

Systematic Theology I

T-TR 9:30-10:50 a.m. · Fall 2015

Course Instructor
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*“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them,
because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”*

1 Timothy 4:16

The Mission of the Seminary

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description

This first course in systematic theology introduces the student to the methodology of theology (Prolegomena) and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ. The biblical foundations and the relevant historical developments are considered in construction of a Christian understanding of each doctrine.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2015-16 year is mission focus.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student, by the end of the course, should:

1. Be able to understand theological method and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ biblically, historically, and systematically.
2. Be able to apply theology by integrating these doctrines into a coherent, comprehensive, and consistent Christian worldview.

3. Be able to communicate these doctrines in the particular ministry calling and context of the learner.

Biblical Authority

This course operates under the assumption that the Bible is the inspired, totally true and trustworthy Word of God. While history, tradition, and reason play no small role in the theological task, the Bible holds ultimate authority in Christian doctrine and practice. *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000) provides the structure of this course's content.

Primary Texts

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Putman, Rhyne. *In Defense of Doctrine: Evangelicalism, Theology, and Scripture*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Other Evangelical Systematic Theology Texts

Akin, Daniel, ed. *A Theology for the Church*. 2d ed. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014. This “systematic” theology is a collection of essays on different doctrinal topics written by some of the leading voices in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Bird, Michael F. *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. Bird is an Anglican and Reformed NT scholar from Australia who has written a systematic theology that integrates the insights of contemporary biblical theology into a systematic textbook.

Frame, John. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013. Frame is a Presbyterian and Reformed theologian in the Westminster Tradition.

Garrett, James L. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, vol. 1, 4th ed. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2011. Dr. Garrett is a SBC theologian who offers an excellent historical examination of each of the doctrines discussed. Dr. Garrett is the go-to expert on Baptist doctrine.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1994. J. Kenneth Grider was a Nazarene systematic theologian in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. Grudem, a Calvinistic Baptist with charismatic undertones, has written one of the most popular and accessible theology texts available today.

Horton, Michael F. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. Horton is a well-known Reformed theologian and apologist who engages many contemporary issues and important philosophical trends in his work.

Lewis, Gordon and Bruce Demarest. *Integrative Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. This evangelical theology—available in one-volume and three-volume editions—integrates biblical exegesis, historical research, apologetics, and pastoral application in its discussion of every doctrine.

Oden, Thomas C. *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology*. New York: HarperOne, 2011. Oden is a Methodist/Wesleyan evangelical theologian who utilizes the resources of patristic Christianity to make a case for Christian doctrines. This book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the thought of early church fathers.

Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. 2d ed. Chicago: Moody, 1999. This volume is a systematic theology written with lay persons in mind. Ryrie writes from a classic Dispensationalist perspective.

Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. Williams was a leading intellectual figure in the neo-charismatic movement called “renewal theology.” This is an excellent exposition of contemporary charismatic and Pentecostal theology.

Recommended Texts

Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Rev. Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Students are expected to participate in classroom discussion and to read all required materials prior to class attendance. Note taking is strongly encouraged. *The professor reserves the right to use pop quizzes to assess reading assignments and lecture participation.*

2. Theological Reflections (60%)

Every student will give **twelve** 2-3 page (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt.) answers to the following questions based on reading assignments in four sets of questions. In each of these assignments, students should demonstrate (1) reading comprehension of the assigned materials, (2) critical reflection on the ideas and content in the reading, and (3) the student’s ability to apply the theological content to vocational ministry.

Question Set #1 (due 9/19) — Theological Method

1. Read Putman 1-39. **Do we need some sort of systematic theological formulation of doctrine in addition to the interpretation of the Bible? Why or why not?**
2. Read Putman 175-207. **Describe Kevin Vanhoozer’s theological method. How does he relate *theology* and *the mission of the church*?**

3. Read Erickson, 210-32; Putman 209-55. **Describe how the use of authorities like the Bible shape the formation of doctrine.**

Question Set #2 (due 10/10) — Revelation and Bible

4. Read Erickson, 121-42. **Using the materials from your assigned systematic theology textbook and other theological resources (like commentaries, other theological textbooks or monographs), briefly explain your understanding of the doctrine of general revelation, highlighting the differences between general and special revelation. What impact does the doctrine of general revelation have on your understanding of missions and evangelism? Describe how the doctrine of general revelation can affect your communication of the Gospel.**
5. Read Erickson, 188-209; 357-62; Putman 257-324. **Explain and defend the doctrine of biblical inerrancy.**
6. Read Putman 374-401. **What practical implications does a doctrine of biblical inerrancy have for the way we address contemporary theological issues?**

