

# THEO5300

# Systematic Theology I

Internet Edition  
Spring 2016

## New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Professor

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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

Instructor

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### 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. Annually, the President will designate a core value that will become the focus of pedagogy for the year. This academic year, the 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**

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. Allison designed his textbook to be a companion to Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. This book contains valuable background information about the historical development of doctrines treated in this course. **Please read your assignments from this text after reading from the assigned readings from Grudem and Erickson.**

**Erickson, Millard.** *Christian Theology*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 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 classical, five-point Calvinistic perspective.

**Harwood, Adam.** *The Spiritual Condition of Infants: A Biblical-Historical Survey and Systematic Proposal*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011. This slim volume is a revision of Harwood's Ph.D. dissertation in Theology. It explores key biblical texts and a selection of Christian writings on original sin, infant baptism, and infant salvation in an attempt to answer this question: What is the spiritual condition of infants?

### **Recommended Texts**

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

Garrett, James Leo. *Systematic Theology*. 4th ed. 2 Vols. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014.

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 weekly 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. Biweekly Discussion Board Questions (20%)**

Students will be required to answer discussion board questions on a **biweekly basis**. 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 250–300 words. The **two replies** offered in response to other student posts should be 100–150 words. 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 reply posts (see above), furthers the discussion thread by posing new questions or thoughts to which other students may respond. Each initial post must be submitted by **Thursday** of the week it is due so that peers will have time to submit a reply. 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.

## **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.

For a helpful overview of critical book reviews, see this paper from the UNC Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/book-reviews/>

**Book Review Grading Rubric**

	10	9	8	7	5
Content	proper length robust explanation and critique of thesis all details accurate	proper length acceptable explanation and critique of thesis minimal inaccuracies	improper length provides some explanation and critique of thesis some inaccuracies	improper length provides little explanation and critique of thesis many inaccuracies	improper length neither explains nor critiques the thesis no accurate details
Organization	addresses topic directly highly organized structure	addresses topic directly organized structure	addresses topic somewhat organized structure	somewhat addresses topic highly unorganized structure	wanders significantly no organized structure
Logical Support	superior examples of the topic	examples of the topic	acceptable support of the topic	minimal support of the topic	no logical support of the topic
Communication	exceptionally clear meaning to the reader	clear meaning to the reader	somewhat clear meaning to the reader	unclear meaning to the reader	incoherent for the reader
Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	no visible or significant errors	errors do not disturb the reading process	errors sometimes disturb the reading process	errors often disturb the reading process	errors make reading difficult

**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.

PLEASE READ THE DOCUMENTS IN THE “PAPER WRITING RESOURCES” SECTION BEFORE WRITING—particularly John Frame’s paper “How to Write a Theological Research Paper” and the research paper grading rubric.

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, Huldruch

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

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

### **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, five 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).

### **Readings and Assignments Schedule**

The schedule runs Mondays through Saturdays. Though materials will be available on Sunday, the course instructor encourages (but does not require) students to take a day of rest and worship on Sundays. Book reviews, ministry projects, and research papers are due Saturday at 11:59 p.m. CST at the end of the unit week (units begin on Monday). Initial discussion board posts are due by Thursday night.

