

# THEO5300

# Systematic Theology I

Internet Edition

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. Annually, the President will designate a core value that will become the focus of pedagogy for the year. For 2015-2016 academic year that core value is Mission Focus, which is stated as follows: “Our Seminary does not exist merely to get an education or to give an education. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.”

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

In order to understand and interpret Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church, 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.

### **A Note about Web-Based Learning**

Web-based courses are, by nature, a different kind of learning experience than courses taught in the traditional classroom. Because of this structure, this web-based course is more reading and writing intensive than traditional classroom courses. Rigorous study of the deep things of God can be a rewarding experience for anyone who participates in it, but it also calls for extra diligence and integrity in completing the work. This reality does not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in equipping you, the student, for effective, God-honoring ministry. It simply means utilizing a different strategy. Internet courses allow room for independent learners to thrive—to work at a responsible pace, to engage in student-led discussions, and to take ownership of the learning of course content. Note that your instructors are praying for your success.

### **Required Texts**

**Allison, Gregg R. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.** Dr. Allison designed his textbook to be a companion to Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. This book contains valuable background information about the historical development of doctrines treated in this course. **It is recommended that you read your assignments from this text AFTER READING GRUDEM AND/OR ERICKSON.**

**Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.** Millard Erickson's text is one of the best contemporary Baptist treatments of Christian doctrine available presently. This textbook is slightly more challenging than Grudem's text because it includes more philosophical and apologetic content. Erickson writes from a modified Calvinistic perspective.

**Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.** Grudem's text is a very readable introduction to Christian doctrine. It is also practical and helpful in a number of ways. It includes devotional content, a glossary of terms, and a great bibliography for research papers. Grudem writes from a more traditional five-point Calvinistic perspective.

**Harwood, Adam. *The Spiritual Condition of Infants: A Biblical-Historical Survey and Systematic Proposal*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.** This is a revision of a Ph.D. dissertation. It is not easy to read, but can help readers clarify their doctrine of sin.

## Recommended Texts

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

Garrett, James Leo. *Systematic Theology*. Vols. 1-2. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2006, 2007.

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

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Rev. Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Reading Quizzes (15%)

Students will take quizzes based on the assigned readings from Erickson, Grudem, and Allison. The quizzes draw on key terms, the theological ideas of the authors, and significant figures and movements in the history of theology. Quizzes can consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and matching questions. **Students are strongly encouraged to read ALL of the assigned reading materials before beginning the quiz.** These are **NOT open-book quizzes.**

### 2. Discussion Board Questions (20%)

Students will be required to answer discussion board questions. These discussion questions will be based on the assigned reading and additional resources located in Course Documents. **Students are required to make at least three (3) substantive posts to each question. The first post** will be your answer to the question posed. This post should be longer and more detailed than the remaining posts. **The other two posts** should be offered in response to other student posts. A substantive post is defined as a post that both exhibits a thoughtful response based upon the class material and that, in the case of response posts (see above), furthers the discussion thread by posing new questions or thoughts to which other students may respond. **To earn credit, students MUST post their first comment no later than three days after the question opens in order to give classmates time to respond.** When replying to a post, please be respectful and peaceable, especially when disagreeing with the views of another person. Be sure to address the content of the initial post, not the tone or personality of the author. When possible, avoid first person (“I, me, my”); simply state things as fact. You may cite Bible verses, but please do not include any quotations due to space constraints. In order to facilitate informed discussions, these discussion board posts and replies should only be composed after reading the assigned material.

Please note the following about the general revelation discussion board question (unit 3 question: this assignment is an embedded assignment that will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. The rubric for grading this assignment is attached to this syllabus. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.

