



## Thesis Summer Reading Assignments – Class of 2025

- I. Purchase a substantial core book by Friday, June 14.**
- A. Your book must first be approved by your advisor, Mrs. Knight, or Mrs. Hopkins. A good core book will help you explore all facets of your topic and provide clear direction for additional research when school begins. A core book that does not provide these things will not give you the background you need to begin additional research in the fall.
  - B. Before you buy, see if you can find a free PDF preview online. Check availability at a local library. Use preview options to reduce the opportunity for buyer's remorse. **Do not purchase a book until it is approved by an advisor!**
- II. Complete a pre-reading/skimming of your core book by June 28, 2024. This assignment should take you no more than 30 minutes.**
- A. "Think of yourself as a detective looking for clues to a book's general theme or idea, alert for anything that will make it clearer" (from *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler, pp. 35-36).
  - B. Adler's technique for skimming involves these steps, *completed at a brisk pace*.
    1. Look at the title page and, if the book has one, at its preface.
    2. Study the table of contents.
    3. Check the index and bibliography.
    4. Read the publisher's blurb.
    5. Identify and look at the chapters that seem to be pivotal to its argument.
    6. Turn the pages, dipping in here and there, reading a paragraph or two, sometimes several pages in sequence, never more than that.
  - C. Be prepared to discuss with your advisor what you learned from this pre-reading exercise.
  - D. Create a **schedule of intermediate deadlines** for reading portions of your book.
- III. Complete a thorough, analytical reading of your core book, with annotations and marginal notes.** As you finish a chapter, complete a "**Commentated Table of Contents**" in which you summarize the main ideas of the chapter in 2-4 sentences. List and define from each chapter any key terms specific to your topic. (Every topic has its own vocabulary which you will need to master and be able to explain to others.)
- At least **half** of this core book assignment needs to be completed by **July 15**. Summaries and key terms should be emailed to your advisor on or before the deadline and should be

available for your advisor to peruse during your July meeting with him/her. The **remainder** of the assignment is due on the first day of school, Wednesday, **August 14**.

**IV. Complete the Topic-Question-Motivation assignment (see attachment) and use the ideas generated there to prepare a three-paragraph essay.**

- A. The first paragraph will more deeply explain and delineate the major facets of your issue as described in your core book.
- B. The second paragraph will suggest what you hope to discover from further research.
- C. The third paragraph will propose what understandings you hope your reader/audience will gain as a result of your research. Why is your topic important? Why should we care? What is the proper response to the ideas presented given a Christian worldview?

Make sure to include specific information from your core book and cite all quotes, paraphrases, and summaries correctly. **JUST THIS ONCE**, you may use first person in this essay since the questions you are answering employ a first-person format, but no second person (you) pronouns are allowed. A correct Works Cited entry must also accompany this assignment. This essay should be emailed or shared with your advisor prior to the first day of school, and a hard copy will be handed in on the first day of school.

**DEADLINES:**

**June 14** – approved core book purchased and IN HAND.

**June 28** - pre-reading of core book completed.

**By the end of June** – meet with your advisor (or Mrs. Knight/Mrs. Hopkins)

**July 15** – at least half of the core book reading assignment completed and corresponding chapters of the “Commentated Table of Contents” emailed to your advisor.

**By the end of July** – meet again with your advisor to discuss your progress and get clarification on questions concerning Topic/Question/Motivation handout and/or essay assignment.

**Before August 14, 2024**, meet with your advisor one final time prior to the deadline for submission of summer assignments. (Assignments submitted to advisors well in advance of the deadline have, on occasion, been reviewed and approved prior to submission.)

**Bring with you on the first day of class:**

- A. Your **core book** with annotations.
- B. The “**Commentated Table of Contents**” assignment.
- C. The **Topic-Question-Motivation** handout.
- D. A **three-paragraph essay** that includes citations and a Works Cited page in correct MLA format.

## Topic/Question/Motivation Worksheet

We will begin the year in thesis by working through a section of a book called *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth et al. (We will refer to this book often as you continue the research phase of your thesis.) The authors state:

**Done well, your [research] project prepares you to join the oldest and most esteemed of human conversations, one conducted for millennia among philosophers, engineers, biologists, social scientists, historians, literary critics, linguists, theologians, not to mention CEOs, lawyers, marketers, investment managers – the list is endless. (10)**

I suspect that each of you can recognize from among the professionals listed above an expert in your general area of study. Welcome to the Great Conversation!

Thanks to the work you did in the spring of your junior year, you already have at least the beginnings of an idea of what you want to research and have learned a bit about the history of the subject. The next step is to read and study a full-length, in-depth book on the subject. Once you have completed a thorough reading of this core book, you will be ready to further clarify your thoughts by engaging in the three-step process suggested by Booth et al. (44-46).

**Step 1: Name your Topic** (what you are writing about).

Begin with the statement “I am studying/working on \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Step 2: Add an Indirect Question** (what you don’t know about your topic).

Add to your statement, “because I want to find out who/what/when/where/whether/why/how \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Step 3: To your indirect question, answer *So What?*** by motivating your answer (why you want your reader to know and care about your topic).

Add to your statement and indirect question “in order to help my reader understand \_\_\_\_\_.”

Here are some examples:

1. I am working on the concept of a central bank digital currency
  2. because I want to find out how this type of currency would work and whether it would be helpful or harmful to the economy
  3. in order to help my reader understand how this technology will affect their individual finances and the monetary system as a whole.
1. I am studying historical and literary influences on postmodern thought
  2. because I want to find out how these ideas have affected our culture,
  3. in order to help my reader understand how authors such as Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Nietzsche have contributed to our current cultural norms.

Once you have completed your core book, you should write **at least two** of these topic-question-motivation statements specific to your area of study. Feel free to create more as the complexity of your topic demands.

**Summary 1:**

*[Topic]* I am studying/working on...

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*[Question]* because I want to find out...

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*[Motivation]* in order to help the reader understand...

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**Summary 2:**

*[Topic]* I am studying/working on...

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*[Question]* because I want to find out...

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*[Motivation]* in order to help the reader understand...

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