

## **Mission Statement:**

Regent University serves as a center of Christian thought and action to provide excellent education through a Biblical perspective and global context equipping Christian leaders to change the world.

---

## **SECTION 1: COURSE OVERVIEW**

---

Regent University  
School of Divinity

### **DGEN 697 Preparing a Thesis Proposal (3)**

Instructor: Dr. Larry K. Asplund

Location: Online

Office Hours: See *Communications Policy* below

Phone: (706) 289-4031

Email: lasplund@regent.edu

## **Communications Policy**

All course email communication should be conducted through the student's Regent University email account. Students can expect a faculty response to an email or a phone call within 24 hours Monday through Friday. Any communication attempted after 5 PM on a Friday will be responded to the next business day.

## **Course Description**

DGEN 697 is for those preparing for advanced study. It includes refining a thesis topic through wide reading, developing a thesis statement, database searching, building a bibliography, writing a literature review, and preparing a formal thesis prospectus as well as the first chapter of the thesis. Prerequisites: second-year status and the approval of the professor.

## **Program Outcomes**

The Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies and Master of Theology programs share six core learning outcomes. Upon completion of the **MDiv**, **MTS**, or **ThM** program, a student will be able to:

1. Apply the Biblical text, historical knowledge, and theological resources to the process of holistic formation.
2. Interpret a Biblical text with appropriate consideration of the linguistic, literary, historical, and theological context of the passage.
3. Analyze the significance of major figures, movements, and theological developments in the history of Christianity.
4. Explain the major doctrines of Christian thought.
5. Demonstrate the characteristics of Christ-centered leadership.
6. Compare and contrast the cultural differences among people groups.

In addition to the above six shared outcomes, upon completing the **MDiv** program each student will be able to:

7. Demonstrate proficiency in the skills of ministry.
8. Synthesize Biblical, historical, and philosophical knowledge to articulate a theological position.

In addition to the above six shared outcomes, upon completing the **MTS or ThM** programs each student will be able to:

7. Defend a theological position on Biblical, historical, and philosophical grounds.
8. Incorporate global ecumenical sources in their theological research and writing.

## Relationship of course to Regent's Mission

*Mission: Regent University serves as a center of Christian thought and action to provide excellent education through a Biblical perspective and global context equipping Christian leaders to change the world.*

1. **Biblical Perspective:** The Master's Thesis enables students to develop competence in Biblical literacy and interpretation, the history of Christianity, and theological reflection from a Renewal perspective. Students will be able to interpret a biblical text with appropriate consideration of the linguistic, literary, historical, and theological context of the passage. During the course, students will identify and discuss the significance of major figures, movements, and theological developments in the history of Christianity which would enable them to compare and assess the major doctrines of Christian thought.
2. **Global Context:** The Master's Thesis prepares students for Christ-centered leadership in the education, training, and development of communities in which they serve. This course enhances the global competence of students for balanced understanding, practice, and participation in diverse contemporary contexts of life. Students will be able to discuss and appreciate cultural and religious differences among people groups which would advance students' levels of proficiency in the content, theory, and practice of ministerial leadership.

---

## SECTION 2: COURSE REQUIREMENTS

---

### Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Grasp an area of significant theological knowledge by demonstrating bibliographic control of the area
2. Articulate the development of scholarly dialogue or progress up to the contribution of his/her master's thesis
3. Discover gaps, inadequacies or flaws in the present state of scholarship
4. Articulate a reasonable correction in the form of a clear thesis statement
5. Support that thesis statement with clear, logical and valid arguments or data, which represent the body of the thesis
6. Knowledge gained from researching the master's thesis should aid in the discharge of the student's vocation and may be a significant step in further biblical or theological research

## Course Objectives

1. Develop further a master's thesis topic and gain bibliographic control of the proposed research area (literature review)
2. Produce a satisfactory thesis prospectus that is a fairly sophisticated expression of theological knowledge, research, logic, and writing skills, including an introduction and the working outline of the thesis
3. Begin writing the master's thesis by drawing from the thesis prospective to produce Chapter One
4. Develop the skills needed to produce the thesis prospective by participating in an online learning community, fulfilling relevant readings and group assignments

Assignments	Course Learning Outcomes					
	CLO1	CLO2	CLO3	CLO4	CLO5	CLO6
Discussion Forums	X	X				X
Writing Group/Peer Review	X	X				X
Literature Review and Thesis Statement	X	X	X	X		X
Thesis Prospectus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Thesis Chapter One	X	X	X	X	X	X

## Integration of Faith and Learning

Overall, the production of a satisfactory master's thesis represents a fairly sophisticated expression of theological knowledge, research, logic, and writing skills. Knowledge gained from researching the master's thesis should aid in the discharge of the student's vocation and may be a significant step in further biblical or theological research. The student will demonstrate the scholarly, professional, practical and spiritual relevancy of the research topic.