Units 1-2

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

Units 3-5

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

Units 6-10

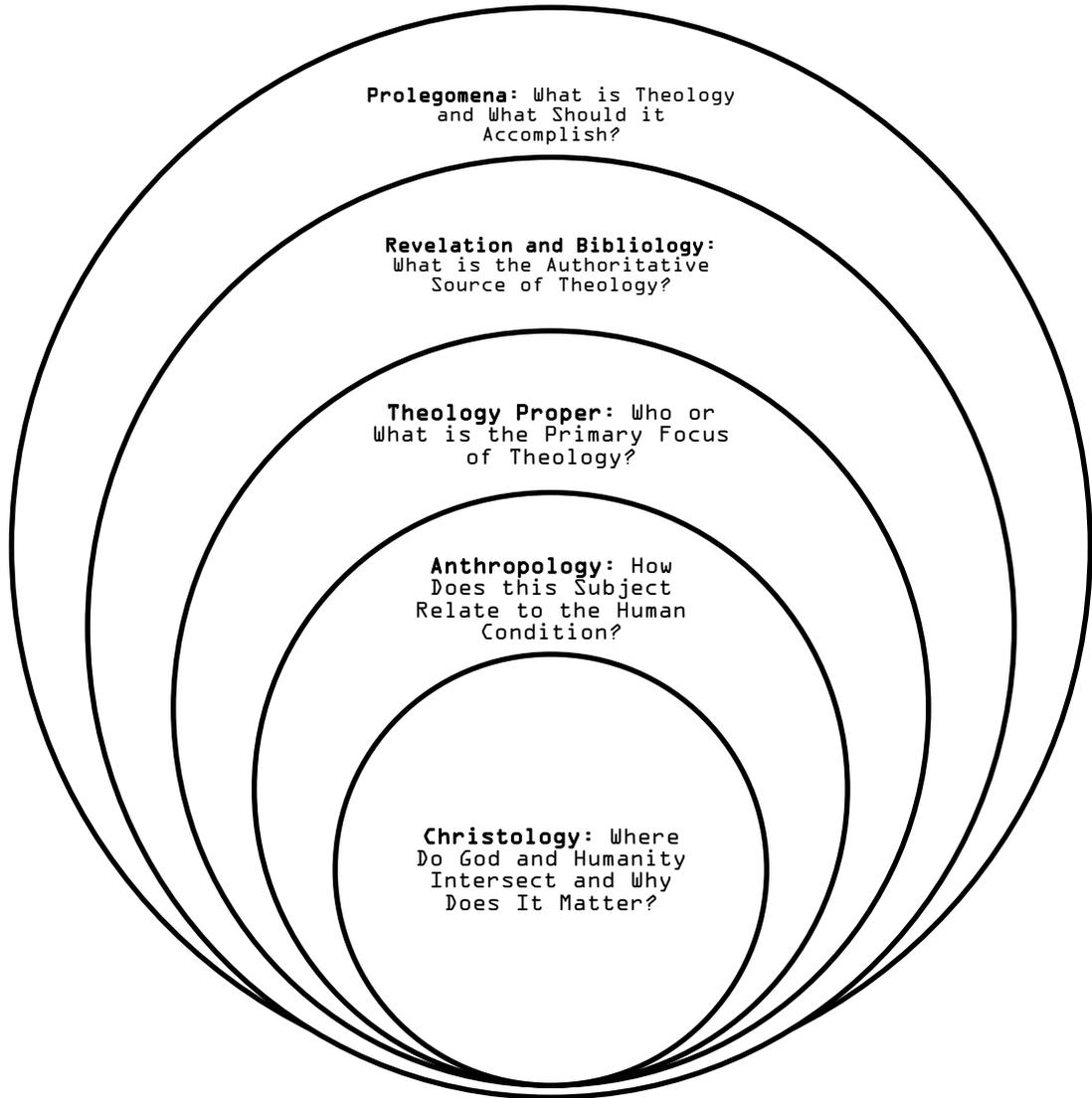
**Theology Proper:** Who or  
What is the Primary Focus  
of Theology?

Units 11-12

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

Units 13-14

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



THEO5300 NOBTS Internet Edition Lectures, Readings, and Assignments Schedule			
<u>Unit &amp; Dates</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Assignments/Quizzes</u>	<u>Readings for Quiz</u>
1 Jan. 18-23	Introduction	Introduce yourself; Watch Grudem videos	Read Syllabus
2 Jan. 25-Jan. 30	Prolegomena and Theological Method	Prolegomena Quiz	Erickson, chs. 1, 3-5 Grudem, ch. 1
3 Feb. 1-6	General Revelation and Natural Theology	Discussion Board 1; General Rev. Quiz	Erickson, ch. 6 Grudem, chs. 9-10 Allison, ch. 9
4 Feb. 8-13	Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 1	Scripture, Part 1 Quiz	Erickson, chs. 7-8, 10 Grudem, chs. 2, 4 Allison, chs. 3-4
5 Feb. 15-20	Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 2	Discussion Board 2; Scripture, Part 2 Quiz	Erickson, ch. 9 Grudem, chs. 5-8 Allison, ch. 5, 7, 8
6 Feb. 22-27	God's Attributes, pt. 1	God, Part 1 Quiz	Erickson, chs. 11, 13 Grudem, ch. 11 Allison, ch. 10
7 Feb. 29-March 5	God's Attributes, pt. 2	Discussion Board 3; God, Part 2 Quiz	Erickson, ch. 12 Grudem, chs. 12-13
8 March 7-12	The Trinity	Paper Topics Due; The Trinity Quiz	Erickson, ch. 14 Grudem, ch. 14 Allison, ch. 11
March 14-19	<i>Spring Break</i>		
9 March 21-26	Creation	Discussion Board 4; Creation Quiz	Erickson, ch. 16 Grudem, ch. 15 Allison, ch. 12
10 March 28-Apr. 2	Providence	Trinity Ministry Project Due; Providence Quiz	Erickson, chs. 17-18 Grudem, ch. 16 Allison, ch. 13
11 Apr. 4-9	Anthropology	Discussion Board 5; Anthropology Quiz	Erickson, chs. 21-23 Grudem, chs. 21-23 Allison, ch. 15
12 Apr. 11-16	Hamartiology	Book Review Due; Sin Quiz	Erickson, chs. 25-29 Grudem, ch. 24 Allison, ch. 16

13 Apr. 18-23	Christology, pt. 1	Discussion Board 6; Watch videos	Erickson, chs. 30, 32 Grudem, ch. 26A
14 Apr. 25-30	Christology, pt. 2	Reading Report Due	Erickson, chs. 31, 33 Grudem, ch. 26B-C Allison, ch. 17
15 May 2-7		Research Paper Due	

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