



**Northwind Seminary
Romantic Theology
Dissertation Writing Guide**

Writing the Dissertation

Each doctoral dissertation is unique, yet all Northwind dissertations will have common elements found in the General Guidelines at the Student Writing Center and the more specific Program guidelines and chapter outlines. You are expected to propose and discuss a specific chapter outline with your faculty mentor. For example, if you desire to write a book-length manuscript for peer review as part of your dissertation, you will negotiate with your faculty mentor how to incorporate and satisfy the general requirements of the DTM dissertation.

The dissertation is typically comprised of 5 chapters, at least 120 pages in length, and strictly follow the Turabian Manual. Front matter, preceding the chapters, must or may include:

- Title page
- Certification page
- Copyright or blank page
- Dedication/acknowledgements (optional)
- Table of contents
- List of figures, tables, or illustrations (if applicable)
- Preface (optional)
- List of abbreviations (if applicable)
- Glossary (if applicable)
- Research methods (if applicable)
- Abstract: states the problem, thesis, and a concise summary of the chapters in 150 words

What follows is a typical chapter outline for the doctoral dissertation in the DTM Romantic Theology program:

Chapter 1: Purpose and Significance of the Study

In the first chapter, clearly state the purpose of the study and explain the study's significance. The significance is addressed by discussing how the study adds to the body of knowledge on the topic and the study's practical significance for the issue being examined. Candidates should explain and demonstrate how their research makes an original contribution on the topic. They also should address the significance of the study for others exploring the issue or topic. It is especially critical that this chapter be well developed. Without a clearly defined purpose and strong theological or theoretical grounding, the treatise will likely be profoundly flawed from the outset.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews prominent literature and approaches to your selected topic and focus. Based on your annotated bibliography, presents a thematic organization of your review of literature in narrative form. It should reflect your best thinking, theoretical/theological framework and analysis, supported by insights of others, and serves to anchor your study in the disciplinary literature and prior scholarly research and writing. Your narrative review should describe and analyze previous research and thinking on the topic, including your conversation partners in the field in the development of your study. This chapter, however, should not merely string together what others have found or decided. Rather, it should discuss and analyze the literature on the topic with the goal of determining what is known and commonly held on the issue and what might not yet be examined about the topic or what might need to be revisited. This analytical review will support your unique approach to the question.

Chapter 3: Thesis, Method, and Reasoning

This chapter is the core of your research, analysis and contribution to your field of inquiry. It describes and demonstrates your method and reasoning in your approach to the topic. It proposes and substantiates a theoretical solution to the problem and purpose of your research in light of literary, historical, sociological, psychological and/or theological norms as indicated by the definition of the problem and precedents in the literature

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter addresses your analysis on the topic and does not include discussing others' reflections. What are the theoretical and practical implications of your insight for the topic you chose? Summarize your findings and original contribution here.

Chapter 5: Applications and Conclusion

The DTM degree requires an application to ministry and service, broadly defined. Based on your spiritual values, faith, and mission in the world, answer the questions "why and so what?" You might begin by discussing how your findings connect to those of others introduced in the literature review. In some cases, you may want to introduce new literature if you find that insights from other perspectives may now have a bearing on your final conclusions. Discuss what your findings mean for a specific community of faith, or a general faith tradition, or for other's investigating the topic in relation to the general body of knowledge on the issue. You may want to outline the limitations of your study and identify areas for future analysis or research.

Specific and contextual applications should be clearly stated since the DTM is a theological research degree with an application to ministry and service.

The doctoral dissertation ends with a brief conclusion that provides closure. A strong final sentence should be written and then an **abstract** prepared.

Addendum may be added in support of your dissertation (but does not count toward the 120-page length requirement).

Once submitted to your faculty mentor, a second reader and third reader will be assigned for the next and final course: Dissertation Defense. In that course notations will be made on your dissertation by all readers, comments offered, formatting checked, changes made, and an Oral Defense of your dissertation scheduled before the Committee recommends conferral of degree and graduation.

Revised: 10/18/2022