Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

GSEM620 Research Methods

Spring, 2027

Ricardo Norton (DMin; PhD)

This course instructs participants on research areas such as: **1)** Key concepts about research, **2)** How to write academic documents, **3)** how to use software to facilitate writing large documents, **4)** how to access electronics documents available Online, and **5)** how to finds sources available through the James White Library.

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location:	NPUnion—5709 N. 20th Street—Ridgefield, WA.
Class meeting dates:	January 24-28, 2027.
Class meeting times:	Sun—6-9:30 pm; Mon-Thur—8am to 6pm (lunch-12-1:30pm).
Course Website:	learninghub.andrews.edu
Instructor Tel.:	(269) 471-8318
Instructor Email:	ricardo@andrews.edu
Office location:	Seminary 233
Office hours:	By appointment

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

"An introduction to research techniques and tools. A research paper is required."

PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This degree program seeks to help you achieve the **Program Learning Outcomes** basic to your chosen profession. The Learning Outcomes primarily addressed in the MAPM Program are:

1. Deliver effective biblically-based sermons.
2. Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills.
3. Understand the historical-theological development of the Adventist Church.
4. Capable of training church members for evangelism.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership.
6. Capable of reaching specific social groups.

The following **Course Learning Outcome** contribute to the overall Program Learning Outcomes by identifying the key learnings to be achieved by diligent work in **this course**:

This course provides students with the tools and concepts they need to find theoretical and practical resources applicable to all six MAPM learning outcomes. In addition, it shares the knowledge on how to report the finding in academic format. Learning outcome CLO 1 benefits the most from this class.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating this Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
01/22/27	• Reading report	**30 hours** from the required books below—Due two days prior to the intensive (**30 points** of the final grade). ***Six-point deduction*** for late submission of reading assignments.	CLO 1
01/24/27	• Knowing each other • Syllabus review • Course introduction • Formation of small groups for collective learning sessions • Selection of topics for small group presentations • Introduction to research	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students during the first day of class.	CLO 1
01/25/27	**Research methods** • Inductive research and the scientific method • Action research • Qualitative and quantitative • Mix methods • Program evaluation	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students during the first day of class.	CLO 1
01/26/27	**Research tools for gathering information** • Guidelines for collecting data • Instruments for data collection • Reliability and validity • Sampling • Data analysis	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class.	CLO 1
01/27/27	**Research reports** • Managing subjectivities • Report Stories • Communicating Results • Types of Reports—Dissertations, thesis, papers • Report Sections	Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class.	CLO 1

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
	• Dissertation Structure by Chapters		
01/28/27	**Writing papers and research reports** • Educational Level of Writers—test • Scholarly writing • Causes for Poor Writing • Insights on Writing	**Group Presentations**: Discussions and questions will be fostered after each group presentation Professor will grade presentations based on content, investigation, organization and quality of the PP slides (**10 points** of the final grade)..	CLO 1
03/28/27		**Final project is due today (March 28, 2027)**. By midnight, this day (EST), students should post in the *LearningHub* a **20-page** electronic **MSW** document with the final project. The project must follow *AU Standards of Writing Work* and will be graded according to the rubric included in this syllabus (**60 points** of the final grade). Students who submit this assignment after this date, will receive an **F** as a final grade.	

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

COURSE MATERIALS

Read 30 hours from the from at least two of the following books:

Required:

1. Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
2. O'Leary Zina. (2005). *Researching real-world problems: A guide to methods of inquiry*. Sage Publications. Great Britain: TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall.
3. Grajales, Tevni (2006). *Cómo planear una investigación empírica: Una extension de autoaprendizaje* (http://adventus21.com/Producto.aspx?idProducto=352&idIdioma=1&idCategoria=15).

Recommended:

1. Patten, Mildred L. (2009). *Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials* (7th Edition). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
2. Pyrczak, Fred & Bruce, Randall R. (2007). *Writing Empirical Research Reports: A Basic Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (6th edition). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- **Courses for professional masters' degrees (e.g. MDiv)** include 15 instructor contact hours and 30 hours of independent learning activities.
- **Courses for academic masters' (e.g. MA [Religion]) and all doctoral degrees** include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

		Professional Masters' Programs	
		2 Credits	3 Credits
Instructor Contact Hours	**Face to Face Instructional Time**		**45** hrs
Independent Learning Activities	**Pre-Intensive Reading (30 points)**		**30** hrs
	Small group presentation (10 points)		
	20-page project/paper (60 points)		**60** hrs
Total Hours:			**135**

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are based on the independent learning activities below which provide practice toward, and assessment of, the learning outcomes of this course. The grade weighting for each assignment is provided in the right-hand column. Specific due dates are given in the Course Overview above.

