching Statement." <https://michaelmilton.org/2019/05/20/a-teaching-philosophy/>

### *Other Resources*

- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE): For those who desire further clinical orientation in a cohort through Clinical Pastoral Education at the Institute. Erskine Theological Seminary and the ICPT provide accredited CPE units with distance education and for graduate or postgraduate academic credit. See the admissions officer for more information or visit: <https://seminary.erskine.edu/academics/cpe-at-erskine/>.

## **Required Texts**

### *A Note on Reading for this Course:*

This 8-week online intensive course requires students to read textbooks and conduct research to complete the course. The textbooks are not tied to any specific week in the course, so students are expected to read ahead and keep track of their progress. If a question arises in the course on a book you have not read, you will need to research in that volume or another. This is a doctoral level that assumes strong reading and research skills. The course is an opportunity to seek proficiency in research and writing as they are a vital component in a pedagogical foundation for conducting dissertation research and writing.

At the end of the course, students will turn in a final paper and must also report the percentage of the textbooks they have read. The reading percentage is based on the honor system.

### *Summary*

- Secure the assigned textbooks for the course.
- Read the textbooks as needed throughout the 8-week course.
- Keep track of your progress for your reporting.
- Report the percentage read at the time of submitting the final paper.

### ***Textbooks for this Course***

Barnes, Craig. *The Pastor as Minor Poet*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. ISBN: 978-0802829627; 146 pages.

Milton, Michael A. *The Secret Life of the Pastor*. Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015. ISBN: 978-1781915967; 128 pages.

Peterson, Eugene. *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992. ISBN: 978-0802808486; 207 pages.

Thornton, Martin. *Pastoral Theology: A Reorientation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010. ISBN: 978-1608997442; 288 pages.

### *Pick one:*

Dawn, Marva, and Eugene Peterson. *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999. ISBN: 978-0802846785; 266 pages.

Merritt, Carol Howard. *Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry in a New Generation*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. 978-1566993944. 160 pages.

Peterson, Eugene. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989. ISBN: 978-0802801142. 180 pages.

### ***Course Requirements and Expectations***

The grading is as follows:

Theological Reflection Papers (25%) (CLOs 1 and 2)

1. A Personal Theology of Pastoral Care and Counseling (module 2)

Theological Reflection Paper (module 6)

Readings (20%) (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

This includes textbooks and supplemental reading.

- Students will follow an honor code and submit their reading percentage in the space provided on the learning management system) (10%)
  - Students will respond to the Professor's "prompt" for the discussion board. Post

your response and at least two responses to other students. Online Discussion Board (100-200 words with references, at least one reference).

- Online Discussion Board Postings (25%) (CLOs 1 and 5)

Final Project (30%) (CLOs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Research and write a 10-12-page theological research paper on “A Personal Philosophy of Ministry.” See Appendix

### ***Applied Ministry Assignment (AMER) with Theological Reflection***

In most ETS courses, the faculty has implemented a competency-based theological (CBTE) component requiring students to take what they are learning in the seminary classroom and apply it in their present church or ministry setting. Each student will prepare and implement an applied ministry assignment during the semester using some key aspects of the course content.

Examples of applied ministry assignments may include preaching a sermon, teaching a class, or leading a Bible study, leading a worship service, or a ministry team meeting. In consultation with the dean of the seminary, the course instructor may require another creative ministry application assignment or project within the student’s ministry context. Students are also welcome to suggest creative applications, appropriate to this particular course, with the instructor’s approval required.

The student’s applied ministry assignment will be assessed by the student’s ministry supervisor (pastor, associate pastor, elder, or other church/ministry leader) using the [AMER](#) evaluation form. The point of this integrative assignment is to demonstrate the student’s competence in both the content of the course and his/her ability to convey or integrate the course material in his or her ministry setting. After the student has implemented the assignment in his or her context, she/he will turn in to the instructor the preparation she or he wrote or designed for the applied ministry assignment along with a scanned copy of the completed AMER report. This completed AMER must include both student self-evaluation and the ministry supervisor’s evaluation.

Please note that all preparation work, the AMER report, and any other documentation for the applied ministry assignment must be submitted in pdf format. This assignment may be completed in the student’s home church or in another ministry setting approved by the course instructor.

The Applied Ministry Evaluation Report should include a student response on spiritual formation: “How has the course and ministry *praxis* supported your life with God?”

This is a pass/fail assignment and is necessary for completing this course.

