



## **DISSERTATION HANDBOOK**



## **Acknowledgements**

American Institute of Holistic Theology would like to thank Christine Letizia and Kym Maehl for generously giving us portions of their dissertations for use as examples for this handbook. Congratulations to both graduates on completion of their Ph.D.!

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## **Getting Started**

### **A quick run-down**

The MLA format has been used as a basis for the formatting described in this handbook. If you have a question about formatting that is not mentioned in this handbook, please referred to *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* or contact AIHT for more assistance. Do not forget to number your pages. **Always** do spelling and grammar checks on your paper.

Remember that software tools will not always catch every error (e.g. there instead of their). If possible, have others read your final draft and check for errors. Often when the work is your own, you will overlook errors. Taking time away from your work will help cut down on this tendency. So if you do not have a friend or relative to help you proofread, wait several days and then reread it yourself.

### **What is a dissertation? And why must I write one?**

As you already know, American Institute of Holistic Theology is a non-traditional school. As such, the decision has been made to also make the requirements of the dissertation non-traditional. In the traditional academic setting, a dissertation requires years of research, both from academic sources and one's own study. One would be required to read the works of others to form a thesis and proposal, formulate a method to test the thesis, and then report the findings of that method including whether or not the thesis was proved to be true or false.

As a non-traditional distance education school, the traditional model may be too restrictive for AIHT students. In an attempt to allow the creative latitude for the development of a research project that matches your interests and studies in the field of holistic theology, your dissertation is an opportunity for you to explore a topic in depth. You should research a topic which applies to your course of study and fits your specific area of interest. This may be an area which was explored in one of your courses or not, but it should be an area that interests you and which you would like to further explore.

Writing your dissertation is a pre-requisite to being granted your degree if you are enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy program, but more importantly it is an integral part of your post graduate training. Writing itself is a creative process. It is often during the writing stage that ideas are generated and conclusions reached. In addition, the skills that you develop while completing your dissertation, including selection of the materials to review, the critical analysis of information gathered, assessment of these ideas, and the written communication, will be valued throughout your life and career. If you have never written a research paper, you might find the following website helpful (<http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/>).

Furthermore, it is our hope that some students will wish to seek publication of their dissertation or that the dissertation will be a stepping stone to later works. For this reason, you will receive comments and suggestions on the returned copy of your dissertation which will help you make any edits we feel necessary for future publication. As the author of your dissertation, you will maintain copyright to your own work. AIHT will not publish your dissertation, or any portion thereof, without your express written consent. In the United States, please consult <http://www.copyright.gov/> for specifics on copyrighting your work.

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## **Approval Process**

First and foremost, you should not request approval for a topic before you have completed 2/3 of your coursework on the Ph.D. level. If you would like to discuss a possible topic with our faculty before making a decision, please feel free to contact us. Read all of the dissertation guidelines before making a final decision on your topic. After deciding on a dissertation topic, you must contact your Faculty Advisor in writing for approval. This may be done via e-mail (faculty@aiht.edu) or regular mail. Your proposal should include your name, student number, program of study (e.g. Parapsychic Science), the title of your dissertation and a summary paragraph. You will receive written approval of your topic via email or regular mail.

## **Topic choice**

Writing your dissertation is a substantial undertaking and should not be taken lightly. When you choose the topic of your dissertation, you need to make sure that your topic is not too broad. Many students are tempted to choose a massive or unfocused subject because they mistakenly think that their research materials will be unlimited. Unfortunately, what happens instead is that the student becomes overwhelmed and may not make very good source selections when consulting the mountain of information that is available.

When choosing a topic for your dissertation, choose one that interests you and that will be an enjoyable learning experience. Your topic should coincide with your degree program. For example, if you are enrolled in the Metaphysics program, your topic should be from the Metaphysical area. Be sure that you will be able to provide at least five books and/or scholarly journal sources by several different authors for your research. These do not include books assigned to you by AIHT as part of your degree program, encyclopedias, dictionaries, magazines, newspapers, interviews, and tapes, although, they may be used as additional sources.

You should do some research on your topic before you zero in on the focus of your dissertation. What aspects of the topic interest you? Could any of them be developed into a provable thesis?

Once you have a general idea of the subject matter you would like to explore, see if you can break it down to one aspect of your original idea. If you cannot, you probably have a narrow enough topic. If you are not sure, go on to the thesis statement. Narrowing your topic down often goes hand-in-hand with formulating your thesis statement, and as you work to make your dissertation effective, you will be automatically creating a focus for your paper.

