

ESSENTIALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

BAT 02, MAT 02

R.C.Sproul

DISTANCE EDUCATION VISION. The distance education course combines class room experience with programmed homework, discussion groups, assigned readings and reports, writing assignments related to ministry and a final exam in order to facilitate training of Christian leaders for teaching ministries.

VISION FOR THE COURSE. R.C. Sproul gives the student an introductory summary of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

FOR THE BACHELOR STUDENTS. The course serves as an introduction to theology. The focus is on understanding basic Christian doctrines.

FOR THE MASTER STUDENTS. The course serves as teaching practicum that will introduce basic theological truths to Bachelor level students. The master level student will complete all of the requirements for the BA level as well as be evaluated as a teacher. See the "Master Evaluation Program."

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. The student will be presented exposed to the basic Biblical and Christian doctrines.
2. By answering questions for each lesson reflection on Biblical doctrine is deepened.
3. The class room will give opportunity for discussion among students and facilitators
4. The student will express in writing his belief in a specific doctrine
5. The student will master basic theological concepts that will enrich further theological study

SUMMARY OF CLASS ACTIVITY

1. There will be a minimum of 15 hours of class
2. The student will answer in writing at least 10 questions per lesson
3. The BA student will read at least 300 pages, while the MA student will read a minimum of 500 pages. Written summaries will be made and oral reports on the readings will be made in class.
4. The student will express his point of view concerning a Christian doctrine in writing an academic essay.
5. The student will complete an exam covering basic concepts.

COURSE EVALUATION

1. One point for each hour of class
2. Three points for every Lesson Question and Answers completed.
3. Reading assignments, oral and written reports are graded
4. A written academic essay will be evaluated
5. The final exam will be evaluated

STUDY RESOURCES

1. E-book or book of ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
2. Ligonier Study Guide
3. MINTS Study Guide

MINTS STUDY STRUCTURE. All of the MINTS courses are structured into 8 lessons. R.C. Sproul's, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, will be structured as follows:

Lesson One	Introduction and Part 1
Lesson Two	Part 2, 3
Lesson Three	Part 4
Lesson Four	Part 5
Lesson Five	Part 6
Lesson Six	Part 7
Lesson Seven	Part 8
Lesson Eight	Part 9, 10

COURSE STRUCTURE

CLASS ROOM.

1. 15 hours of class room participation:
2. The purpose of the class room participation is to explain the course content and method; to foster interaction among the participants and to give opportunities for students to develop both presentation and teaching skills.
3. 4 hours of orientation (professors may choose to do 8 hours)
4. 11 hours of follow up class with facilitator. Normally, these are five 2 hour sessions with one hour added to the final class for the final exam.
5. The 4 hours orientation typically includes: (one educational hr is 50 min.)

ORIENTATION

First hour: introduction to methodology of course, review Lessons 1 and 2 (Introduction, Parts 1,2,3. Introduce how each class will begin with discussion of the questions and answers presented at the end of each Part.

Second hour: review Lessons 3 and 4 (Parts 4,5) , organize the readings so that students will report during the follow up classes.

1. 25% of the students will report in each of the follow up classes. Since the course involves quite a bit of reading, the extra reading report consists of the student of finding readings or articles that contradict what R.C. Sproul is saying. Assign the students to bring to class writings that contradict the themes being studied. For example, for the first follow up class 25% students will be assigned to bring readings that contradict: divine revelation, general revelation, the Bible, the law of God, the prophets of God, the canon of Scripture and Bible interpretation And so for each class, 25% of the student will pick from the themes of the mini chapters.

Third hour: review Lessons five and six (Parts 6,7). Explain how essay (or another type of writing assignment) will be conducted. Have student come to first follow up class with

bibliography, title page and index for essay, to be reviewed by facilitator and other students.

Fourth hour: review Lessons seven and eight (Parts 8,9,10). Explain how exam works. The exam will only cover the questions and answers at the end of each Part. Prepare the class for the first follow up class (questions and answers, who gives reading report)

FOLLOW UP CLASSES

11 hours of follow up class typically are two hours each with last class being 3 hours.

Follow up class one: Discuss Q/A for Lessons one and two. Hear the reading reports of 25% of the students; review bibliography, title page and index of essay. Prepare student for next class: Q/A for lessons 3 and 4; reading reports, bring corrected copy of bibliography, title page, index and first draft of body of essay.

Follow up class two. Discuss Q/A of Lessons 3 and 4. Hear the reading reports. Review rough draft of essay. Prepare for next class. Q/A 5 and 6, more reading reports, hand in finished essay.

Follow up class three. Discuss Q/A of 5 and 6. Hear reading reports. Review final draft of essay. Prepare for next class: Q/A of Lessons 7 and 8. Prepare for taking final exam, which is a review of all Q and A's. Go through practice run for fun.

