

Outline for a Literature Review

Introduction (approx. 2 pages)

- Purpose of the review: State your research question; what do you want to learn?
- Importance of the topic: why is the topic important to you and, perhaps, to others?
- Scope and limitations: what are the parameters you have used for selecting the literature you will review? What falls within those parameters, and what falls outside? By what rationale did you include the works cited and exclude other sources?
- Methodology: discuss the method(s) by which you will analyze the literature, for example, chronological, analogical, comparative, thematic, etc.
- Location and self-reflexivity: What aspects of your locations (familial, racial-ethnic, social, religious, historical, etc.) are most significant relative to this research question, and how/why?
- Audience: besides yourself and the professor, for whom are you writing? What constituencies might need or find helpful a review of the literature you are addressing?
- Provide a brief description of the structure of the review

Description/Definition of Disputed or Diversely Defined Terminology (approx. 1 page)

- Practical Theology: “For the purposes of this review, I understand practical theology as...”
- [reference descriptions in course readings or elsewhere that ground your understanding in this review]
- Other terms as needed for your review

Description and Analysis of the Literature (approx. 16 pages)

- Provide as close a reading of your sources as is possible, given the page limitation of the review
- To the extent possible, include the following descriptive elements relative to the literature you are reviewing
 - Who are the authors? What locations do they represent? What is their positionality in the field of practical theology?
 - What are the problems addressed and theses argued by these authors?
 - Sketch the content and argument of the literature
- Analyze the literature: being explicit and mindful throughout about the basis of your expertise

- to do so
- Employ the method(s) you have chosen, as noted above
- Discuss the significance of the literature relative to your research question
- Discuss significance of the literature relative to practical theology
- o Assess the strengths and limits of the literature being reviewed using both a “hermeneutic of generosity”—engage the work of others in the best possible light—and a critical stance (AKA a “hermeneutic of suspicion”)

Conclusion (approx. 1 page)

- Restate your main findings and/or questions raised by your review
- Based on your findings, identify next steps for research in this area
- Works Cited: include the material you reviewed, and any other works you referenced in your analysis