## **Thesis Statement**

One of the earliest and most crucial steps in writing your paper is coming up with an effective thesis statement. Think of it as the whole paper in a nutshell. If you were going to tell someone the point of your paper in one sentence, that is your thesis statement. Your thesis statement will usually appear somewhere in the first paragraph, or introduction, of your paper. Every single sentence in your paper must have a connection to your thesis statement.

Your thesis statement is your way of telling your reader what your dissertation will try to demonstrate. The rest of your dissertation will then be devoted to supporting the thesis statement you have made in your opening paragraph. When you type your paper, though, the thesis

statement should not be identified---it should not be in bold print or made to stand out in anyway. Although it will just be one of the sentences in your introduction (usually the first or last sentence of your introductory paragraph), it should be clear that this is the statement you intend to support just by how clear and definitive it is.

In creating a thesis statement, remember these things:

A thesis statement is NOT:

- a question
- a vague or indefinite idea
- a statement containing “no” or “not”
- a fact
- a series of ideas several sentences long
- a foregone conclusion (something everyone already knows)

A thesis statement IS:

- a narrow, limited, single idea, capable of being fully developed in a paper opinion
- a fresh look at an issue you are willing to defend as being important
- a positive statement
- a clearly stated, specific point of view
- a declaration or assertion capable of being proven

Your thesis statement will reflect your paper. It should not be so broad that hundreds of pages could be written about it. At the same time, it should not be so narrow that you will have a great deal of difficulty coming up with enough information to support your statement. Your thesis statement should be specific and provable. It should also enable you to focus on narrowing your research to just the information necessary to deal with your dissertation topic.

When you have chosen an area of interest and have created a good thesis statement for it, you are ready to research and gather information for your dissertation. You should only look for information that will help you to prove your thesis statement. As a general rule, background information is only appropriate if it is necessary to help support your thesis. However, if your topic is one which is highly unique, there may be some background information which the reader will need in order to understand a concept. Make sure to define unusual terms and concepts. When you have gathered your information, it is helpful to outline your paper. Organizing your thoughts and your research will help you create a well written paper.

## Writing Your Dissertation

As you begin to write the first draft of your dissertation, keep in mind that it is much more impressive for you to write it in simple language that demonstrates that you understand what you are saying than to use big words or complicated sentences. Also, you would be well served to remember these “unwritten rules” for successful academic writing:

- Research papers should be written in the third person (as in “He said” or “She stated”). Academic research papers should be supported by research and fact, not personal opinion. Notice that most published research papers and textbooks are written in the third person for this reason. Do not use “I” (as in “I think” or “in my opinion”) or “you” (as in “Have you always wondered...?”), because it not only weakens your sentence but it also places your opinions into what should be an academic research paper
- Be very careful not to refer to the process of writing the paper in your thesis. Do not make the common mistake by stating your thesis statement like this: “The thesis for my paper is...” Make your statement with confidence as if it is a fact, because proving your thesis statement is the purpose of your dissertation.
- Plagiarism is often misunderstood. Many people think they must only cite direct quotes. However, if you gain an idea from someone, you must also cite your source. For example:

“Waking paralysis (also called sleep paralysis) is extremely common: you wake up paralyzed, or suddenly become paralyzed while relaxing or trying to get to sleep—but while still awake.” (Bruce 87)

Sleep paralysis, when one is mentally awake but cannot move, is not uncommon. (Bruce 87)

Notice that both examples contain a citation because the idea for the statement came from Bruce. There is an exception to this rule. If the idea is contained in several of your readings in basically the same form, then this would be considered common knowledge and would not need a citation. If in doubt, cite. It is better to “over” cite than to “under” cite.

The first thing you need to do when you begin is to write a general introduction for your paper. Begin with general comments that introduce your topic, including the thesis statement and save the details for the second paragraph and beyond.

After the introduction, continue supporting your thesis statement. You need to constantly check yourself to be sure you are not including information that is irrelevant to helping you support your thesis.

- Paragraphs should be at least three sentences in length but you should be careful that your paragraphs are not too long.

- Divide your ideas so that you deal with one main idea per paragraph.
- Use transitions (therefore, however, on the other hand, in addition, etc.) to make your paper flow from paragraph to paragraph and idea to idea.

Here are some special situations you might run into:

**Short Quotations** - If a quotation runs four or less typed lines, work it into the body of the paper.

Hyde states, “Our ideas about property and theft depend on a set of assumptions about how the world is divided up.” (71-72)

**Long Quotations** - Quotations of more than four typed lines should be set off from the rest of the paper. Indent each line one tab or .5 inches. No quotation marks are used with longer quotations that are set off from the rest of the text of your paper.