### ***Grading***

Grades for written assignments will be assigned based on clarity, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, correctness of grammar and style, and adherence to instructions. Final grades will also depend heavily on student attendance and active class participation. The Seminary grading scale is published in the [Catalog](#).

In general, student work will be evaluated using the following scale:

1. Creative, clear, thorough, going well beyond expectation.
2. Consistently competent and complete, with at most minor errors or deficiencies.
3. Adequate but uninspired, marred by notable omissions and/or errors.
4. Weak, superficial, unclear, incomplete, falls short of expectation.
5. Inadequate, confused, with major omissions and/or errors.

*Grading Scale for the Master degree programs:*

GRADE	VALUE	GPA	GRADE	VALUE	GPA
A	95-100	4.0	C	80-83	2.0
A-	93-94	3.7	C-	78-79	1.7
B+	91-92	3.3	D+	76-77	1.3
B	88-90	3.0	D	72-75	1.0
B-	86-87	2.7	D-	70-71	0.7
C+	84-85	2.3	F	0-69	0.0

### ***Writing Standards***

All written work must conform to the [ETS Style and Form Standards](#). For additional information, use the latest edition of the Turabian manual of style and typed in 12-point type, Times New Roman (or similar), normally double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Some reflection papers (which do not use footnotes) may be single spaced. See syllabus requirements for each assignment.

Turabian, Kate L., et. al. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Ninth ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. (Paper ISBN: 978-0-226-43057-7, or Cloth ISBN: 978-0-226-49442-5, or eTextbook ISBN: 022671389X)

Additional writing guidelines are available in the [Sample Paper and Writing Aids](#) folder located on the Seminary website. There you will find sample papers for several courses, a “Seminary Research Paper Template,” a bibliography sample, footnote samples, and other similar writing resources.

Students who may need more assistance are encouraged to peruse [these documents](#) for improved writing skills. By clicking this link, students will find the [Erskine Theological Seminary Writing Rubric](#). Please scroll down to the Writing Assessment Rubric and download it.

Students are strongly encouraged to review the provisions of the Seminary's Catalog, particularly those governing registration and withdrawal from classes, class attendance, grades (including incompletes), academic conduct, and expectations for written assignments.

**SEMINARY POLICIES:** [Click here.](#)

Seminary website: <http://seminary.erskine.edu>

Taping Class Lectures: If you wish to tape a lecture using your own recording device, you must complete an "Audio Recording Request" form, which can be downloaded from the Seminary website. When permission is given, it is only for the student's personal use and is not to be posted online or distributed elsewhere.

### **FOR OPTIONAL USE:**

To ensure original writings, submission to this site will scan and evaluate papers: <https://www.turnitin.com>

**LIBRARY GUIDES:** <http://libguides.erskine.edu/databases>

### ***Assignments***

#### *Introduction*

Students are expected to experience the lecture, participate in weekly peer-to-peer interaction on the discussion board (by the Friday of the week) and submit the required papers on time (Due Monday following the topic at noon).

Throughout the course, students will be required to work on three research papers (3-5 pages plus cover and bibliography pages, according to the usage in the Erskine Seminary Style Manual [that is based on the Turabian 9th edition style], using at least two peer-reviewed journal articles to demonstrate independent research), and a final research paper that requires a philosophy of ministry theological reflection paper (10-12 pages). Instructions for the final paper are in Appendix 5: "Writing a Philosophy of Ministry Paper."

### **Assessment/Grading**

1. Three Research Papers (10% each)
2. Online Discussion Board.
  - a. See <https://michaelmilton.org/2020/06/11/idea-the-way-to-write-a-discussion-board-post-in-online-teaching-and-learning/>. Weekly assignment (20%).
3. Reading (20%)
4. Final Paper (30%)

### **Course Outline**

The course will offer the following lessons from the Pastoral Epistles:

### ***Module 1: Reassessing Expectations in Ministry (Research Paper 1)***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scripture and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.
  - Question 1: What ministry expectation did you have that turned out to be false or wrong? Why? Support your answer with Scripture and a peer-reviewed journal article.
  - Question 2: What ministry expectation did a congregation (or another area of ministry, e.g., an employer of chaplains) have that turned out to be false or wrong? Why? Support your answer with Scripture and a peer-reviewed journal article.
- Research and write a research paper and turn it in by the Monday following at noon.
  - 3–5-page research paper on "The Presenting Issues: My Three Greatest Concerns in Ministry."

### ***Module 2: Reconnecting with one's sacred encounter.***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.
  - Question 1: Reading Paul in this week's assigned passages, what is his "one sermon?" How so?
  - Question 2: How is Paul's testimony instructive to Timothy?

