



## **Doctrine of God in Christianity and Islam (THEO/PHIL6332)**

### **Internet Version**

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Division of Theological & Historical Studies  
Aug 21-Dec 15, 2018**

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### **Seminary Mission Statement**

The mission of the 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.

### **Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. This year the President has chosen Servant Leadership as a focus. We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. This core value is vital in the long term witness and discipleship of Followers of Christ from the Islamic Worldview.

Research has identified 6 key competencies for effective Gospel Ministry. These are biblical exposition, Christian theological heritage, disciple making, interpersonal skills, worship leadership and spiritual and character formation. While all of these will be touched on, this course seeks to enhance biblical exposition, Christian theological heritage, and disciple making, especially within the context of witnessing/discipling to and with people from Muslim worldviews.

### **Course Description**

This Internet course seeks to present the doctrine of God as foundational to all theological reflection. In fact, the discipline of theology may be defined as a sustained meditation on the being and purpose of God. In their understand of God, Christianity and Islam share some common roots but also manifest sharp and striking differences. The course explores these commonalities and differences as they developed historically, beginning with the early Islamic period beginning in 632 AD.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course the student will:

- Be familiar with the major historical and contemporary facets of Christian and Muslim

views of God.

- Be competent to discuss major trends of changes in the presentation of the doctrine within the two faith communities.
- Appreciate differences between Islamic and Christian doctrines of God.
- Be better equipped to engage in respectful Christian apologetics with Muslims based on the doctrine of God.

### **Course Teaching Methods**

The course will involve the following methodologies:

- Students will read texts and view videos from Christian and Muslim thinkers on the Doctrine of God.
- Students will discuss important Muslim/Christian issues within the context of the doctrine of God.
- Students will interview and summarize a Muslim concerning that person's belief and practice of the doctrine of God.
- Students will conduct guided research on an aspect of the comparison of Christian and Islamic doctrines of God.

### **Textbooks**

Bloesch, Donald G. *God the Almighty* Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1995

George, Timothy *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002.

Aslan, Reza *No god but God* New York, New York: Random House, 2006.

<http://www.allah.org>

<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/195/>

### **Requirements**

#### **1. Research Project : 30%**

Each student will research a selected topic. No two students will be allowed to research the same topic (see suggested topic below).

- A. The 1-page proposal due by the end of day Sept 11, 2018 must contain the following:
  - Student name, course number and date.
  - Subject to be researched and proposed title.
  - One sentence thesis (What are you trying to investigate? What is your theory or hypothesis?)
  - One paragraph rationale (Why is this interesting to you? What sources exist for this research?)

B. The research paper will be Turabian formatted and consist of a maximum of 5,000 words (20 pages), not including cover page and bibliography. **Due Dec. 8, 2017**

**Topics such as the following will be considered:**

1. A Comparison of Islamic and Christian Monotheism
2. The difference between biblical and qur'anic roles of God as (complete with one of the following)
  - a. Creator of all things spiritual and material
  - b. Lord of all in history and eternity
  - c. Judge of all
3. The relationship between deity, spirit, and matter in Christianity and Islam.
4. The difference in the means and content of special revelation between the Christian and Islamic concept of deity.
5. Is God knowable in Islam? Is the answer different in various Islamic communities (ie Sunni, Shi'a, Sufi, etc.).
6. The comparable content between the Christian and Islamic conception of deity as seen in special revelation.
7. Human creation and the God of Christianity and Islam.
8. The reality of God in Christianity and Islam in relationship with Adamic Sin, sin nature of humans, and sins.
9. How does the God of Christianity and Islam respond to human need and sin? Compare and contrast.
10. How does the day of judgement work within Christianity and Islam? How does God judge persons and angels?
11. Islamic objections to the biblical presentation of God's involvement with His creation.
12. Islamic objections to the biblical presentation of God's ethical holiness as opposed to Allah's bare separateness (otherness or holiness).
13. Islamic objections to the biblical presentation of God's complex unity as the Triune God.

14. Islamic objections to the biblical presentation of God's justice and holiness which requires redemption of humanity individually and corporately.

15. Christian objections to the qur'anic presentation of Allah's freedom to act capriciously with regard to his creation.

16. Christian objections to the qur'anic presentation of Allah's favoritism towards Muhammad.

17. Christian objections to the qur'anic presentation of Allah's nature as a simple unit.

18. Christian objections to the qur'anic presentation of Allah's determinism.

**Grading rubric for research papers:**

Content 40%

Coherent and Concise (15%)

Clearly organized structure of thought (25%)

Sources 40%

Breadth of research (20%)

Selection of scholars to be quoted in the paper (are they representative of the religion?) (20%)

Style and Form 20%

Word choice and polish (10%)

Turabian formatting, but be consistent (10%)

**2. Attendance in and participation in discussion board topics :30%**

Postings should reflect reading of required text and will be evaluated by the Professor. Post should be from 200-400 words and responses to other students' posts should be around 50-100 words. New discussion topics will open at the beginning of each of the first 6 units of study. It is suggested that students post as early as possible during the first week of each unit of study and respond to other post in the second during the second week. However it is true that some of the better responses are "on later thought" and a second though posted a week or more later. Discussion board posting will be closed on Thanksgiving day for the semester.