## Course Procedures

### ***Understanding the Master's Thesis Proposal –***

The purpose of this course is to develop further one's master's thesis topic, to gain bibliographic control of the proposed research area (literature review), and to begin writing the master's thesis. The student will work under the direction of the instructor and will submit a thesis prospectus and first chapter by the end of the semester. If the student does not make sufficient progress in DGEN 697, so that it will be impossible to complete the master's thesis the following semester, the student should consult with his/her academic advisor in the Academic Advising office to consider a different Summative Experience option.

### ***Master's Thesis Approval and Registration –***

All students who wish to submit a master's thesis as the terminal requirement for graduation are required to first submit the [Thesis Proposal Form](#) for approval to identify a master's thesis advisor and to proceed with the thesis as planned (at least nine months prior to the start of the thesis). Review the "[Summative Experience](#)" section of the Divinity Students organization in Blackboard. The assigned academic advisor in the Academic Advising office is the point of contact for course registration. After the student submits the Summative Experience Proposal and receives approval to write a master's thesis, the academic advisor will register the student for DGEN 697 in the appropriate term. Students *must* remain in contact with the academic advisor if any circumstances change before the start of the course.

For more details regarding the entire procedures of preparation, approval, and registration of the Master's Thesis, review section 2 "Preparing for the Master's Thesis" and section 3 "Master's Thesis Approval and Registration" in [the Master's Thesis Manual](#).

#### ***Identifying a Master's Thesis Advisor –***

The student may identify up to three potential master's thesis advisors on the Thesis Proposal Form. Before submitting this form, however, the student should be in dialogue with potential master's thesis advisors early on to discuss the master's thesis topic. Such conversations should help both student and faculty member to determine whether a topic and the working relationship are a good fit. Final selection of a master's thesis advisor will be based on the student's proposed master's thesis topic and faculty availability. The Academic Dean of the School of Divinity will oversee the master's thesis advisor selection process.

#### ***Thesis Prospectus –***

The thesis prospectus is the final project for DGEN 697. The thesis prospectus reflects an advanced stage of research and must demonstrate the student's bibliographic control within the respective area of study. After the thesis statement is formulated, the presentation of the arguments supporting the thesis statement must be clearly articulated in detail. Much of the thesis prospectus can be incorporated into the final master's thesis project.

For more details regarding the format of the thesis prospectus, review section 6 "The Thesis Prospectus" in the [Master's Thesis Manual](#).

#### ***Academic Honesty –***

Students are on their honor to complete assignments with integrity. This means that all written assignments, reading reports, exegetical observations, and term papers are to reflect the student's own work and have been submitted for credit only in this course. Where other secondary sources are used, appropriate acknowledgement with the proper use of parenthetical citations/endnotes/footnotes must be adhered to. Relative to the entire course of study, it must be assumed that cheating and plagiarism are sins contrary to God's laws and the mission of Regent University. Plagiarism is using the intellectual property of others without proper citation to give the impression that it is the student's own work. The professor's instructions concerning "take-home, closed-book" exams are to be honored. Students are responsible for following all policies of academic honesty and integrity included in the Student Handbook. Charges of violating academic integrity shall be handled according to established student discipline procedures published in the Student Handbook:

<http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/docs/StudentHandbook.pdf>

### **Human Subjects Review (HSR) Process**

Anytime that a student is planning to do research involving human subjects, **he or she must go through the formal Human Subject Review (HSR) process**. He or she cannot begin research until the proposal has been reviewed and approved by the HSR committee.

#### ***Purpose of HSR –***

The purposes of HSR are:

1. To protect human subjects (people to be researched) – to insure that participants in a research project will be safe and to remove or minimize risk factors in the process.
2. To protect researcher, dissertation advisor, dissertation committee, the School of Divinity, and Regent University – to keep all parties concerned out of legal trouble and liability (e.g., breach of confidentiality).