### ***Module 3: Reaffirming one's divine calling (Research Paper 2)***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board post and responses.
  - Question 1: How does our experience of God's call inform our ministries today?
  - Question 2: Why is our call to ministry related to evangelism?
- Research and write research paper and turn in by the Monday following at noon.
  - Wrote a 3–5-page research paper on "My One Sermon: A Study in Testimony as Power for Ministry."

### ***Module 4: Renewing one's passion for the priority of the sacred word.***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.
  - Question 1: How did the Word of God impact your calling?
  - Question 2: Why does Paul call on Timothy go recall who taught him the scriptures?

### ***Module 5: Recommitting one's life to the sacred mission.***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.

- Question 1: What is a possible result of disconnecting our vocation from God’s mission in the world?
- Question 2: How might this scenario come about?

***Module 6: Re-orientating pastoral ministry (Research Paper 3)***

- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.
  - Question 1: How does Barnes’s model of the pastor as a “minor poet” fit with Paul’s example?
  - Question 2: Martin Thornton was an Anglo-Catholic and, thus, wrote out of his faith. From your own convictions, describe the practical effect of a pastor and church (or other ministries) reorientating evangelism from “enlistment” to “enfolding?”
- Research and write a research paper and turn it in by the Monday following at noon.
  - Research Paper: 3-5 pages on "Reorienting Pastoral Ministry: Lessons Learned, Adjustments Needed."