### **3. Critical Book Review (20%)**

All students will read and review Adam Harwood, *The Spiritual Condition of Infants*. The review should include: (1) a bibliography entry; (2) one or two sentences of biographical data (e.g., highest degree, current academic position/s, and area/s of research); (3) an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book; (4) a concise summary of the book's contents (limit the summary to no more than 1/3 of the total length of the review); (5) a critical analysis of the book (including the author's thesis, assumptions, supporting arguments, method, selection and use of sources, logic, style, specific examples of strengths and weaknesses [such as areas not addressed]); (6) a discussion of the relevance of the book to your particular ministry; and (7) a conclusion either recommending the book or not and explaining why. The reviews should be between 2,000-3,000 words and should conform to Turabian or SBL style guides. Because book reviews are primarily about one source, use parenthetical citations when citing page numbers and footnotes only for external sources.

A few questions to consider when preparing for a critical book review: What is the main purpose or thesis of this book? To whom is this book written? Did the author(s) fulfill his or her purpose? What are some of the author's working assumptions (e.g., his or her denominational background, field of research, or view of Scripture)? Does the author provide strong biblical, philosophical, and historical support for his or her positions? Are there any points of contact between this book/writer and other texts read during the course of the semester? How might the content of this book affect ministry in the local church or ministry within your particular calling? Are there any ideas that changed your particular way of thinking on the subject matter at hand? Would you recommend this book to someone else?

- **A papers (93-100)** clearly state the book's thesis, successfully and succinctly outline its argument in its own terms, demonstrate advanced critical engagement with the argument and content of the book, make clear and well structured arguments, and exhibit a proficient grasp of grammar, spelling, and style.
- **B papers (85-92)** clearly state the book's thesis, show an attempt to understand the book on its own terms and critically reflect on the issues at hand, make arguments, and show sufficiency in grammar, spelling, and style.
- **C papers (77-84)** state the book's thesis, present the content of the book, raise preliminary critical questions for further evaluation, limit evaluation to approval or disapproval of the author's arguments, and make repeated mistakes in grammar, spelling, and style.
- **D (70-76) and F (0-69) papers** lack evidence of grasping the book's thesis and content, limit evaluation to preformed judgments without serious consideration of the book's ideas, contain major grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors, and demonstrate little or no attempt to proofread.

**4. Trinity Ministry Project (15%)**

Theology done well should result in faithful Christian ministry. After reading the course materials on the doctrine of the Trinity, students will complete a ministry project related to the doctrine of the Trinity. Students may either: (1) write a full-length sermon or Bible study manuscript on the doctrine of the Trinity and *present it in a church or Bible study group* or (2) *share the gospel* with a member of a cult that denies the doctrine of the Trinity (e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses or Mormons) and write a detailed report of the witnessing encounter. Whatever option students choose, they must write a 3-5 double- spaced page **personal reflection** on the value of doctrinal study for completing these tasks.

**5. Theological Research Paper (25%)**

All students are required to write a brief research paper (12-15 double-spaced pages in length) on a particular doctrinal topic/question. Students may choose from the following topics or seek approval from the professor on another topic.

A more focused paper is usually a better product than an overly broad paper (e.g., like trying to cover all the doctrine of Christ in ten pages!). Students may select a doctrinal topic and seek to investigate how a particular theologian in history addressed that issue, or one may start with a particular theologian and investigate his or her unique theological perspectives (e.g., Calvin’s view of the image of God or Karl Barth’s doctrine of inspiration). Be sure to use both primary sources (those written by the theologian being considered) and academic, peer-reviewed journal articles (accessible through the NOBTS Library web page [click “e-journals & Dissertations” then “EBSCOHost”]).