The Trickster cycle corresponds to the earliest and least developed period of life. Trickster is a figure whose physical appetites dominate his behavior; he has the mentality of an infant. Lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary needs, he is cruel, cynical, and unfeeling. This figure, which at the outset assumes the form of an animal, passes from one mischievous exploit to another. But, as he does so, a change comes over him. At the end of his rogue’s progress he is beginning to take on the physical likeness of a grown man. (Henderson 103-104)

**Quoting Poetry** - Lines of a poem should be worked into the text of the paper. Use a slash (/) to indicate the end of each line of poetry. If it is more than four lines, see the format for long quotations (above).

As Emily Dickinson wrote “Because I could not stop for Death/ He kindly stopped for me/ The Carriage held but just Ourselves/ And Immortality.” (poets.org)

**Partial Quotations** - If you want to omit part of a quotation, use an ellipsis (...) to indicate that you left part of it out. Be sure that you do not change the quotation's meaning with your omission.

According to Hyde, tricksters are the “...lords of in-between [and] can move between heaven and earth... between the living and the dead.” (Hyde 6-7)

**Adding Words** - If you need to add any clarifying information, put it inside brackets ([...]) within the quotation.

“[They act as] mediator – sometimes the messenger of the gods, sometimes the guide of the souls.” (Hyde 6-7)

**Citing a Complete Work as a whole** - Remember to underline the title of the work. A page number is not needed, since you are talking about the point of the whole work. If you use the author's name in the body of the sentence along with the title of the entire work, you do not need to include a parenthetical citation.

This is delineated in the book, Power vs. Force, in which Dr. David Hawkins states that all attractor fields or levels of consciousness are either life affirming or life detracting.

## **Formatting**

### **Font**

Any legible 12 point font is acceptable. Choose styles that have the greatest legibility. Times New Roman and Arial are good choices. Typefaces that are overly ornate, small or difficult to read will not be accepted. If you are using a typewriter for your dissertation, you should use 12 point Elite.

### **Margins**

The left margin should be one and one half (1 ½) inches throughout the paper, including any charts, graphs, tables, etc. The right margin should be one inch throughout the paper. The top margin on the first page should be two inches; the rest of the top margins should be one inch. The bottom margin should be one inch throughout.

### **Spacing**

The text of your dissertation must be double-spaced. Bibliography citations are single-spaced with double-spacing between each one.

### **Pagination**

You should use Roman numerals to number your introductory pages (title page, acknowledgements, if any; dedication, if any; etc.) with the page bearing no number, but included in the sequence. All preliminary pages are numbered with Roman numerals; all other pages from the 1<sup>st</sup> page of the body of your paper until the end of your paper should be numbered using regular numerals. Page numbers should be centered ½ inch from the bottom of the page.

## **Title Page**

A Title Page is **REQUIRED**. Begin about three inches from the top of the page. Center the title of your paper.

Then drop down two more inches and center the following information, double spacing between each line:

your name

“In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of YOUR SPECIFIC DEGREE IN  
CAPITAL LETTERS”

(current month current year)

## **Abstract**

The next page should contain an abstract, which is **REQUIRED** in order for your paper to be Approved. An abstract is a paragraph between 150 and 200 words in length. This paragraph often contains the thesis statement along with a concise description of the purpose, procedure, results and conclusions of your dissertation.

The word ABSTRACT should be centered and positioned three inches from the top of the page. Three lines down from this is the single-spaced title of your paper. Three lines down from this is your name. Five spaces down from this is the abstract for your paper. It is a short, concise, bare bones outline of the major points and conclusion of your paper.

It should be single-spaced and no longer than a page. Ideally, it is a short to medium length paragraph.

## **Table of Contents**

A table of contents is **REQUIRED** for your dissertation. The words TABLE OF CONTENTS should be centered on the first line of your page. It should contain all parts of your paper. Roman numerals are used for all parts of your paper before the body of your paper. All other pages are numbered.

## **The Body of Your Dissertation**

The body of your paper should have an introductory paragraph which contains a thesis statement explaining the aim(s) of your research. The body of your paper should elaborate on your topic, presenting research to further your ideas and prove your point(s). This research should be liberally scattered throughout your paper, adding strength to your observations. A conclusion that reiterates major points and ties up all the loose ends should complete your dissertation. ***The length of the body of the paper should be a minimum of 25 but no more than 30 pages in length.***

The body of your dissertation should be a well-rounded exploration of research organized into an informative, academically sound, well written paper proving the original thesis statement. Your concluding paragraph(s) should bring together all the salient points that provide this proof.