Assignment Description	Weighting
Pre-Intensive reading report. **30 hours** from the required books above—Report due on **January 22, 2027** before sundown—two days prior to the beginning of the intensive. The report consists of one page with the following information: 1) Name of the student, **2)** number of hours read, and **3)** Author and titles of books from which the student invested her/his 30 reading hours—two books minimum. ***Six points deduction*** to all reading-reports submitted late.	**30** points
Small-Group presentation—Each of the small groups formed during the first day of class will have a 30-minute presentation, on an assigned topic during the last day of class. The professor will grade the presentation based on **1)** content, **2)** investigation, organization, and **3)** quality of the PP slides.	**10** points
Final research paper—20 pages. Participants must select a ministerial topic they would like to write about for the final research paper. • The paper will need the following sections**: 1)** Title page. **2)** Table of Contents. **3) Introduction**—relevancy of the selected topic**. 4)** ***Chapter 1—Biblical and theological foundations for the Selected Topic***—include EGW writings. ***5) Chapter 2—Current Literature review on the Topic***—minimum of 20 authors—EGW counts as one author. ***6) Chapter 3—Applicable insights on how the contents can be applied in ministry***. ***7)*** Conclusion. **8)** Bibliography—Only sources used for the research. • This report should follow *AU Standards for Written work*: (http://www.andrews.edu/GRAD/style.html). • This project must be submitted by **March 28, 2027** and will be graded according to the rubric that appears at the end of this syllabus. • **Note**: The final report must be submitted through our Learning Hub in ***ONE MSW file***.	**60** points
Total points	**100** points

Note. In order to make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned on the basis of the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on Learning Hub before the dates indicated in the Course Overview--Above.

Late Submissions

Because student assignments are an essential part of class activities, assignments turned in after the time they are due will be worth a maximum of 50 of possible points%--for this course, see penalties posted on the ***Course Overview Table***. Any requests for extra time on an assignment must be made in advance with

the professor. Such requests should be a rarity and should be accompanied by a valid reason why the work could not be done by the date due.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Ricardo Norton (DMin, PhD) has taught at the Seventh-day Theological Seminary since 1996 and is the founder of a worldwide lay training program (SAL—Lay Adventist Seminary), with more than 20.000 students in 18 countries. He currently directs a MAPM Hispanic Track Program and coordinates three DMin cohorts. His lectures and writings carry the weight of serious investigation and the practical knowledge that 48 years of teaching and ministerial experience confer. He travels extensively in the U.S. and abroad, teaching pastors and lay leaders how to make their churches grow.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:
    - Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual's research and/or ideas; and
    - Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another's work as one's own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments);
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program;
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials;
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz;
- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

LearningHub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with Learning Hub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu .

APPENDIX 1: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

95-100%	**A**	80-84%	**B**	65-69%	**C**
90-94%	**A-**	75-79%	**B-**	60-64%	**C-**
85-89%	**B+**	70-74%	**C+**	55-59%	**D**
				58-Below	**F**

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of the knowledge, insight, critical competence and professional presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed or when the final assignment is not submitted within the dates indicated in the Course Overview Table.

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Rubric for Assessing Research Papers

Student _____

Criteria	(5) Exceptional	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Emerging	(1) Unsatisfactory	Score
Title Page	Includes: 1) institution's name, 2) title, 3) name of the course, 4) course period, 5) name of the student, 6) date submitted, 7) follows AU Standards for Written work (AUSWW). Has no errors	Misses 1 of the 7 components	Misses 2 of the 7 components	Misses 3 components	Misses more than 3 components	
Introduction	The introduction is engaging, states the main topic and purpose of the paper, and previews the structure of the paper	Introduction states the main topic and purpose of the paper and previews its structure	States the main topic and purpose of the paper, but does not adequately preview its structure	The introduction states the main topic but lacks a purpose and a preview of its structure	There is no clear introduction or main topic and the structure of the paper is missing	
Contents	The paper looks neat, crisp, and professional. Contents meets paper length and exceeds the number and quality of sources. The evidence is clear and presented in a convincing and progressive manner	Assertions are clearly supported by adequate resources but misses some factual evidence. Meets paper length.	The content is good but arguments are weak and unclear	Content is too broad and presents data without personal reflection	The report misses entire sections of the paper. Does not meet paper length and misses evidence to support argument.	
Organization	Report provides a table of contents, and is organized using different subhead levels, following AUSWW. Subheadings are exceptionally well-worded and reflect upon the main subject. Exceeds all organizational specifications stated in the syllabus	Table of contents and subheading levels follow AUSWW Standards. Subtitles reflects upon the subject, but wording can be improved.	Paper provides a table of contents and is organized using different subheading level. However, does not follow AU standards of written work	Paper provides first level headings, but headings do not clearly reflect upon the subject. No table of contents. Does not follow all specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	Does not provide a table of contents and is not divided under headings and subheadings. Does not follow organizational specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	

Format/Style	All texts and references follow specifications from AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are outstanding. Models language and style. No errors in punctuation, spelling, and sentence formation	Consistently follows AUSWW with minor flaws. Syntax and semantics are very good. No major errors in style	Consistently follows all AUSWW format. Syntax and semantics are good. Few errors in style	Inconsistently follows some AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are poor	Does not follow AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are deficient	
Conclusion	Conclusion is engaging and provides an outstanding overview of the project and personal reflections on projected implementation. Exceeds expectations	Conclusion restates the purpose, gives a good summary, and provides personal opinions about the outcome	Conclusion restates the purpose and satisfactorily summarizes results Lacks personal reflection on projected implementation	Conclusion attempts to summarize the thrust of the project, but is ambiguous. Lacks personal reflection	Conclusion fails to summarize and to express personal reflection on the project	