<b>Possible Paper Topics (or Mix and Match)</b>	
The Inspiration of Scripture	Anselm of Canterbury
The Authority of Scripture	Arminius, James
Biblical Inerrancy	Athanasius
General Revelation and World Religions	Augustine
Arguments for God’s Existence	Barth, Karl
God’s Incommunicable Attributes	Brunner, Emil
God’s Communicable Attributes	Bultmann, Rudolf
The Trinity	Calvin, John
Creation	Cappadocian Fathers, The
Providence	Edwards, Jonathan
God and Evil	Hodge, Charles
The Image of God	Justin Martyr
The Imputation of Adam’s Sin	Luther, Martin
Total Depravity	Mullins, E. Y.
The Age of Accountability	Origen
The Historical Jesus	Schleiermacher, Friedrich
The Humanity of Christ	Thomas Aquinas
The Peccability/Impeccability of Christ	Wesley, John
The Hypostatic Union	Zwingli, Huldreich

## **6. Reading Report (5%)**

At the end of the course, students will report in the online classroom the total percentage of the assigned readings that was completed.

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## **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.

## **Class Policies**

1. Late Work—Because life and ministry happens, late work will be accepted—but with a penalty. **For every day an assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted.** No assignment over two weeks late will be accepted.
2. 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).

Unit 2

**Prolegomena:** What is Theology  
and What Should it  
Accomplish?

Unit 3

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

Unit 6

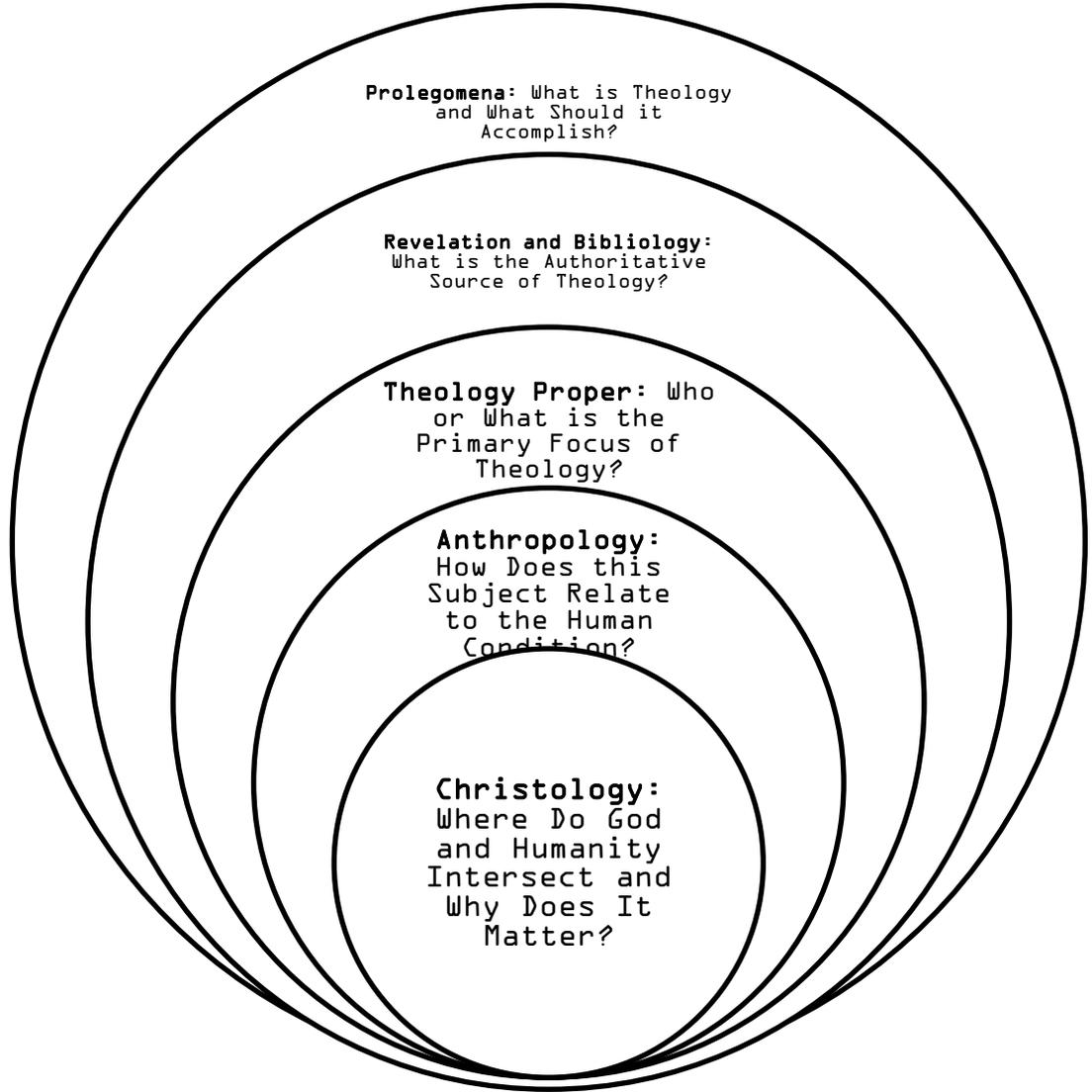
**Theology Proper:** Who  
or What is the  
Primary Focus of  
Theology?