***Module 7: Reframing Ministry by Seasons (“From the Apprentice to the Keeper of Meaning”)***

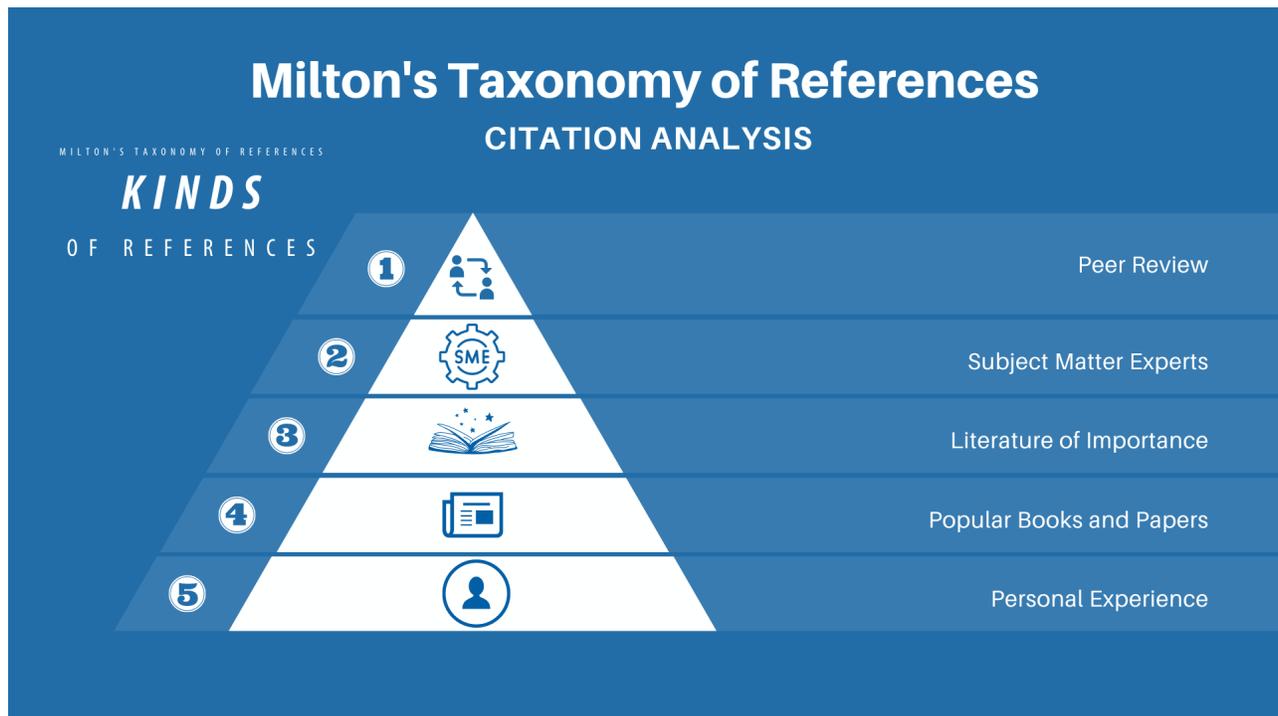
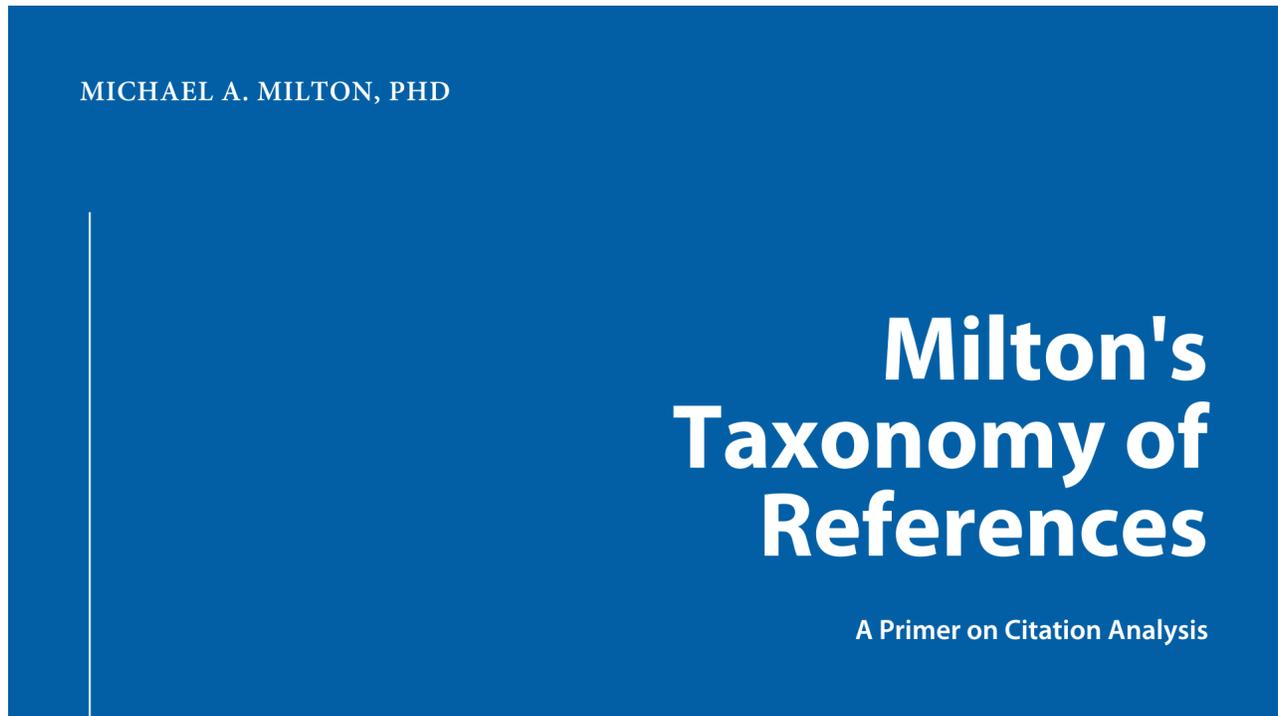
- View lecture.
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses.
  - For week 7 you will conduct two peer reviews. See the prompt that follows.
- Research Final Paper: A Philosophy of Ministry (Instructions: See Appendix 5).
  - Research final paper
  - Create and upload an outline (only) for the discussion board.
  - Students will conduct peer-review on a at least two other papers online, in the discussion board section.
  - Use insights to strengthen your research and writing.