**3. Combined Book Review (3 Required Texts) : 15%**

Students will write a maximum 2,500 word (10 page) book review including the 3 required printed texts of the class. Spend around 500 words (2 pages) per book in summation, followed by 1000 words (4 pages) of synthesis of the texts with the topic of "The Doctrine of God in Christianity and Islam". **Due Oct 23, 2017.**

**4. Summary of a Muslim interview : 20%**

Students may either review the 6 English sub-titled videos of Arabic speaking Christians

and Muslims with a ½ page review of each **or** write a 2-3 page verbatim or summary of an interview with a Muslim concerning his view of God. The professor strongly encourages students to seek out a local person to interview, however students, having diligently tried to find a person to interview must contact Dr. Edens by Nov 4 to be included in a come to meeting type interview to be set up in the first half of November. **Due Nov 20.** Interviews of sufficient value, in the view of the professor F, will be included in the content of Unit 7.

5. **Baptist Faith & Message Reflection paper** : 5%

Students will write a one-page reflection paper on Article Two: God, in *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. **Due Sept 18, 2017.**

**Extra points: Reflection paper on the Friday Evening live streaming of Greer-Heard :5pts**

N.T. Wright and Simon Gathercole will be presenting variant views of God's atonement for Sin/sins in the life and work of Jesus the Christ. View the forum Friday evening Nov 10 (in person or streaming), take notes on their views, consider their two views in the context of our course of study and your ministry to Muslims and write a 3-4 page formal reflection (First Person is allowed in this assignment) paper. **Due Nov. 20.**

**NOTE:** All deadlines are firm. Missed deadlines will result in 1 lost point per day after the assigned date. Submit all assignments by email in MS Word format, double spaced and formatted as per the NOBTS style guide at <http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/turabiantutor.pdf>

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1** (Begins Aug 21) Orientation and Unit 1: Review of the biblical doctrine of God

**Week 2** (Begins Aug 28) Complete Unit 1

**Week 3** (Begins Sept 4) Unit 2: Ways and Aspects in which Allah of Islam resembles the biblical God

**Week 4** (Begins Sept 11) Complete Unit 2

**Week 5** (Begins Sept 18) Unit 3: Contrasts between Allah of Islam and the living God

**Week 6** (Begins Sept 25) Complete Unit 3

**Week 7** (Begins Oct 2) Unit 4 the biblical God's relationship with prophets compared and contrasted to Allah of Islam's relationship with Muhammad

**Week 8** (Begins Oct 9) Complete Unit 4

**Fall Break Oct 14-22**

**Week 9** (Begins Oct 23) Unit 5 Religious impact on Christianity and Islam of the doctrine of God

**Week 10** (Begins Oct 30) Complete Unit 5

**Week 11** (Begins Nov 6) Unit 6 God's sovereignty compared and contrasted to Allah's determinism

**Nov 10-11 Greer-Heard topic:** The Atonement

**Week 12** (Begins Nov 13) Complete Unit 6

**Thanksgiving week Blackboard discussion topics close at 0001 AM Thanksgiving Day.**

**Week 13** (Begins Nov 27) Apologetic and Missiological challenges and opportunities found in the Biblical and Qur'anic doctrines of God

**Week 14** (Begins Dec 4) Complete Unit 7

**Week 15** (Begins Dec 11) Finals week

## Selected Bibliography

### Primary Sources

The Holy Bible

The Qur'an

Baqi, Fuwad Abdul, ed. *Al-Lu'Lu' Wal Marjan: A collection of Agreed Upon Ahadith from Al-Bukhari and Muslim vol 1 & 2*. Arabic and English translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Lahore, Pakistan: Kazi Publications, 1990.

### Secondary Sources

Algar, Hamid. *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*. Oneonta, New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002.

Armour, Rollin, Sr. *Islam, Christianity, and the West: A Troubled History*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002.

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*. Toronto, Canada: Random House, Inc., 2002

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Bramsen, Paul. *The Way of Righteousness: Good News for Muslims*. Spring Lake NJ: CMML. 1998.

Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West* Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications, 1993.

DeLong-Bas, Natana J. *Wahhabi Islam from Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Garlow, James L. *A Christian's Response to Islam*. Tulsa, OK: RiverOak Publishing. 2002.

Geisler, Norman L.; Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* Baker Book House 2002.

Gregorian, Vartan. *Islam a Mosaic, Not a Monolith* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2003.

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- McCurry, Don M., ed. *The Gospel and Islam: A Compendium*. Monrovia, California: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, 1979.
- Miller, Dave. *The Qur'an Unveiled: Islam and New Testament Christianity in Conflict*. Montgomery, Alabama: Apologetics Press, Inc, 2005.
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- Qutb, Sayyid. *Social Justice in Islam*. Translated by John B. Hardie. Oneonta, New York: Islamic Publications International, 2000.

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Ur-Rahim, Muhammad 'Ata. *Jesus: Prophet of Islam*. Elmhurst, NY.: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., ND.

Shipp, Glover. *Christianity and Islam: Bridging the Two Worlds*. Webb City, Missouri: Covenant Publishing, 2002.

Swartley, Keith E., ed. *Encountering The World of Islam*. Littleton, Colorado: Authentic Media, 2005.