

## Enhancing Student Research Skills Information Literacy Stipends for 2020

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Course name and number:	T/RS 122—Theology II
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### Course and Research Assignment Background

Theology II is a required course, and an Introduction to Christian Theology. This means that students who enroll in the course may have no interest in theology in general or in Christian theology in particular. Yet, Theology II does have Theology I as prerequisite, so students should have some Biblical aptitude. So I have designed the course to prioritize hands-on self-discovery with an initial shallow learning curve. While I scheduled "Information Literacy Week" (more information below) in the fourth week of the semester, the very first day of class mentioned the research paper and the topic of Information Literacy (IL). Before the second week of class even started, I announced the coming "Information Literacy Week," and I urged students to begin researching their choices for secondary sources for the research paper. The research paper was not due until the last week of the semester, so all research truly contextualized the work of the entire semester. Aside from "Information Literacy Week," the saturation reached its second peak by Week 10, in which the first of three consecutive, weekly research installments for the research paper became due. These installments, which as a group are worth just as much to the semester grade as the paper itself, are a low

Prof. Witek on the specific IL needs of Theology II. Furthermore, IL standards had changed since my previous IL project, so I needed to update my course material with the new standards.

#### Information Literacy Standards That Are Addressed

Information Literacy applies to the two research angles in my class: Biblical research and theological assimilation. Each of these angles demands a different primary frame for the work of Information Literacy for Higher Education





also both the character of the author and the reception of the text. In this “best paper” student researched demonstrated a prolonged investigation into both of these features of the secondary source. This success I directly attribute to the “Information Literacy Week.” Second, even though making general characterizations is weak, I believe I can conclude that overall student research papers were characterized as having lively interactions with their secondary and primary sources. Such interactions would be the expected result of the research emphases that Prof. Witek and I emphasized. I would characterize these interactions as not merely looking at a source as a repository of quotes by which to patch together a formally acceptable research paper. Instead, I contend that my students’ use of their sources demonstrates that they recognize their sources to be full statements by an author about topics or situations. I conten7(c)-1om

- The weekly installments helped in organizing thoughts and points for the major paper. The concept map which was created by Professor Witek helped with gathering and finding relevant information.
- I learned many things for theology class and my paper, but one important tool is learning how to navigate through the library and knowing all the resources offered to me. I believe this is most important because I can use this skill in all future classes. I am very comfortable and able to reach out to the librarians for research help, which I was not previously aware of. I became informed with many topics for my theology major paper and I am thankful for that, but I am most glad that I know I have more assistance in the library for future reference!
- One major perspective I earned from Information Literacy Week this semester is that it is okay not to have an answer for everything in research, for finding good questions can be as important as finding answers.

This sampling, actually lifted directly out of the middle of the D2L answers list, shows the breadth of IL targeted gains this semester, from basic IL resources, to research strategy, to Prof. Witek's chart, to IL relevance beyond Theology. This breadth, unsolicited and undirected, shows that the IL saturation of this class as intended and expected had a broad and successful footprint.

#### [Ideas for Continued Enhancement of Information Literacy](#)

As I have reread the IL Framework materials that I have tailored to this class, and as I think about where the rubber meets the road of research possibilities...