Follow up class four. Discuss Q/A of 7 and 8. Hear final reading reports. Hand in books reports. Hand in final copy of essay. In hour three, take the final exam.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

1. ATTENDANCE

- 1.1. The facilitator(s) is (are) normally one or two master level students who lead the students in answering homework questions, facilitate discussion as to the questions and answers at the end of each lesson, organize reading reports and discussion.
- 1.2. One percentage point is given for each class hour attended.

2. QUESTION AND ANSWER HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

At the end of each lesson there are a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 15 questions. For the course there will be a minimum of 80 to a maximum of 100 questions.

The answers are in the Teacher's Manual. The student is expected to write out the questions and answers without consulting the Teacher's Manual. Upon completion, the student will correct his own answers. The corrections will be written or typed in different color.

The corrected answers that correspond to the assigned class will be reviewed by the facilitator. If complete, three points are recorded in Class Record. If all 8 lessons were completed on time, extra point is given for a total of 25 points.

The comprehension of the Q and A is measured in the final exam.

3. READINGS, ORAL REPORTS AND WRITTEN REPORTS

The purpose of the reading is to introduce the student to examples of readings related to the course and/or reading helpful to understand course materials.

Since we are distance education, readings can be placed in the appendix or linked to the internet

At the BA level the student will read 300 pages and at the MA level 500 pages. For this course the pages of the text are included.

Each student will be assigned to report on their reading (or a portion of their readings) in class. BA students, 5 minute report; MA students, 10 minutes.

At end of course a written report of reading will be handed in. BA students a three page report and MA students a five page report.

Grading: 15% for reading, 5% for oral report, 5% for written report, total 25%.

4. WRITTEN ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENT

- 4.1. The purpose of the writing assignment is to develop themes related to ministry and express them in an academic and educational format. (See, essay format)
- 4.2. Students are assigned a written project such as an essay, survey, interview or other written assignment.
- 4.3. Students will present their essay in typed format.
- 4.4. Value: 20 %

5. FINAL EXAM

- 5.1. The purpose of the final exam is to show dominance of the main course concepts
- 5.2. This is a review of the Q and A. If different, be sure to explain that to the student
- 5.2. Value is 15%

REPORTING

Students name	Course of study	Att.	Q/A	Readings reporting	Written assign	Final exam	Final Grade
		15%	25%	25%	20%	15%	100%

In order for the student's grade to be registered at MINTS-Miami office, the student needs to be properly registered and the course record needs to be sent to Academic Dean at MINTS-Miami.

Dr. Cornelius (Neal) Hegeman, Academic Dean, Miami International Seminary (MINTS)

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN ESSAY

Introduction

An essay is a literary form that analyzes a specific topic in order to inform, explain, persuade, defend an opinion, or to stir interest. It is a more serious style, formal and academic. It is not fiction or comedy. Neither is it poetry, but prose. It should make a contribution to the reader in terms of new concepts or information.

The following guidelines will help you edit an essay:

1. Decide on a unique and specific idea

An essay should express the idea of you, the author, instead of simply repeating the ideas of others. It is not simply a research report, but personal reflection. Of course, you may take into account the ideas of others, but you should utilize these ideas to support your own point, or maybe to make a contrast with your view.

The author should have something in mind that he wants to communicate and focus on one main point. For example, the essay could have the purpose of convincing the reader that Christ is sufficient for our salvation, or that Augustine was the most important theologian of his time, or that Genesis 3 explains all the problems of humanity. The different parts of the essay present evidence or arguments that either support the central idea, illustrate the idea, or show contrasting views. However, the content of the different parts of the essay should not stray away from the main point of the essay as a whole.

2. Do careful research

The student should reflect on the topic that he or she wishes to study, and begin reading and collecting information and quotes. He should write down the bibliographical data for the quote or idea, including author, title, place of publication, publishing company, and year. Use cards, a notebook, or even better, write notes in a computer word processor. Afterwards, organize the notes into groups according to topic. You should begin focusing on what you consider important and discard things that are not related to your topic, even though they may be interesting. Concentrate on a few ideas that are related to the central theme of the essay.

3. Write an appropriate title

The title of the essay should clearly communicate the main theme. It should not be too *general*, but rather point to a specific topic. For example, if you want to write about the physical consequences of the Fall in Genesis 3, the title should *not* be, “Man’s Problem,” or “Genesis 3,” but “The Physical Consequences of the Fall According to Genesis 3.” Neither should the title be too *specific*, pointing only to one aspect of the essay. For example, if the author wishes to write about all the physical consequences of the Fall, the title should *not* be “Why Women Give Birth in Pain” but rather as mentioned before, “The Physical Consequences of the Fall According to Genesis 3.”

