

MACCD RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

The “M” in the MACCD is for Masters’ degree, which communicates high expectations for academic excellence that is honoring to God. Therefore, in MACCD classes where research papers are required, we have developed the following guidelines to assist you in your goal of producing God-honoring, quality graduate-level research and writing.

Basic Principles

- All MACCD research papers have specific guidelines included in the class syllabus or distributed as a supplement. Thus, the first principle is to follow carefully all instructions provided by your professor.
- For general style matters, use the first two chapters of the *CBS Paper and Thesis Manual* (available on the CBS website or for purchase in the campus bookstore).
- In many cases a fifty-word abstract of your paper (a thesis statement) will be required before you can obtain final approval for your chosen topic. Carefully follow the instructions for your abstract. In a thesis statement, you are to state succinctly the purpose for your research. Identify the topic you are researching, why you are researching it, what you are attempting to prove, disprove, or demonstrate. Then, outline how you will fulfill your purpose in your paper.
- When you are instructed to write several sections, be sure to adequately address each assigned section of your paper.
- MACCD research papers incorporate several types of writing skills: biblical research, biblical exegesis, synthesis and analysis, self-awareness, personal application, and ministry implications. If you have never taken *Techniques of Bible Study* or have never written a position paper, ask an experienced student to look at the biblical research and exegesis portions of your paper. If self-assessment and reflection are not your strengths, find someone who can assist you with that portion of your paper.
- Avail yourself of writing services offered on campus, such as the writing lab, the writing class, and/or the instructor’s or grader’s early review of your paper.

Writing: Grammar, Spelling, Writing Style, Creativity

- Include a brief introduction that overviews your purpose, what you will cover, how you will cover it, and what passage or theme you are studying (see above on abstract and thesis statement).
- Include a brief conclusion that summarizes your findings.
- Use headings and subheadings that identify the sections of your paper.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread.
- Have at least one other person read your paper.
- Remember grammar is important. Common errors include misspellings, poor punctuation, lack of subject/verb agreement, and incomplete sentences.

- Avoid first and second person (I, me, us, we, you). The only exception would be when you are writing your personal life and ministry application sections.
- Avoid using contractions.
- Include a bibliography.
- Correctly spell the name of your instructor and authors.
- Italicize book titles.
- Capitalize Bible and Scripture, but not biblical and scriptural.
- Cite direct quotes by using quotation marks and endnotes or footnotes.
- Cite sources for ideas that are not directly your own by using endnotes or footnotes.
- Utilize resources for growing as a writer. Some excellent sources include Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, and Zinsser, *On Writing Well*.

Biblical Study: In most MACCD research papers, you will examine a biblical passage in context, exegete the passage, explain the passage, and relate the passage to your topic.

- It is best to select a passage that is not too broad. For instance, Psalm 119 would be impossible to cover in a ten-to-fifteen page paper. However, a section covering five to ten verses of Psalm 119 would be manageable.
- If for any reason you think that you may go over the stated page limit, contact your professor for permission and be prepared to explain your reason. For example, if you believe that including an exegesis of Psalm 119 in its entirety is crucial to your argument, then you may consider requesting permission to add an appendix to your paper.
- Include a section for background or context for your passage. Scripture does not exist in a vacuum. What is the general theme of the book? Who is the intended audience? Who is the author? What is the purpose of the book? The chapter? The passage?
- Clearly state the passage that you are studying so that the reader does not have to hunt for it.
- Use basic principles of biblical study such as observation, interpretation, and application. Use principles from *Techniques of Bible Study*. If you have not taken that class, use principles from a book such as *Living by the Book* by Hendricks and Hendricks.
- Present the concepts in your own words as much as possible.
- Be careful in your use of the original languages or foreign languages. Make sure that you are using correct roots, forms, and parsing. When using the Hebrew and Greek font(s) and word(s) you should not interrupt the flow of the sentence by switching between languages. Be consistent in Hebrew with using vowel points.
- Provide introductory explanations and summary conclusions that explain to the reader why you have done this particular word study or compared those particular phrases. Great exegesis or lexical studies need to tie into your thesis and provide clarity to the reader.

Comparison and Contrast: In many MACCD research papers, you will be asked to engage other sources, contrasting and comparing them.

- The purpose of this section is to demonstrate your ability to use critical thinking skills to distinguish the similarities and differences between concepts as presented by different authors.
- Use at least two-to-three similarities and two-to-three differences.
- Interact with the material. Engage it. Evaluate how the views presented by the various authors are alike and unlike.
- This section is **not** a summary of what each source says about the topic.

Personal Life and Ministry Application: In most MACCD research papers, you will be asked to describe specific ways in which you can apply your research to your personal life and to your ministry setting.

- In this section of your paper it is acceptable to use “**I**” statements. In this section, you will demonstrate not only that you understand the RRVEP concepts, but that you can specifically apply them to your life and ministry.
- It is extremely helpful to use subheadings in this section. It keeps you focused and keeps the reader from having to guess which concept you are talking about. It also shows the reader that you understand the individual concepts and can distinguish them from one another.
- Use this section as an opportunity for personal development and growth. Spend some time in prayer before writing this section, asking God what you should take away from this exercise.
- While it is not necessary to reveal your deepest suffering and darkest sins, be candid about your application. You can be very specific about the application without revealing more of the precipitating events and circumstances than you want.
- Do not rush through this part. Finish well and take your time with this section. It is not an afterthought. It is an integral part of your paper.
- If you are involved in a specific ministry, state how you have already applied the concepts that you have learned from this study to that ministry. State your plans for additional application to your ministry. Have you seen the fruit from your application?
- How has this study changed your heart, mind, and perceptions as you interact with those you lead and serve?
- If you are not currently in a specific ministry, how have you been able to apply informally what you have learned? With friends? With family? With fellow students? How do you imagine you will apply the lessons from this study to future ministry? How has what you have learned from this study changed or shaped your ideas about future ministry?