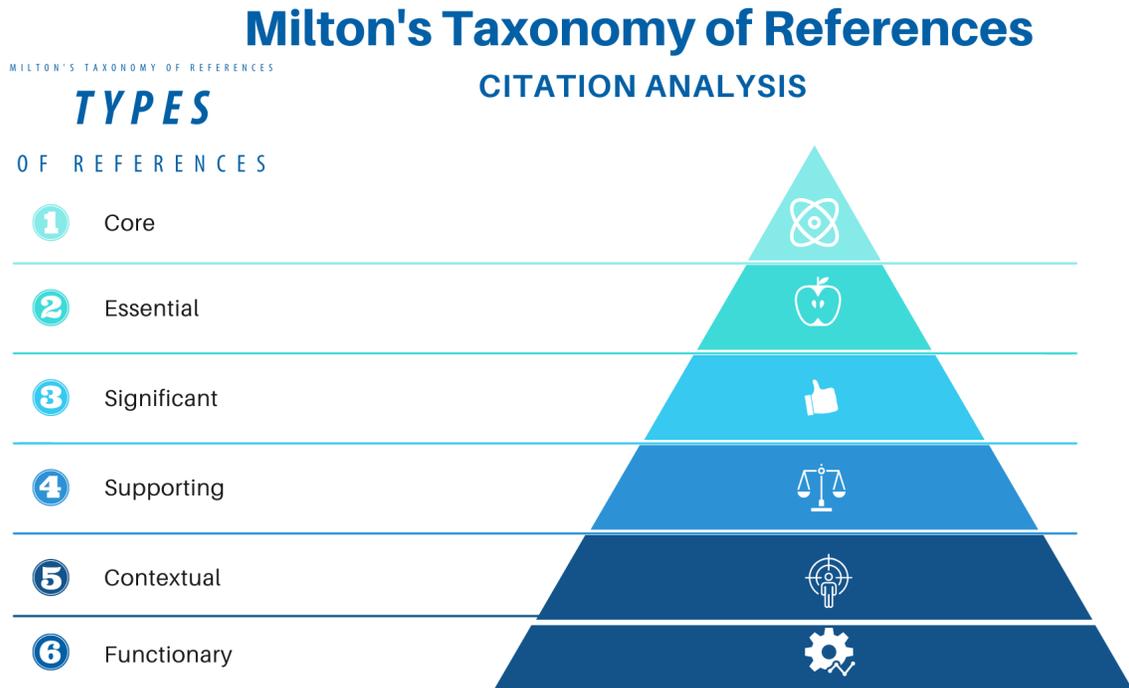
***Module 8: Reengaging Ministry with Insight (“From the Apprentice to the Keeper of Meaning”)***

- View Lecture
- Read the Key Scriptures and continue in the textbooks.
- Complete online discussion board posts and responses
  - How does the “keeper of meaning” stage relate to the first or second stage of ministry?
  - What one insight do you leave with? Why or how is it important to you?
- Write the final paper, “A Personal Philosophy of Ministry.”
  - Upload on the LMS platform by the Erskine Online Summer Semester 2 end date: Saturday, August 12, 2023, by Midnight.

## Appendix 1: Milton's Taxonomy of Citations

*Michael Milton's Taxonomy of References and Citations in Research Papers*





We began work on the classification of references in theology and religious studies to help graduate and postgraduate students in classifying and measuring references. There was a need for a simple division of kinds and types of references. Indeed, we have seen the phrase "Milton's Taxonomy of References" as "a framework for classifying the different types of references used in academic writing," particularly in theological and religious studies. The taxonomy was developed by a simple formula for citation analysis. *The standard is, for the most part, a demonstration of the received value of respective content.* [See <https://michaelmilton.org/2019/06/21/a-taxonomy-of-references-in-writing-graduate-level-theological-papers/>.]

### *Five Kinds (divisions) and Six Types (subdivisions)*

The taxonomy categorizes references into five *kinds* and six different *types* based on their level of relevance and the purpose for which they are used.

#### *I. The five kinds of references are:*

1. Peer-reviewed. The peer-reviewed journal article, monograph, or book is invested with the highest possible editorial value. The respective content has undergone significant testing by the scientific method or through approbation by subject matter experts in the field. The content is deemed to be of a superior kind because of the tested process that produces material more likely than not to reflect some mastery in a respective area of knowledge.
2. Subject Matter Experts. Being a subject matter expert is not an honor assumed to oneself. The SME is a distinguished scholar or practitioner in a respective field by acclamation of professional peers, and demonstrated through reviews, commentaries, or some other form of professional peer affirmation. The SME is graded below PR content for the introduction of some necessary subjectivity.

3. Literature of importance. Literature of importance includes ancient, medieval, and modern content from any culture that has earned considerable fame due to its received value. This includes but is not limited to the 102 ideas in *The Syntopicon* by Mortimer J. Adler (1902-2001), and *The Great Books*. Indeed, each field of study has a literature of importance that includes works that may be obscure to the larger encyclopedia of knowledge but is considered essential and authoritative by those in the respective field. A quote from Adler is helpful in recognizing literature of importance: "The reader must be informed that the 102 ideas, along with their topics, were not imposed on the *Great Books*. They were, rather, sorted out by an intensive reading and rereading of the books by a sizable staff of scholars. There was, in other words, no attempt on the part of the editors to predigest or simplify the information available in this set."

1. See Mortimer J. Adler, ed., *The Syntopicon: An Index to the Great Ideas*, Second Edition, vol. 1, Great Books of the Western World (Chicago; London; New Delhi; Paris; Seoul; Sydney; Taipei; Tokyo: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1990), xiii.
4. Popular books and other published media.
5. Personal experience.