Question Set #3 (due 10/31) — Doctrine of God

7. Read Erickson, 233-59. **Does God change his mind? How do you explain Scriptures that seem to indicate that he does?**
8. Read Putman 325-73. **Suppose a skeptic were to tell you that many of the doctrines you hold dear—such as the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of inerrancy—are not explicitly stated in the Bible and therefore not valid theological positions by our own standards. What would you say?**
9. Read Erickson, 291-316. **Explain the doctrine of the Trinity as you would to a student in a youth group. Be careful to avoid bad analogies that implicitly reflect trinitarian heresies.**

Question Set #4 (due 11/21) — Creation, Anthropology, Christology

10. Read Erickson, 337-57. **How do you make sense of the “days of creation” in Genesis 1. Explain your position.**
11. Read Erickson, 565-83. **How do you understand the “age of accountability” doctrine?**
12. Read Erickson, 643-58. **The Scriptures repeatedly affirm the sinlessness of Jesus, but the question of whether Jesus could have sinned has significant implications for understanding the relationship between his human nature and his divine nature. Could Jesus have sinned? Is he impeccable? Why or why not?**

The schedule below has the reading assignments and questions asked for each theological reflection. One of these theological reflections (question four above) is an **embedded**

assignment that will be used for assessing this course. The rubric for grading this assignment is attached to this syllabus. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric. (The rubric is located on page 12 of this syllabus.)

3. Final Exam (20%)

Every student will complete a comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester that covers all assigned readings and class lecture notes.

4. Reading Report (10%)

Students will be required to submit a reading report on Blackboard at the end of the semester that includes (1) the percentage of assigned readings completed and (2) the percentage read on-time (according to the reading schedule provided below).

Course Evaluation

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below. Borderline grades will normally be determined by the numerical grade received (I round up from .5), unless the student's promptness and faithfulness in class attendance, positive attitude and contribution in class discussions, and preparedness and attentiveness in class warrants special consideration. These factors only apply when the student is fractionally close to the next highest grade.

• Attendance and Course Participation	10%
• Theological Reflections (3 sets)	60%
• Final Exam	20%
• Reading Report	10%
Total	100%

Extra Credit

1. Readings from Other Systematic Theologies

Students may earn up to ten points on their final grade simply by reading chapters parallel to Erickson reading assignments in evangelical systematic theology texts of their choice. The list of recommended texts above has helpful suggestions if students do choose this option.

2. Book Review

Students may write one (1) critical book review of a book related to the course and **pre-approved by the professor**. Students can earn up to **five (5) points** on their final grade with a quality critical book review. Extra credit book reviews are due the week of the final exam.

3. ETS Report

Students attending the annual national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, GA on November 17-19 may write a 1000-word report on papers attended (at least three). Students can earn up to seven points on their final grade with submission. For registration information, please visit <http://www.etsjets.org>.

Class Policies

1. Attendance and Class Participation

As noted above, attendance and class participation are necessary for meeting the requirements of this class. Students are expected to be attentive and prepared for each class session. Students who are engaged in private conversations or doing work for other classes may be asked to leave the class; repeat violations may result in removal from the course. Rude or disruptive behavior is also not permitted.

2. Laptop Guidelines

Laptops are permitted in class as long as they are used for taking notes or accessing Blackboard materials related to this particular course. *Students using laptops are requested to sit in the front of the classroom for accountability purposes.* Gaming, e-mail, social networking, and web browsing of any kind are strictly prohibited. Failure to heed this policy *will* result in dismissal from the class session; repeat violations may result in removal from the course. *Any student using Facebook during a class meeting may be asked to leave the class, repeat offenders for the remainder of the semester.*

3. Late Work

Because life and ministry happens, late work will be accepted—but not without penalty. For every day an assignment is late, five points will be taken off. *No assignment over two weeks late will be accepted.* Failure to submit every assignment will result in failure of the course.

4. Plagiarism

The instructor calls attention to the policy on plagiarism found in the NOBTS Graduate Catalog and Student Handbook. Remember the words of the proverb: *“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out”* (Prov. 10:19).

Week 1

Prolegomena: What is Theology and
What Should it Accomplish?

Week 3

Revelation and Bibliology: What is
the Authoritative Source of Theology?