### Process of HSR –

1. View the video on the HSR process:  
<http://www.regent.edu/aD.Min../media/fms/vod/bcovePlayerURL.cfm?address=3000888>
2. Go to Regent University's website and type in "[Human Subjects Review](#)."
3. Go through the training, which will include a certificate that you have gone through the training
4. Fill out the proposal on the website including the university template, Informed Consent, etc.
5. Send in the complete package as **one document**, which will include the certificate, the proposal, informed consent, questionnaires, material to be used—anything that directly bears upon how you will engage with people in research.
6. Send it to Dr. Lyle Story [lylesto@regent.edu](mailto:lylesto@regent.edu), the SOD representative of Regent University's HSR Committee.

### Required and Supplemental Resources

Students are expected to have all required materials by the first day of the semester.

The Regent University Bookstore website is: <http://www.cbamatthews.com/regent/>

Additional materials (e.g., articles, etc.) may be found in the *Content* section of Blackboard.

### Required and Recommended Resources –

Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, eds. *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. The Society of Biblical Literature. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1-58983-964-9

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and the University of Chicago Press Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-226-81637-1

Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. ISBN 978-1-4522-2609-5

### Method of Evaluating Student Performance

Assignments	Weight
Discussion Forums	10%
Writing Group/Peer Review	10%
Literature Review and Thesis Statement	35%
Thesis Prospectus	35%
Thesis Chapter One	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Scale

**MASTER'S GRADING: PHILOSOPHY and CRITERIA** (from the Graduate Catalog)

The following evaluation rubric is employed in the Masters programs of the School of Divinity and is in keeping with grading policies at most U.S. graduate schools.

**A A-**

Work of superior quality in all areas. Work displays an outstanding mastering of the facts, a creative and critical use of the data, and an analysis or evaluation of facts, research, and trends, that shows real scholarship and talent for graduate work at the highest level. Practical or formational implications of work are included, as appropriate.

**B+ B B-**

Good grasp of facts, creativity and analysis, showing good comprehension of the subject. Practical or formational implications of work are included, as appropriate. The grade for such work will vary from B+ to B- according to the quality and quantity of the work.

**C+ C C-**

The student has shown a minimal grasp of the facts of the course, and does not demonstrate the desired level of creativity, analytical performance, or comprehension. Practical or formational implications of work are included, as appropriate. The grade will vary from C+ to C-.

**D+ D D-**

Below minimal understanding and ability to handle the subject material of the course, but not requiring the course to be repeated. Practical or formational implications of work are included, as appropriate. The grade will vary from D+ to D-.

**F**

Not acceptable for graduate level study. The student's work indicated major deficiencies both in routine learning and in use of data. This grade denotes either unacceptable performance in spite of some effort, or failure to complete the assigned work.

**MASTER'S GRADING SYSTEM**

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	QUALITY POINTS	MEANING OF GRADE
A	94-100	4.00	<i>Superior</i>
A-	90-93	3.67	
B+	87-89	3.33	<i>Very Good</i>
B	83-86	3.00	<i>Good</i>
B-	80-82	2.67	
C+	77-79	2.33	
C	73-76	2.00	<i>Minimal</i>
C-	70-72	1.67	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
D+	67-69	1.33	
D	63-66	1.00	
D-	60-62	.67	
F	0-59	0.00	<i>Failing</i>

**Course Schedule**

Week	Readings/Resources Used	Activities/Assignments	Due Dates
1 Setting the Stage	Master's Thesis Manual HSR Policies	Discussion Forum #1	May 14
2 The Art & Science of Writing	Stunk & White RU Writing Center	Discussion Forum #2	May 21
3	Turabian & Creswell	Discussion Forum #3	May 28