## II. The six types of references are:

1. Core references: These are the most important references and provide the foundational information for the research.
2. Essential References: Such references are needed to understand the core references and are central to the research.
3. Significant references: These references provide additional information and support to the core references but are optional to the research.
4. Supporting references: These references provide supplementary information to the core references and are used to strengthen the arguments or findings.
5. Contextual references: These references provide background information or context but are not directly relevant to the research.
6. Functionary references: These references are not used to necessarily defend an assertion of an idea but to serve a literary function in the presentation of ideas. A functionary reference may be a peer-reviewed journal article, i.e., the highest kind of value, yet it does not serve to defend research or assertions but to offer further reading or insights on other issues that may be related but not essentially so.

Our *Taxonomy of References* may be considered a tool to help researchers evaluate the value and relevance of the prospective references for citation. The taxonomy is not an exhaustive list of every kind and type of reference. Rather, this is a primer for citation analysis.

## References

Milton, Michael A. "Milton's Taxonomy of References: A Primer on Citation Analysis." *Figshare*, February 14, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22094819.v1>.

## Appendix 2: Using Zotero

*Zotero: Citation and Bibliographic Reference Manager for Theological Research Papers*

Research and writing are indispensable components in graduate and postgraduate study. By research, we mean to say demonstrating skills and mastery of identifying and citing valuable reference material (see Milton's Taxonomy of References:

Zotero is a powerful and easy-to-use citation and bibliographic reference manager. The free resource helps students, faculty, and professionals organize their research and create citations, bibliographies, and notes in a variety of formats. This guide will provide an overview of how to use Zotero for theological research papers.

Install Zotero onto your computer by visiting the [Zotero website](#) and downloading the appropriate version.

Zotero is available for Mac or Windows operating systems. Zotero is also available for iOS products such as iPhone and iPad.

Create a Zotero account and log in. This will allow you to sync your library across all of your devices and share it with others.

Create your first collection within the library. This could be one module, or it could be listed as the course. One can also create some folders within the main collection folder to differentiate between journals and books, peer reviews, popular, and so forth.

Start collecting sources for your paper. Zotero offers a variety of ways to add sources to your library, including the browser extension, import options, manually entering data, and searching within the library itself.

The beauty of Zotero is *the connector*. The connector is an extension that you will install on your browser (Chrome, Edge, Safari). This will allow easy citation selection as you peruse through, e.g., Google Scholar or a theological studies data base (e.g., JSTOR, ATLA). As you click on a citation, Zotero connector sends all the respective meta-data into your selected collection folder or sub folder. When you get ready to cite or to print out a bibliography, you have all of the data formatted in Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> edition or Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition (one can customize an output style to, e.g., the Erskine Seminary style manual, which is an adaptation of Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition).

Organize your sources into collections. This will make it easier to find the reference you need when you're writing your paper.

Insert citations into your paper with the Zotero plugin. As noted, Zotero can generate citations in a variety of formats, including MLA, APA (for your other graduate degree work) and the traditional theology and religious studies styles, viz., Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> (full note) and Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition.

Create a bibliography at the end of your paper. Zotero can generate a bibliography in the same format as your citations. Make notes on your sources. You can add notes to each source in your Zotero library and keep track of your thoughts on the source.

It is true that the Christian philosopher, Jacques Ellul wrote, "The machine has become our master, and we are its slaves." (Ellul, 1970, p. 3). However, even the most aspiring Luddite-theological student will appreciate citation management tools like Zotero (and for those who demand a higher-octane citation management vehicle, Endnote).

### **Reference**

Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Bluff*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.

## **Appendix 3: Using Google Scholar and Zotero**

### *Using Google Scholar and Zotero: A Guide for Seminary Students*

Note: I programmed an AI writing assistant to assimilate articles I had written on the subject. Thus, the article refers to yours truly (thus, the third-person reference). We trust this how-to is of service to you and your studies.

Seminary students often have a hectic and overwhelming workload, which can make it difficult to keep track of all their readings and citations. Fortunately, tools such as Google Scholar and Zotero can help make managing research and sources easier and more efficient. This guide will provide an overview of how to use these tools according to the online articles by Dr. Michael A. Milton.

#### *Understanding Google Scholar*

Google Scholar is a powerful search engine that can quickly locate articles, books, and other online resources relevant to a particular topic. To use Google Scholar, type a keyword or phrase into the search bar. This will return a list of results that can be filtered by various parameters, such as author, year, and source type. The results are also ranked according to their relevance to the search query.