4. Organize your ideas in a good outline

An essay should have at least three main sections: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The introduction stirs interest in the essay and explains what it is about. The body is the main development of the theme, and normally has several subdivisions. The conclusion summarizes the argument of the essay and shows what the author considers to be most important.

If the essay is well organized, the ideas are easy to follow. The writer should imagine that he is dialoguing with the reader, anticipating his questions and presenting answers. The reader should be able to follow the thread of thought even with a quick glance at the introduction, the titles of the sections, and the conclusion.

There are various ways to organize an essay. 1) If the purpose of the essay is to inform about something historical, it may be organized in chronological order. 2) If the purpose is to analyze a philosophical concept, the writer may want to first give the historical background, then explain how the concept is expressed in our day, then give a biblical analysis of the thought. 3) If the author wishes to persuade the reader of his point of view of some issue, he may use logical order, first presenting a premise, then a second premise, and the logical conclusion. 4) If the purpose is to arouse interest in a cause, he may present different dimensions of the problem in order of increasing seriousness. 5) Some people like to use illustrations to demonstrate a truth, organizing them to point toward the central idea, like the hands of a clock that meet in the center. 6) If the author wants to present a new idea, he may first show how it is similar to other ideas, then show how it is different from those ideas. 7) One might analyze an event, showing first the causes, then the effects. 8) New information may be presented by giving definitions and classifications. There are many ways to organize a paragraph, but the writer should decide how to organize it and be consistent with the plan.

Make a good outline to assure good organization. The body of the essay (all but the introduction and conclusion) normally has at least two main divisions, each with at least two subdivisions. If there is only one subdivision, it is not really a subdivision but the main point. The main divisions should contain ideas that are equal in importance, but distinct in content. The subdivisions should contain ideas that are subordinate to the main division, and equal in importance among each other.

The traditional system of numbering is to use roman numbers for the main divisions, capital letters for the subdivisions, numbers for the next subdivisions, and small letters for the next, as follows:

The Letter to the Romans

I. Doctrine

A. Sin

1. The wrath of God against sin

2. All men are sinners

B. Justification by faith

C. Sanctification by faith

D. Eternal security

II. Practical exhortations

A. Love

B. Submission to authorities

etc.

The introduction of the essay does not have a number or letter. Neither does the conclusion.

Introduction

I.

A.

1.

2.

B.

II.

III.

Conclusion

Alternative classifications systems are acceptable. The student needs to be consistent and not mix classifications systems. For example, the numerical system is also acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

1.
 - 1.1.
 - 1.2
2.
 - 2.1.
 - 2.2.
3.
 - 3.1.
 - 3.1.1.
 - 3.1.2
 - 3.2

CONCLUSION BIBLIOGRAPHY

5. Write coherent paragraphs

A paragraph is the key unit of the essay. Review each paragraph to make sure that:

- 1) All the sentences of the paragraph deal with the same subject.
- 2) The paragraph has normally from 3-10 sentences. If there is only one sentence, it should become part of another paragraph, or maybe other sentences can be added to complete the paragraph.
- 3) The central idea of the paragraph is expressed in the first or last sentence (normally).
- 4) The other sentences contribute to the point of the paragraph, supporting, showing contrast, or giving illustrations.
- 5) The paragraph is well organized. The paragraphs may follow any of the same organization styles that were mentioned in point 4 regarding the essay as whole.
- 6) The sentences are clearly readable. Long sentences should be divided into two or more sentences. Avoid incomplete sentences without a main verb.
- 7) Transition words and phrases are included when there is a change in thought (such as “however,” “furthermore,” and “on the other hand.”) The reader needs to see the relationship between different points. Try reading the paragraph out loud. If it is not smooth, you probably need to modify it.

Do not hesitate to eliminate sentences that are not related to the main theme of the paragraph. They might belong better in another paragraph, they might be material for a whole new paragraph, or they might be completely unnecessary.

6. Use footnotes properly

You must indicate all sources of ideas with footnotes, even if it is not a direct quote. You may use one of the two possible formats. However, you must be consistent within the essay, always using the same format.

A. MLA Style (Modern Language Association)

NOTE: This is the preferred style of MINTS.

This style puts the minimum information in parentheses, and takes advantage of the full information given in the bibliography at the back of the book, article, or essay.

For example, if the book in the bibliography is the following, ...

Marcuse, Sybyl. *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 1975.

...then within the text, only the author's name and the page number are necessary. For example, if the quote is taken from page 197, after the quote within the essay there should be a parenthesis as follows:

(Marcuse 197)

If there is more than one book by the same author, a short version of the title should be included, as follows:

(Marcuse, *Survey* 197)

If the author's name is mentioned within the essay, only the page number is necessary:

(197)

B. Chicago Manual of Style

This style gives more information in the notes. You should put a number in the text, after the quote or information used, in superscript, as seen here⁸. Then at the bottom of the page, put the footnote. (The footnotes may also be put at the end of each chapter, or at the end of the book, but we prefer them at the bottom of the page.)