Research Resources	RU Library Resources		
4 Writing Project Management	Turabian Online Resources	Discussion Forum #4	June 4
5 Academic Writing: Format & Documentation	Turabian SBL Handbook RU Writing Center	Discussion Forum #5	June 11
6 Thesis Statement: A Work in Progress	Turabian Creswell	Discussion Forum #6	June 18
7 Literature Review: Reading, Writing & Reading	Master's Thesis Manual Turabian Creswell		June 25
8 Gaps in the Literature	Master's Thesis Manual Turabian Creswell	Writing Group #1	July 2
9 Writing the Thesis Prospectus: Final Thesis Statement	Turabian Creswell Online Resources	Writing Group #2	July 9
10 Writing the Thesis Prospectus: Working Outline	Master's Thesis Handbook	Writing Group #3	July 16
11 Writing the Thesis Prospectus: Introduction	Master's Thesis Handbook Turabian Creswell	Writing Group #4	July 23
12 Writing the Thesis Prospectus: Review of the Literature	Master's Thesis Handbook	Thesis Statement & Literature Review Writing Group #5	July 30
13 Writing the Final Thesis Prospectus	Master's Thesis Handbook Turabian SBL Handbook	Thesis Prospectus Writing Group #6	August 6
14 Writing the Thesis: Chapter One	Master's Thesis Handbook	Thesis Chapter One	August 12

---

### SECTION 3: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

---

This section covers policies related to academic integrity, accommodations, and University policies and procedures.

## **Christian Foundations of Academic Integrity**

### ***Biblical.***

Regent University affirms the Biblical commandment of “thou shalt not steal” (Ex. 20:15). In the context of academic integrity, this must be understood in the larger framework of “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39) as well as “render therefore unto Caesar what are Caesar’s; and unto God what are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). Paul writes from this framework of love and respect when he says, “Pay to all what is owed them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed” (Rom. 13:7). Each of these passages conveys the social obligation to respect the dignity of both the personhood and the property of those in society. Paul thus prescribes the biblical standard of honest, hard work as a key to respecting each other’s personhood and property. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul even provides counsel to those who have committed theft, stating, “Let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need” (4:28). As such, the God of the Bible mandates a higher life than the world requires, a life in which Christians participate in the love and dignity God holds for himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. Indeed, even as Christ honors and acknowledges the will of his Father and the works of his Spirit, so should Christians honor and acknowledge the wills and works of those that provide opportunities to edify their minds and hearts with the knowledge and wisdom of sound scholarship. In doing so, Christians follow the biblical precept of integrity that is founded on love and respect and enables them to learn both from one another and those outside the faith.

### ***Philosophical.***

Regent University also affirms the necessity of recognizing the classical virtues when deriving a foundation for academic integrity, particularly the virtue of diligence. The virtues dictate that researchers should consider morality first. In other words, one’s sense of expediency must always follow from that which is right, not from that which is convenient. Cicero comments that, in order to act morally, individuals must act in a manner that prevents themselves from being placed in a position where they must choose between convenience and morality, or, stated differently, into a position where they “consider one thing to be right but not expedient, and another to be expedient but not right” (102). The virtues, therefore, require diligence in order to act morally upright—diligence to plan ahead, diligence to rationally consider the context of the moral situation, and diligence to act biblically not just ethically. For that which is ethical to the world is never necessarily moral before Christ. (Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Moral Obligations*. Trans. John Higinbotham. London: Faber and Faber LTD, 1967. Print.)

### ***Legal.***

Finally, Regent University affirms the necessity of equipping students for the reality of functioning within a society bound by laws, including copyright laws. Paul speaks clearly about a Christian’s responsibility to abide by the laws of the land. He concludes that authority is ultimately from God, so believers must work within that God-ordained system (Rom. 13). Thus, in mastering the art and science of proper attribution of sources, students are participating in the Biblical tradition of exhibiting reverence for the divine institute of law as well as giving honor where honor is due.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The policy and intent of Regent University is to fully and completely comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, to the extent that they apply to the university. Regent University will not



discriminate against an otherwise qualified student with a disability in the admissions process, or any academic activity or program, including student-oriented services. Regent University will provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical and mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability, unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the university, or unless it would fundamentally alter a degree or course requirement. Qualified students must request reasonable accommodations for disabilities through the Disability Services Coordinator in Student Services.

For information about student records, privacy, and other University policies and procedures, students are directed to the most recent version of the Student Handbook located at <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/docs/StudentHandbook.pdf>

### **REGENT UNIVERSITY CONTINUITY POLICY:**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for Regent University to suspend normal operations. During this time, Regent University may opt to continue delivery of traditional classroom instruction using the Blackboard Course Management System. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the course Blackboard site in the event of campus closure.

***This syllabus is provided to students and participants for their general guidance only. It does not constitute a contract; either expressed or implied, and is subject to change without notice.***

Regent University, School of Divinity  
1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
Phone (800) 723.6162  
© 2014 Regent University, All Rights Reserved.