#### *Utilizing Zotero*

Zotero is an open-source citation management software that can be used to store, organize, and cite research sources. Zotero can be installed as a browser extension, allowing users to quickly add citations to their library directly from web pages. Once the desired citations have been added, Zotero can generate a bibliography or works cited page in various formats, such as Turabian.

#### *Additional Resources*

In addition to Google Scholar and Zotero, there are other tools that can be used to assist with research and citation management. Dr. Milton recommends using EndNote, a citation management software that is available for both Mac and Windows. He also recommends using Mendeley, another open-source citation management program that is compatible with both desktop and mobile devices.

### ***Conclusion***

By following the guidelines outlined in this guide, seminary students can easily manage their research paper sources with the help of Google Scholar and Zotero. By taking advantage of these tools and additional resources, students can streamline the process of research and citation, allowing them to spend more time focusing on their studies.

## Appendix 4: Research Paper Instructions

### *Writing the Theological Research Paper: A Guide for Doctoral Level Students*

Note: See Dr. Michael A. Milton's articles on writing research papers at <https://michaelmilton.org/2017/05/31/writing-the-weekly-theological-research-paper/> and <https://michaelmilton.org/2014/08/13/a-brief-guide-for-writing-theological-reflection-papers/>.

Writing a theological research paper is an important part of the doctoral-level curriculum. It is a chance for students to demonstrate their independent research skills and better understand the biblical-theological-ministry issues they are studying. The following guide provides advice on how to write an effective theological research paper, from understanding the requirements to formatting the final document.

1. *Understand the requirements.* A typical theological research paper should be between 3-5 pages long (not including the cover page and bibliography). The paper should be supported by a minimum of two peer-reviewed journal articles. It should be written in accordance with the most recent Erskine Seminary Style Guide, a modification of the Turabian 9th edition style guide of the Chicago Manual of Style.
2. *Isolate the presenting issue.* Just as a doctoral student must isolate and express a presenting issue in a respective context (sometimes the presenting issue is a problem, and sometimes it is a question) in a scholarly or professional dissertation, one does the same in a graduate and postgraduate research paper. Use the “sticky-note” test: Write the problem or presenting issue you do the same in a complete sentence. Continue to edit until your sentence can be reduced in handwriting on a sticky note.
3. *Research the presenting issue.* No single component of doctoral study is more important than the inseparable couplet, “reading and research.” Consult the Erskine Library theological and religious studies index and Google Scholar (see the article of Google Scholar and Zotero: books, journals, websites, and other sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic).
4. *Draft an outline.* Writing an outline helps to ensure that your paper is organized and that it follows the requirements. It should include a thesis statement, an introduction, body paragraphs, a conclusion, and a bibliography. One often neglected component in an outline is the transition statement with keyword. After you have posited the proposition or the main idea, ask a question of the statement using who, what, when, where, or how. Then, answer the question with a *transitional statement* and a *keyword*. For example, if your proposition is, “Pastors can face burn out.” You might ask the question of the text, “How do pastors face burn out?” The transition statement with keyword might be, “Pastors face burn out in at least *three ways*.” This transition statement now provides the literary sinew to connect the structure of the *body* (i.e., the *Argument* with divisions of thought, i.e., “points” in the body), and the conclusion. For further study on these rhetorical skills and devices see the eight movements of an expository biblical sermon:
5. *Write the paper.* Begin writing the paper, referring to the outline as you go. Make sure to follow the correct formatting style and include citations as needed.
6. *Peer-review.* Remember that when you make assertions that could be challenged, you must cite a level-1 reference (e.g., a peer reviewed journal article) to support your assertion.
7. *Edit and proofread.* Once the paper is finished, take the time to edit and proofread it. Make sure that the paper is free of spelling and grammatical errors and that it meets the requirements.
8. *Biblical worldview test.* Ask questions of the paper from a motif such as Creation-Fall-Redemption. “Take every thought captive” (2 Cor. 10:5) in your writing and “prove” your reflections by the authority of the Word of God.

Writing a theological research paper can be challenging. By applying these norms in writing, you will begin to move past the academic writing technique and formulate interesting, logical, creative, reflective, and, most of all, biblically faithful research papers. Following these steps will help ensure that you produce a high-quality paper that meets your professor's and the course's requirements.

