

**TRG 502<sup>5</sup>: Theological Reflection Group #2**  
**Foundations for Theological Writing**  
**Phillips Theological Seminary**

**Spring 2017**  
**Online**

**Instructor:** Prof. Susanna Weslie Southard, Director of Teaching with Technology/Chaplain/Instructor in Ministry Studies

**Office hours:** By appointment or as announced on Moodle

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

(From the catalog) **TRG 502 Foundations for Theological Writing .5 hrs**  
Small theological reflection group employing a workshop approach for the practice of seminary writing, as well as various forms of public theological writing. To be taken by all master's students early in program, in Phase One and concurrently with at least one portal course. Graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Reading assignments will be minimal. The course relies heavily on student interaction; therefore, attentive participation is essential to receive a passing grade. **The instructor will explain what document, if any, should be added to a student's portfolio upon completion of the course.**

**COURSE GOAL:**

To equip students with the necessary foundations for effective theological writing.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- write academic papers in accordance with the PTS Style Guide
- demonstrate basic awareness of multiple genres of public theological writing
- convert academic writing into publicly accessible forms of writing
- practice basic attention/listening skills with colleagues

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Participation:** Students are expected to log in and post on Moodle at least twice per week throughout the semester. Weeks will run on a Monday-Sunday basis. **Three substantive posts spread over two or more days per week will satisfy participation requirements.** At least one post should be made by Thursday; at least one post should be made Friday or later. 'Substantive' means at least two complete sentences on topic showing evidence of thoughtful reflection. By official Phillips policy [see document available in 'Syllabus' folder on Moodle], any student missing 20% or more of class contact hours for any reason will automatically fail the class. For this online course, the policy means that three weeks of failing to meet the three-post requirement will result in automatic failure.

**Reading Assignments:** Two books are required for this course and will be assigned chapter by chapter. Additional materials, such as blogs and letters to the editor, will be linked through Moodle. Students may email the instructor and/or [Katherine Casey](#) in the Phillips library in case of difficulty accessing eReserves. Readings should be **completed prior to the class session in which they are assigned.**

**Discussion Forums:** At the beginning of the semester, the instructor will create a discussion forum for students to post questions, concerns, and thoughtful comments. Respectful dialogue is encouraged. Topical discussion threads will be added each week, according to the schedule below.

**Writing Workshops:** The class may divide into small groups for the purpose of writing workshops. During the first half of the semester, each student will choose one written assignment from the previous semester to edit. This assignment should already have been submitted and graded by the appropriate course instructor; however, students will share clean copies and NOT the graded/commented version. Students will share appropriate sections of their papers with peers for discussion in designated weeks. During the second half of the semester, each student will choose a form of public theological writing and draw from the existing academic paper to write a sample. Peers will assist one another in the process and comment on the resulting work. The instructor will facilitate small group interactions and provide guidance as requested. Written work will NOT be submitted to the instructor for review or grading. The instructor may, however, seek evidence that students have participated fully in their small group activities.

**Writing Assignment:** During the second half of the semester, each student will write one short piece of public theology and present it to the class for feedback. Detailed instructions will be provided.

**Chat Opportunities:** At the beginning of the semester, the instructor will consult with students to see if 1-3 voluntary online video chat sessions can be scheduled, using Zoom or another approved technology. Due to time zone differences and work schedules, finding an agreeable day and time for everyone may be difficult. This is not a requirement for the course; however, it often helps class interaction to see faces and hear voices at least once during the semester.

**Professional Behavior and Netiquette Statement:** See the official Phillips policy posted in the 'Syllabus' folder on Moodle.

**Disability Accommodation Statement:** See the official Phillips policy posted in the 'Syllabus' folder on Moodle.

**Definition of Semester Hour:** See the official Phillips policy posted in the 'Syllabus' folder on Moodle.

**Additional Expectations:** Academic integrity is expected in all coursework. [See the current PTS Student Handbook for official policies and procedures in cases of academic dishonesty and plagiarism.] Class discussions and written assignments should reflect openness to diversity and respect for others. Use of inclusive human language is required; use of non-gender-specific God language is encouraged. See the PTS Inclusive Language Policy in the Student Handbook, as well as relevant materials available in the 'Helpful Files' folder on Moodle. With the instructor's permission, students may email assignments in case of technical difficulties with Moodle.

#### **GRADING:**

This is a pass/fail course. In order to pass, a student must meet posting requirements (see 'Participation' above), show evidence of reading assigned materials, give one presentation, and interact appropriately with others.

#### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS TO BE PURCHASED:**

Barreto, Eric D., ed. *Writing Theologically. Foundations for Learning.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1451483406. (Paperback: \$11.90; Kindle: \$9.99)

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes.* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000. ISBN 978-0-827234475. (Paperback: \$10.48; Kindle \$9.99)

#### **MATERIALS ON eRESERVE and SHELF RESERVE IN PTS LIBRARY:**

Materials will be posted as needed throughout the semester.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE** (subject to change at the instructor's discretion):

**Week 1 Jan 30-Feb 5 Introduction and Overview**

Reading Assignment: Syllabus

Activities: Introductions, Syllabus Q&A, Class Covenant

**Week 2 Feb 6-12 "Why Write?"**

Reading Assignment: Core, ch. 1; Barreto, ch. 9

Activities: Discussion of Reading, Organizing for Workshops

**Week 3 Feb 13-19 "Beginning and Beyond"**

Reading Assignment: Core, ch. 2; Barreto, ch. 1

Activities: Discussion of paper topics and writing process

**Week 4 Feb 20-26 Workshop #1**

Reading Assignment: Peer Papers (thesis and introduction)

Activities: Discussion of Reading and Papers

**Week 5 Feb 27-Mar 5 "Reading to Write" and "Seminary Research Papers"**

Reading Assignment: Core, ch. 3-4 (skip MLA sample paper)

Guest Presenter: Amanda Ross, Instruction and Access Services Librarian

Activities: Discussion of Reading and Presentation

**Week 6 Mar 6-12 Workshop #2**

Reading Assignment: Barreto, ch. 2; Peer Papers (bibliography)

Activities: Discussion of Reading and Sources

**[CONCENTRATED COURSE WEEK I Mar 13-19]**

**[CONCENTRATED COURSE WEEK II Mar 20-26]**

**LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW – Mar 24**

**Week 7 Mar 27-Apr 2 Workshop #3**

Reading Assignment: Peer Papers (main body)

Activities: Discussion of Reading and Papers

**Week 8 Apr 3-9 "A Brief Manual of Usage"**

Reading Assignment: Core, ch. 5 & app. 1; Phillips Style Guide

Activities: Discussion of Reading, Q&A on Style Guide

**[HOLY WEEK RECESS – Apr 10-16]**

**Week 9 Apr 17-23 Workshop #4**

Reading Assignment: Barreto, ch. 4; Peer Papers (conclusion)

Activities: Discussion of Papers

**Week 10 Apr 24-30 Public Theological Writing**

Reading Assignment: Barreto, ch. 6; samples to be provided

Activities: Class Discussion, Choice of Genre for Project

**Week 11 May 1-7 Workshop #5**

Reading Assignment: Barreto, ch. 7; Two Peer Projects  
Activities: Discussion of Projects

**Week 12 May 8-14 Workshop #6**

Reading Assignment: Barreto, ch. 8; Two Peer Projects  
Activities: Discussion of Projects

**[DEADLINE TO REQUEST INCOMPLETE – May 12]**

**Week 13 May 15-21 Wrap Up**

Reading Assignment: N/A  
Activities: Wrap Up