Week 5

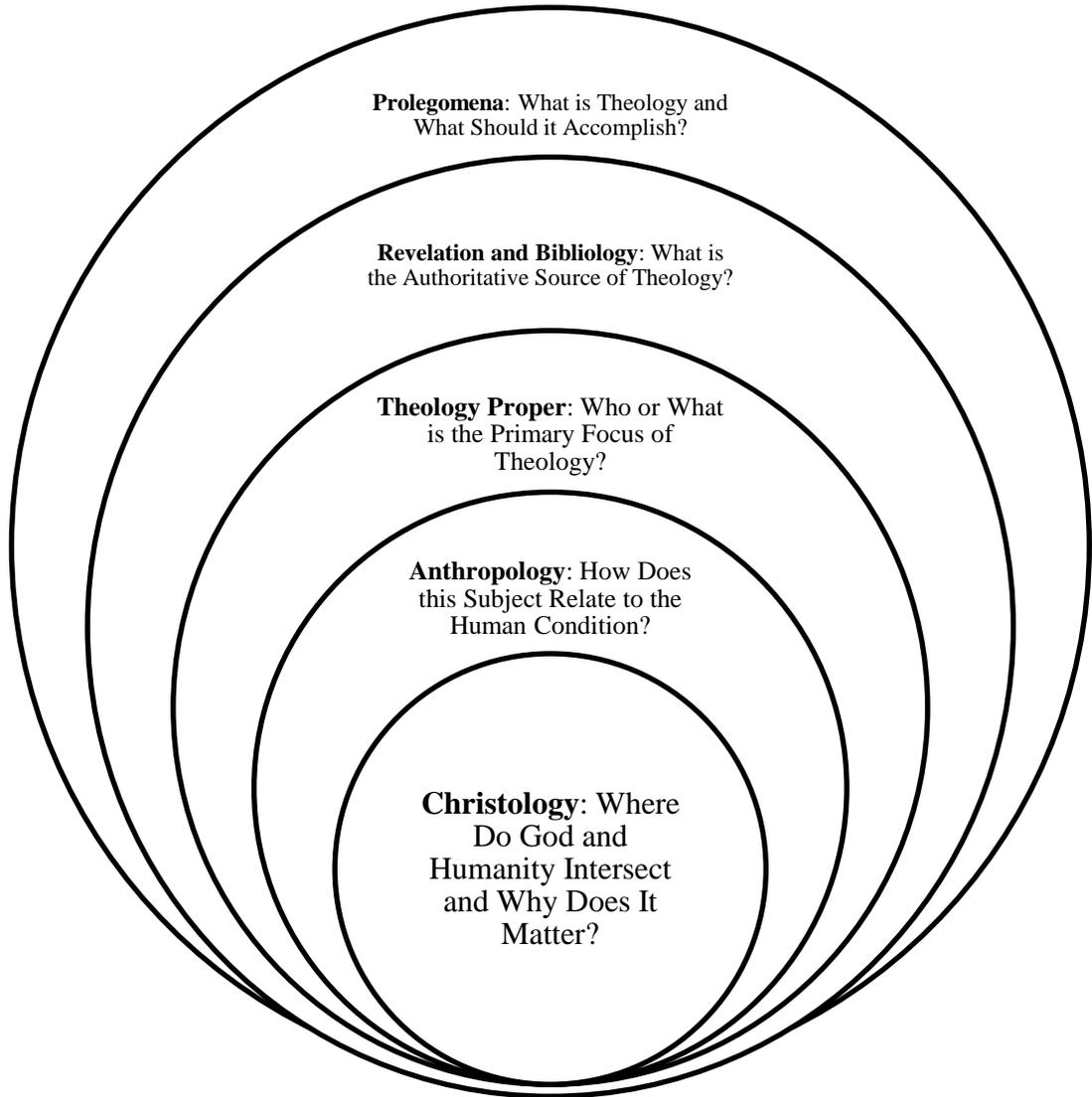
Theology Proper: Who or What
is the Primary Focus of
Theology?

Week 10

Anthropology: How Does
this Subject Relate to the
Human Condition?

Week 12

Christology: Where
Do God and
Humanity Intersect
and Why Does It
Matter?



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THEO5300 Fall 2014 // TTh 9:30-10:50am Lectures, Readings, and Assignments Schedule		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic / Assignments</u>	<u>Readings</u>
08.25	Introduction	
08.27	NO CLASS LIBRARY DAY	
09.01	Prolegomena and Theological Method	Erickson, 3-44 2d 17-61
09.03	Prolegomena and Theological Method	Erickson, 45-89 2d 62-134
09.08	Prolegomena and Theological Method	Erickson, 90-120 2d 135-176
09.10	The Nature of Revelation	
09.15	General Revelation and Natural Theology	
09.17	General Revelation and Natural Theology Theological Reflections Question Set #1 Due 9/19 at 11:59 p.m.	Erickson, 121-42 Ch. 8
09.22	Special Revelation and Bibliology	Erickson, 143-67 Ch. 9
09.24	Special Revelation and Bibliology	Erickson, 210-32 Ch. 12
09.29	Special Revelation and Bibliology	Erickson, 168-87 Ch. 10
10.01	Special Revelation and Bibliology	Erickson, 188-209 Ch. 11
10.06	Doctrine of God	Erickson, 233-53 Ch. 13
10.08	Doctrine of God Theological Reflections Question Set #2 Due 10/10 at 11:59 p.m.	Erickson, 254-71 Ch. 14
10.13	Doctrine of God	