## **Appendix 5: Final Paper Instructions**

### **“How to Write a Philosophy of Ministry Paper for DF 980 Vocational Renewal | Erskine Theological Seminary” by Dr. Michael A. Milton.**

One of the most memorable assignments in my seminary experience was composing a philosophy of ministry paper. I credit the Reverend Dr. Dominic Aquila for sharpening my thinking through this course that he taught. Indeed, Dr. Aquila’s teaching provided me with a ruling motif, a pattern or template, that I would use in thinking through other facets of life and ministry. I planted three churches and founded a Christian school, served as senior pastor for a church in need of a vision and mission revitalization, was appointed as the Command Chaplain over a division of chaplains serving around the globe, and led three seminaries in my career. In each case, I used the skills of critical thinking and theological reflection that I gained from seminary. I want this for you, too.

Without a doubt, writing a philosophy of ministry paper is important and meaningful to help you develop your ministry goals and objectives. This guide seeks to help you to understand the process and effectively craft your philosophy of ministry paper.

#### *I. Introduction*

A good talk with oneself before starting a research paper is helpful. Order your paper by identifying the presenting issues (problems, goals, concerns) in ministry at this stage. Thus, consider the challenges that pastors face in the current context and how your philosophy of ministry can address these challenges. Additionally, review the goals and benefits of writing this final paper. What do you hope to gain from this process? How do you plan to use the paper to develop and grow in your ministry? When you can answer those questions, *you can begin to prepare* to write.

#### *II. Preparing to Write*

Before beginning to write your paper, it is important to prepare properly. Consider the core values of your ministry and how they relate to the challenges that pastors face today (including the challenge of, e.g., unmet expectations, false expectations of ministry, and the loss of meaning, viz., “burnout,” that invariably follows). Conduct reading and collect research on topics related to your philosophy of ministry and use this research to support your ideas. Follow the footnote trail. See where it leads. Then, question your ideas with Scripture. Using the worldview motif of “Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation” is a Reformed and redemptive standard for expressing biblical truth in such statements. Finally, create an outline for your paper that will help you clearly articulate your thoughts and arguments.

#### *III. Writing Process*

Once you have prepared for writing, you can begin the writing process. Start by defining your burden (or the presenting issues), your values and what they mean for your ministry. What is the vision that lifts the burden? What is the mission that moves you towards the vision? How will you carry out that mission? How you minister is the philosophy of ministry. As you write, you have this template in mind: I have a burden to see people come to Christ. The values that inform that burden include faith in the supernatural nature and sufficiency of the Word of God. The vision is to shape life and ministry with this one aim: that there will be a multitude of souls safe in the arms of Jesus when He comes again as a result, in God’s plan, of my faithful witness. I will seek that vision through a mission that involves becoming the strongest, most

Christ-clinging, God-dependent man I can be. I will carry out this ministry by focusing on personal devotions in the daily office of the Book of Common Prayer. I will conduct ministry with a desire for “excellence in all things and all things for Christ” (D. James Kennedy). Finally, frame the shape of pastoral ministry by considering what areas of ministry demand your attention for this stage of your career. For example, rather than broad topics such as preaching or pastoral counseling, focus on specific areas such as preaching the lectionary or taking courses in clinical pastoral education. In summary, a vision and mission statement is broadly put. A philosophy of ministry paper outlines the areas of focus vital to realizing the vision and mission. For further reading in this area, see the author’s book on *Finding a Vision for Your Church: Assembly Required* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012). This will help you avoid the corporate statement templates and create a biblical and Christ-centered statement.

#### *IV. Finalizing the Paper*

Once you have completed the writing process, you can move on to the final steps in crafting your paper. Editing is an important part of this process and should be done carefully to ensure that your paper is clear and concise. Additionally, emphasize key points throughout your paper so that they stand out clearly when read as a whole. Limit scope by focusing on one or two main points rather than trying to cover too much in one paper. Finally, once all editing is complete, finalize the draft and submit it for review.

#### *V. Conclusion*

In conclusion, writing a philosophy of ministry paper can be a meaningful task that helps you build on your ministry's core values and develop future goals. Reflection on this experience can be beneficial in helping you understand how your philosophy relates to the challenges faced by pastors today and how it can be applied in your future ministry.

The practices of critical thinking and theological reflection are worthy of continued refining and growth. You will use these pastoral skills in every area of ministry throughout your service. If we can support you in that practice through developing the appropriate disciplines for conducting such a life of the mind then we will be most thankful.

## ***Appendix 6: Bibliography for Further Study***

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## **Appendix 7: Key Scriptures by Module**

Locate and download the Scriptures for each module [here](#).