

From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research

By Michael Kibbe

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While courses in Bible and theology typically require research papers, particularly at the graduate level, very few include training in research. Professors have two options: use valuable class time to teach students as much as they can, or lower their standards with the understanding that students cannot be expected to complete tasks for which they have never been prepared.

From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research offers a third option. This affordable and accessible tool walks students through the process, focusing on five steps: finding direction, gathering sources, understanding issues, entering discussion and establishing a position. Its goal is to take students directly from a research *assignment* to a research *argument*?in other words, from topic to thesis.

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From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research By Michael Kibbe Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #255884 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-01-28
- Released on: 2016-01-28
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review
"Kibbe's *From Topic to Thesis* is a concise but complete course in the art and science of theological research and writing, complete with five sharply focused aims and objectives: find, gather, understand, enter into discussion, establish. Unlike assembly instructions for things like bookshelves, Kibbe's directions are easy to follow, providing everything one needs to know to write and sustain a theological thesis (except the theology). I said 'thesis' and not 'topic' because Kibbe encourages me not to confuse them (a topic is a subject area; a thesis is a specific claim about that area). This is only one of the many practical bits of wisdom readers will find herein." (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

"Michael Kibbe's compact guide delivers a lot of practical wisdom for those beginning to write theological research papers. Other guides can be so long that assigning them competes with the actual reading and writing you want students to undertake! By contrast, this one gets to the point and gives concrete examples without denying the mysteries of the research process." (Daniel J. Treier, Wheaton College)

"This small handbook is precisely what every beginning theology student needs to write a coherent, well-argued, properly researched essay. Mike Kibbe is not only a master teacher (his instructional style is evident throughout) but he is a master researcher (whose recent PhD demonstrates his fresh skills). Let Kibbe become your coach and encourager. If you do, you'll find guidance for how to organize that winning research project. You'll find lists of common errors that countless students make. But above all, you'll discover a gold mine of wisdom that I wish we could put into the hands of every student who sets out to write a paper." (Gary M. Burge, Wheaton College)

"Mike Kibbe's guide for writing research papers is an excellent resource for both college and graduate level students. Its compact size belies its wealth of helpful advice and information. The step-by-step instruction should give students confidence, while pointing out pitfalls and offering examples from the author's own experience. There are many time-saving suggestions that will make research and writing efficient without compromising integrity. And the tone is conversational, as if Kibbe is having a one-on-one conversation with the reader. This book is essential for students who write research papers . . . and for professors who want to *enjoy* reading what their students produce." (Dennis Okholm, professor of theology, Azusa Pacific University)

"This is a short review for a very short book, but I don't want that to overshadow the fact that no book may be more important for the seminary student than Michael Kibbe's *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. This goldmine of an instruction manual, clocking in at 148 pages with the extra valuable appendices, provides step-by-step instructions for assembling a research paper.Finding, processing, and communicating information are the essential skills in theological research, Kibbe writes, but the process entails moving from identifying a set of information (topic) to making an argument (thesis). Kibbe not only tells the reader how to get there, he also provides clear examples and warns against common mistakes. And if the book couldn't offer more bang for the buck, Kibbe's six appendices introduce the reader to specific research tools, like databases and citation managers." (S. Craig Sanders, Towers, April 2016)

"Michael Kibbe's *From Topic to Thesis* offers an accessible, wise and eminently practical introduction to theological research, an introduction that will benefit undergraduate and seminary students alike. Students who follow Kibbe's five steps for assembling a theological research paper will receive a sure-handed guide to

the development of a research argument. I enthusiastically commend this book to two audiences: students, who will write better papers when they use this book, and professors, who will enjoy reading better papers when they assign this book to their students." (David J. Downs, Fuller Theological Seminary)

"Michael Kibbe provides students with a real gift: a handbook that is both theologically thoughtful and undeniably practical. His wisdom comes through concrete and useful counsel. Sensible students will follow his guidance." (Kelly M. Kapic, Covenant College)

About the Author
Michael Kibbe (PhD, Wheaton College) is assistant professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute-Spokane in Spokane, Washington, where he teaches Greek and hermeneutics. He is the author of *Godly Fear or Ungodly Failure? Hebrews 12 and the Sinai Theophanies* and has published articles in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, *Biblica*, the *Journal of Theological Interpretation* and the *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters*. His research interests include the Epistle to the Hebrews, the use of the Old Testament in the New, the doctrine of the atonement, theological exegesis, Second Corinthians and the reception history of Exodus and Deuteronomy. He lives in Spokane, Washington, with his wife Annie and their two children.

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