THEO5300 Fall 2014 // TTh 9:30-10:50am Lectures, Readings, and Assignments Schedule		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic / Assignments</u>	<u>Readings</u>
10.15	Doctrine of God	Erickson, 291-316 Ch. 16
10.19-10.23	FALL BREAK <i>"...give him rest from days of trouble..." (Psalm 94:13)</i>	
10.27	Doctrine of God	Erickson, 317-36 Ch. 17
10.29	Doctrine of God Theological Reflections Question Set #3 Due 10/31 at 11:59 p.m.	Erickson, 337-57 Ch. 18
11.03	Creation / Providence	Erickson, 357-82 Ch. 19
11.05	Creation / Providence	Erickson, 383-422 Ch. 20
11.10	Anthropology	Erickson, 423-37 Ch. 22
11.12	Anthropology	Erickson, 457-93 Ch. 24
11.17	Hamartiology	Erickson, 513-64 Ch. 27-30
11.19	LIBRARY DAY—NO CLASS Theological Reflections Question Set #4 Due 10/21 at 11:59 p.m.	
11.23-27	THANKSGIVING BREAK <i>"...The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me" (Psalm 50:23)</i>	
12.01		

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THEO5300 Fall 2014 // TTh 9:30-10:50am Lectures, Readings, and Assignments Schedule		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic / Assignments</u>	<u>Readings</u>
12.03	Christology	Erickson, 565-622 Chs. 30-32
12.08	Christology	Erickson, 643-58 Ch. 34
12.11	Christology	Erickson, 623-42, 659-73 Ch. 33
12.15	Final Exam Due Reading Report	Erickson, 674-694 Ch. 35

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I EMBEDDED ASSIGNMENT AND RUBRIC

Embedded Assignment (from Question #5 of the Theological Reflections)

1. Using the materials from your assigned systematic theology textbook and other theological resources (like commentaries, other theological textbooks or monographs), briefly explain your understanding of the doctrine of general revelation, highlighting the differences between general and special revelation.
2. What impact does the doctrine of general revelation have on your understanding of missions and evangelism?
3. Describe how the doctrine of general revelation can affect your communication of the Gospel.
4. This assignment should be 800-1200 words in length.

DOMAIN	LEVEL	INADEQUATE (0 PTS)	BASIC (1 PT)	COMPETENT (2 PTS)	GOOD (3 PTS)	EXCELLENT (4PTS)
UNDERSTANDING	Able to understand the doctrinal topic.					
APPLICATION	Able to apply knowledge by relating it to the broader Christian worldview.					
COMMUNICATION	Able to communicate the doctrine to a ministry audience.					

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

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- Cross, Frank L. and Elizabeth A. Livingstone. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Douglas, J.D., ed. *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Eliade, Mircea, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. 16 vols. New York: MacMillan, 1986.
- Elwell, Walter, ed. *Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Erickson, Millard J, ed. *Readings in Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973-79.
- _____. *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., David F. Wright, and J.I. Packer, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove/Leicester: InterVarsity, 1988.
- Harrison, Everett F., ed. *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960.
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- Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Ronald Pitkin. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976.
- McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995.
- McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*. Grand Rapids: Bakers, 1985.
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Taylor, Richard S., ed. *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1983.

Systematic and General Theologies

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Aulen, Gustaf. *The Faith of the Christian Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960.

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: Clark, 1936-1977.

Berkhof, Hendrikus. *Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949.

Berkouwer, G.C. *Studies in Dogmatics*. 14 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952-76.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. 2 vols. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978-79.

_____. *A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Boice, James M. *Foundations of the Christian Faith*. Four vols. in one. Revised. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986.

Brunner, Emil. *Dogmatics*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1949-60.

Buswell, J.O., Jr. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. Two vols. in one. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962, 1963.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Edited by J.T. McNeill. Trans. by F.L. Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.

Carter, Charles, ed. *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

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Chopp, Rebecca S., and Mark L. Taylor, eds. *Reconstructing Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986.

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