### **Parenthetical Citations**

Whenever necessary, you should use parenthetical citations in the body of your paper to cite a work. These are formatted in the MLA style. For the sake of uniformity, all papers are required to use MLA style formatting. Examples are given below and throughout this handbook. Additionally, if you have two books by the same author, your citation should include enough of the title of the work to set it apart (i.e. Choquette, Psychic 89 or Choquette, Heart's 180). Also, if the work you are using does not have an author or editor, use the abbreviated title as seen above. If you have questions about formatting, please contact us. You should use parenthetical citations for both paraphrased information and direct quotes. For example:

While trickster figures vary across different myths, there are some commonalities between them. They tend to be crafty and cunning and as Krishna has shown, they will take the opportunity to “make the truth on [their] own terms” (Hyde 73). For the trickster, what is real and unreal is negotiable. His own characteristics reflect this fluid perspective. In several Native American myths, Coyote imitates other animals’ means of survival. He has no way of his own, yet he is a master imitator (Hyde 42-43).

### **Works Cited**

You are now ready to prepare the list of works cited that will conclude your paper. This is the list of authors you consulted in your research which are listed alphabetically in correct MLA style at the end of your paper.

Centered at the top of the page, you should have WORKS CITED. Three spaces down, arrange the list of works alphabetically by author. If it is a source that has more than one author, alphabetize by the first author’s last name in the same order that they appear in the work. If the work does not have an author or editor, alphabetize by the title of the work. Type the first line of each entry flush with the left margin and indent subsequent lines one tab or .5 inches (a hanging indentation); single-space each work; double-space between works.

The basic MLA style entries, which are listed below, cover the basic types of sources you are likely to list. Observe both the arrangement of information and the punctuation.

- Books: Most books consist of three units separated by periods:

Author      Title      Publisher

One author: Author Last name, First name. Title. City: Publisher, year.

Choquette, Sonia. Your Heart's Desire. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997.

Two or more authors: First Author Last Name, First name, and Second Author First Name Last Name. Title. City: Publisher, year.

Silva, Jose, and Robert B. Stone. You the Healer. Tiburon, CA: H J Kramer, Inc., 1989.

Books with editor(s): Editor Last name, First name (ed.). Title. City: Publisher, year.

Barton, John, and John Muddiman, eds. The Oxford Bible Commentary. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

- **Articles:** The documentation format for articles differs slightly from that of books. The three units are the same, and they are still separated by periods, but note the differences in treatment for titles and publication information. (Note: Articles with more than one author are treated the same way as books with more than one author.)

Periodicals with date: Author Last name, First name. "Title of the Article." Periodical. day/month/year: pages.

Marano, Hara Estroff. "The Power of Play - Psychological Benefits of Play." Psychology Today. July/August 1999: 450-451.

Periodicals with volume and/or issue: Author Last name, First name. "Title of Article." Journal. Volume.issue (year): pages.

Wood, Jeffrey. "Effect of Anxiety Reduction on Children's School Performance and Social Adjustment." Developmental Psychology. 42.2 (2006): 345-349.

- **Internet & World Wide Web Sites:** To cite files available for viewing/downloading via the World Wide Web by means of Lynx, Netscape, or other Web browsers provide the following information:

Internet sources: Author's Last name, First name (if known). "Full title of the document." Title of the complete work (if applicable). Date of publication (if available). Date visited <Full http address (URL)>.

Brooks, Claire M. "A Cultivator's View of Reincarnation Cases in Western Medical Research." Reincarnation Cases 2003. 20 August 2004  
<<http://www.pureinsight.org/pi/articles/2002/9/2/213p.html>>.

Please pay careful attention to details---periods, underlining, and spacing should appear exactly as the examples above!!! In some formats, you may italicize or underline the title of a book or  
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periodical. Please notice that in this format the title is to be underlined. If you do not know how to use the formatting on your computer, it is okay to use a black pen to underline the titles.

If you have any questions about citation style, please consult the *MLA Handbook* or contact the school for assistance.

## **Binding**

You should submit two copies of your dissertation, one bound and one unbound. AIHT does not expect you to pay a printing company to have your dissertation bound like a hardback book. However, you will need to take your dissertation to a local copy center and have them place a hard, plastic cover on the back, a clear, plastic cover on the front, and use either a spiral or a binding comb to bind your dissertation. The bound copy is sent to an adjunct faculty member for grading and the unbound copy is kept in your file until the final grading has been finished. After your dissertation has been graded, the bound copy will be sent back to you. In the event that your dissertation is returned to you for corrections, you will need to submit both bound and unbound copies of your corrections. Dissertations are purged immediately after graduation.

