

Dr. Darleen Pryds
Franciscan School of Theology, GTU
webpage: courseweb.fst.edu/dpryds
email: dpryds@fst.edu

How to Write and Survive Writing a Thesis

N.B. What follows assumes you already have a research question that will serve as the focus of your research. If you don't have a topic/research question, and need help on how to arrive at one, please ask.

Please email me if you are interested in other workshops related to study skills at the graduate level or an on-going thesis-writing workshop.

I. Getting Organized

A. Get Out Your Calendar NOW and Create a Schedule

B. How to Take Notes and Conduct Research

1. Computer vs. hand-written

--Computer files should be backed up at least weekly; as thesis nears completion, daily back up; keep copy in separate location

2. Basic Note-taking

- a. Reading for content information
- b. reading for author's interpretation
- c. reading to respond to author's interpretation

3. Carefully note author's name; Full Title and bibliographic information; page numbers; NEVER, EVER SKIP OVER THIS STEP!

4. Anne Sigismund Huff, Writing for Scholarly Publication (Thousand Oaks, 1999);

- a. Identify your Audience: target topics, specific works, people
 - b. Write to refine thinking
- c. Find an Exemplar that accomplishes the same kind of task you seek to accomplish and does so effectively.

5. Always carry a pen and notepad with you once you begin in earnest

C. Beginning Writing

1. Manuals of Style: Start now and learn a Style and use it consistently, so it becomes second nature. The GTU Stylebook is Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th edition (Chicago, 1969, 1993)

2. Strunk and White, Elements of Style; Booth et al., The Craft of Research; N. Goldberg, Writing Down the Bones; Huff, (mentioned above)

II. The Psychology of Writing a Thesis

A. Confidence

1. student mentality vs. scholar mentality
2. Take charge of your schedule
3. Be Honest in your Writing and your Documentation
4. Don't be Arrogant about your Contribution to Scholarly World

B. Persistence vs. Procrastination

1. write 5 pages everyday
2. if stuck, write in a new way—through graphs, diagrams, pictures
3. if stuck, write in a new space—a coffee shop, a book store, the library
4. if stuck, play “final exam” and write non-stop for 2 hours
5. leave something easy to write as a warm-up for the next day

C. Form a Thesis Peer Group for Peer Review

D. Passion for Subject: when you feel stuck, write about your passion

E. Your Text and Your self-identity: Fragile Ego/Healthy Ego