If you do *not* have full information in the bibliography, use the following pattern:

8 Author [first name, then last name], *Title of the book* [in italics] (city of publication: publishing company, year) [between parentheses, with a colon between city and publisher, then a comma before the year, just as it appears here], page or pages cited.

Here is an example:

8 Federico García Lorca, *Bodas de Sangre* (Barcelona: Ayma, S.A., 1971), 95.

On the other hand, if you *do* have full information in the bibliography, you may simply put the author, title, and page number. The reader can find the rest of the information in the bibliography at the back.

Here is an example:

8 Federico García Lorca, *Bodas de Sangre*, 95.

7. Include a bibliography

At the end of the essay, you should include a bibliography, listing all the books, articles, and web sites that you used for the essay. The format for the bibliography is slightly different from the footnote. The last name goes first in this case. There are no parentheses and no page number. The author's last name should not be indented, but if the entry uses more than one line, the other lines are all indented. Look at the following examples.

García Lorca, Federico. *Bodas de Sangre*. Barcelona: Ayma, S.A., 1971.

Marcuse, Sybil. *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 1975.

8. Resources

Use the following sources for other help with editing and style:

1. Joseph Gibaldi, ed., *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999. (Currently the 6th edition is the latest.) NOTE: This is the official guideline for MINTS.

Some web sites contain portions of the MLS standards:

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite5.html>

http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html

2. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.)

See online Manual: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

See the following web site for information about this book and about electronic resources: <http://www.docstyles.com/cmsguide.htm>

See also the following web site for exercises to improve your grammar and writing style.

<http://go.hrw.com/hhb/>

You may also use the following books for reference:

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, latest edition.

Kirszner, Laurie G., and Mandell, Stephen, *The Holt Handbook*. Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace.

9. Essay Evaluation

1. CONTENT

Identification of theme/thesis

Development of theme/thesis

Conclusion to theme/thesis

Educational content

Theological content

2. STYLE

Title page

Index

Titles

References

General presentation

3. GRAMMAR

Grammar in general

Vocabulary

Paragraph structure

Sentence structure

Punctuation

4. VERIFICATION

Argumentation

Use of resources

Quotations

Footnotes

Bibliography

5. APPLICATION

Faithfulness to the Biblical revelation

Helpful for obeying the Great Commission

Identification of spiritual needs

Presentation of Biblical solutions to the spiritual needs that were presented

Motivation for future studies

10. Essay style

TITLE PAGE

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>TITLE OF THE ESSAY</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAME OF THE AUTHOR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAME AND CODE OF THE COURSE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of the Professor</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of the Educational Institution</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p>

INDEX (Classical style)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>TITLE OF THE ESSAY</i></p> <p>INTRODUCTON</p> <p>I.</p> <p> A.</p> <p> 1.</p> <p> 2.</p> <p> B.</p> <p> 1.</p> <p> 2.</p> <p>II.</p> <p> A.</p> <p> B.</p> <p>CONCLUSION</p> <p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>
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INDEX (Numerical style)

TITLE OF THE ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

1.
 - 1.1.
 - 1.2
2.
 - 2.1.
 - 2.1.1.
 - 2.1.2.
 - 2.2.
3.
 - 3.1.
 - 3.2.

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Conclusion

There are many ways to write a good essay, and creativity is welcome. However, there are certain guidelines that help you communicate better. Probably the greatest challenge is to make your writing clear and easy to understand. It should be pleasant to read, and not hard work. Read your essay over and over until you are satisfied. The more you work on it, the easier it will be to understand. Have a friend or family member read your essay before you send it in. Also, read the essay aloud to see if the sentences communicate what you want to say and how you want to say it. Your essay should be so good that others want to publish it!

Form For Reading Reports

<p><u>Bibliographical Data</u></p> <p>Title:Chapter:..... Pages:</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>If article, name of magazine or web site:.....</p> <p>Editorial:.....</p> <p>City Year of publication</p>
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<p><u>Outline:</u></p>	<p><u>Brief Summary</u> (Write a synthesis of what the author says, without your own comments)</p>
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Critical Evaluation

(Elaborate your own opinion about what the author says. Is it clear, precise, confusing, well-documented, out of context, too simple, too complicated, biblical, too technical? Did you like it? Defend your opinion.)

Personal Application to Your Life and Ministry

(What impact did this reading have on my life and ministry? Was it helpful? How did it help? Be specific.)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS THAT COME FROM THE READING