## **Grading**

Dissertations do not receive a letter grade (i.e. A, B, C, etc.). Instead, your dissertation will either be approved, or it will be sent back to you to make corrections. You cannot graduate until your dissertation receives approval.

Grading is based on the following criteria:

- Appropriate length (***Required*** 25-30 pages of double-spaced type)
- Table of Contents (***Required***)
- Abstract (***Required***)
- Works Cited page (***Required***)
- Appropriate sources (***Required*** at least 5 books or journal articles by a variety of authors quoted throughout your paper)
- Correct formatting
- Grammar and sentence structure
- Two copies (***Required*** one bound as specified above, one unbound)

Note: Formatting is laid out very specifically in this handbook. As such, you will be expected to use it. However if there are minor mistakes in your formatting, your dissertation will be approved with notes about corrections that should be made for publication standard.

Furthermore, although you will not receive a letter grade, your grammar and sentence structure must be adequate to allow the grader to understand your points. We expect you to use complete sentences, use proper comma placement, avoid run-on sentences, and state your points clearly and concisely. Your dissertation will be returned to you if these types of mistakes are excessive to the point of detracting the reader from your ideas.

## **FINAL CHECKLIST BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR DISSERTATION**

Before you submit your paper you need to be sure that you do not have any glaring errors that will negate all of the hard work you have done. Proofreading, in fact, is one of the most important steps in any kind of project, but it is especially crucial for a doctoral dissertation.

Remember that no one can type a report that does not need corrections!

Your first step should be to print a hard copy of the dissertation so you can look at it meticulously. It is amazing how errors that can slip by your eye on the screen become hideously obvious on paper! Although spell check is a wonderful tool (and you should definitely use it), it can not know that you were supposed to use “than” where you used “then”, for example.

Nothing can take the place of careful reading and re-reading to eliminate errors. (Avoid relying on the grammar check and thesaurus features of some word processing programs; they tend to be confusing, unnatural, and often inaccurate.)

Next, find someone who is willing to read your report critically. It is essential to choose someone who:

- is a decent writer themselves
- is familiar with the rules of standard English
- understands the assignment (you can brief them on it)
- who will take the time to read your dissertation with a critical eye

No one is going to have as much of a personal investment in your paper as you are. The following checklist will help you to inspect your dissertation for flaws so that you can hand in a paper that is the absolute best you can do.

## **BEFORE YOU TURN YOUR PAPER IN, ASK YOURSELF:**

Did I proofread and change all errors in:

- spelling?
- punctuation?
- verb tense?
- capitalization?
- run-on sentences/fragments?

Did I make sure not to refer to myself or the process of writing the paper?

Did I write the entire paper in the third person (not using “I” or “you”)?

Do I have an appropriate title page?

Have I included my abstract page and have I followed the proper format on it?

Have I included a table of contents? Does it follow the correct format?

Is my paper organized and does it follow a logical train of thought?

Does the first page of the actual paper follow the correct format?

Do I stick to my thesis and not include irrelevant info?

Are my pages in order? Are they numbered correctly? Did I double space the entire paper?

Does my Works Cited page follow the correct format?

Have I used parenthetical citations in the proper places, regardless of whether I quoted directly or put it into my own words?

Have I used my own clear and simple wording?

Is my paper neat and presentable?

**If so, then you are ready to submit your dissertation to the college.**

**Good Luck!**

Appendix A

Trickster and Two-Spirit People:  
Our Guides in Myth, Identity and Relationship

Christine Letizia

“In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of PH.D. IN METAPHYSICS”

(March 2006)

## **ABSTRACT**

Rehabilitation and Spirituality: The Connective Thread

Kym Maehl, MA, CHT

It is the intention of this work to illuminate the value of spirituality and its role in the field of rehabilitation. Born out of the author's experiences while working as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; this paper incorporates informal observations, statistical data and a variety of spiritual teachings from Lao Tzu to Eckhart Tolle. Among the areas of discussion are the relationship between spirituality and healing, mass consciousness, victim consciousness, steps to healing, balance, surrender and presence, with each tying back to the practice of rehabilitation and creating lasting change. Examples such as the Native American Medicine Wheel and the 12-Step philosophy are also discussed as existing ways in which spiritual practice has been successfully integrated into the rehabilitation field and has increased positive outcomes. Overall, this is a treatise designed to stimulate deeper inquiry into the need to connect to a higher energy source in order to find the power to propel into healing, wholeness and true rehabilitation.

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## Appendix D

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