Unit 11

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

Unit 13

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



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THEO5300 NOBTS Internet Edition Lectures, Readings, and Assignments Schedule			
Unit	Class Topic	Assignments	Readings / Quiz Materials
1 5/30	Introduction	Introduce yourself Watch Grudem videos	Read Syllabus
2 6/2	Prolegomena and Theological Method	Prolegomena Quiz	Erickson, chs. 1, 3-5 Grudem, ch. 1
3 6/6	General Revelation and Natural Theology	Discussion Board General Revelation Quiz	Erickson, ch. 6 Allison, ch. 9
4 6/9	Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 1	Scripture, Pt. 1 Quiz	Erickson, chs. 7-8, 10 Grudem, chs. 2, 4 Allison, chs. 3-4
5 6/13	Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 2	Discussion Board Scripture, Pt. 2 Quiz	Erickson, ch. 9 Grudem, chs. 5-8 Allison, ch. 5, 7, 8
6 6/16	God's Attributes, pt. 1	God, Pt. 1 Quiz <b>Book Review Due (6/19)</b>	Erickson, chs. 11-13 Grudem, ch. 11 Allison, ch. 10
7 6/20	God's Attributes, pt. 2	God, Pt. 2 Quiz Discussion Board	Erickson, ch. 12 Grudem, chs. 12-13
8 6/23	The Trinity	Trinity Quiz <b>Paper Topics Due (6/26)</b>	Erickson, ch. 14 Grudem, ch. 14 Allison, ch. 11
9 6/27	Creation	Creation Quiz Discussion Board	Erickson, ch. 16 Grudem, ch. 15 Allison, ch. 12
9 6/30	Providence	Providence Quiz <b>Trinity Ministry Project Due (7/6)</b>	Erickson, chs. 17-18 Grudem, ch. 16 Allison, ch. 13
7/4	<b>Independence from the British (for 240 years) and Theology (for a few days)!</b>		
10 7/7	Theological Anthropology	Anthropology Quiz Discussion Board	Erickson, chs. 21-23 Grudem, chs. 21-23 Allison, ch. 15
11 7/11	Hamartiology	Sin Quiz	Erickson, chs. 25-29 Grudem, ch. 24 Allison, ch. 16
12 7/14	Christology, pt. 1	Christology, Pt. 1 Quiz Discussion Board Watch videos	Erickson, chs. 30, 32 Grudem, ch. 26A
13 7/18	Christology, pt. 2	<b>Research Paper Due (7/21)</b> <b>Reading Report Due (7/21)</b>	Erickson, chs. 31, 33 Grudem, ch. 26B-C Allison, ch. 17

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**SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, EMBEDDED ASSIGNMENT, AND RUBRIC**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

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

- i. Be able to understand theological method and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ biblically, historically, and systematically.
- ii. Be able to apply theology by integrating these doctrines into a coherent, comprehensive, and consistent Christian worldview.
- iii. Be able to communicate these doctrines in the particular ministry calling and context of the learner.

**Embedded Assignment**

- 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.					