

The Doctrine of God

THEO9401

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Seminary Mission Statement, Core Values, and Core Competencies Addressed

The mission of NOBTS is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

The main core values addressed in this seminar are Doctrinal Integrity and Characteristic Excellence.

The primary core competencies addressed in the seminar are Christian Theological Heritage and Biblical Exposition.

Course Description

An intensive study of the doctrine of God is made through an analysis of the biblical data in the light of historical and contemporary interpretations. A contemporary theology of God is developed.

Class Texts

Feinberg, John S. *No One Like Him*. Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Erickson, Millard J. *God, The Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Ware, Bruce, ed. *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: Four Views*. Nashville: B&H, 2008.

Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1997.

Lemke, Steve, and David Allen. *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five Point Calvinism* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010).

Class Assignments

Each member of the seminar will be expected to participate meaningfully in each session in the seminar. It is crucial that every member of the seminar read the assigned readings or papers for that date. Because of the reading schedule, seminar members should begin reading the text as soon as possible. Each member of the seminar will be assigned to lead the seminar discussion on several occasions, as delineated in the assignments below. Some changes will have to be made if the seminar enrollment changes.

Text Discussion – During the first section of the seminar, all the seminar members will be discussing the class text readings. Each week, seminar members will guide the class in a discussion of assigned portions of the text. The student facilitator assigned to lead the discussion should prepare a one-page summary of the chapter(s) and a one-page list of questions and comments addressed to the chapter, or pose a case study to apply the ideas being presented. Each student will lead the seminar discussion on assigned chapter(s) in the text. Assignments will be made quickly to facilitate students having plenty of time to prepare for these assignments. Students should express an awareness of the theological and ecclesiological background of the authors being read.

Research Papers will be written by each seminar member. They should be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages (Times New Roman 12, 1 inch margins) with footnotes and bibliography in proper Turabian/Chicago Manual style. Research papers should focus upon a particular argument or position held by a theologian/philosopher related to the topic addressed in the seminar. Research papers are not to be merely historical surveys but rather should consist of critical analysis and response to a particular issue, argument, etc. from a particular author. Articles should thus resemble journal articles rather than articles found in theological dictionaries or historical or biblical treatments of the topic. *Research papers should be handed out or posted on Blackboard a week before they are to be presented to and discussed by the seminar.* Each seminar member is expected to have read each of the papers before the class in which it is presented. Papers should be written cleanly, without errors of style and form, in such a way that with minor alterations they can be published in a professional journal or presented at a professional meeting.

Formal Responses –Each student will be assigned to write a formal response of 3-4 pages to a research paper. Responses should demonstrate an understanding of the paper and highlight both strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Responses are to be both critical and charitable. They should help the paper writer to improve his paper upon revision. Each response will also include an *errata* section citing errors or suggested improvements in form and style.

Suggested Topics for Research Papers

- Atemporalism/God's Timelessness (Paul Helm)
- Temporalism and Mediating Views on God and Time (see *God and Time: Four Views*)
- Omnipresence
- A Model of Divine Transcendence and Immanence
- A Determinist Image of God (Paul Helm)
- A Simple Foreknowledge, Comprehensive Foreknowledge, or Middle Knowledge Views of God (see Basinger and Rice books in bibliography)
- A Comparison of the Molinism of Bruce Ware and Ken Keathley
- The Molinism of William Lane Craig
- Models of Divine Providence in Terrance Tiessen's *Providence and Prayer*
- An Openness View of God
- Divine Simplicity
- Omnipotence
- Is God Immutable?

- Impassibility and Patripassionism (McWilliams and Fiddes)
- God and Incorporeality
- Religious Epistemology
- Religious Language
- The Goodness of God
- God and the Problem of Evil
- Perfect Being Images of God
- Liberation, Feminist, or Postmodern Theology Images of God
- The Triune God
- Picirilli's Classical Arminianism vs. Wesleyan Arminianism

Course Schedule

Session/ Date	Presenter	Discussion of the Feinberg and Erickson Texts	Readings
Thursday, 2/4			
2/4 am 8:00-9:00	Dr. Lemke Dr. Brooks	Introduction to the Seminar God—The Very Idea	Feinberg, chapters 1-3 Erickson, chapter 1, 12-13 Bray, chapter 1, 6
2/4 am 9:00-10:00		The Existence and Being of God (arguments for God's existence, God as Perfect Being, God as Spirit)	Feinberg, chapter 5 Erickson, chapter 10 Bray, chapter 2A
2/4 pm 10:00-11:00		God in Contemporary Thought, Process Theology An Openness Doctrine of God	Feinberg, chapter 3 Erickson, chapters 2-4 Ware, chapters 7-8 Lemke, "Truth for a Postmodern Era"
2/4 pm 1:00-2:00		The Doctrine of the Trinity	Feinberg, chapter 10 Bray, chapters 3-5
2/4 pm 2:00-3:00		God, Time, and Eternity	Feinberg, chapter 9 Erickson, chapter 6 Allen/Lemke, chapter 3 Lemke, "Transdimensional God"
2/4 pm 3:00-4:00		The Doctrine of Creation	Feinberg, chapter 12 Erickson, chapter 12
Thursday, 3/10			
3/10 am 8:00-9:00		The Moral Attributes of God (Holiness vs. Love)	Feinberg, chapter 8 Erickson, chapter 11 Allen/Lemke, chapter 1
3/10 am 9:00-10:00		The Attributes of God and the Non-Moral Attributes of God – I (aseity, infinity, immensity, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, impassibility)	Feinberg, chapters 6 Erickson, chapters 7-8, 10 Bray, chapter 2B

3/10 am 10:00-11:00		The Attributes of God and the Non-Moral Attributes of God – II (omnipotence, sovereignty, omniscience, wisdom, unity, simplicity)	Feinberg, chapter 7; Erickson, chapters 8-10; Bray, chapter 2B
3/10 pm 1:00-2:00		The Calvinist <i>Ordo Salutis</i> : The Decrees of God -- The Classical Calvinist (supralapsarian), Modified Calvinist (infralapsarian), and Amyrauldian Doctrines of God	Feinberg, chapter 11 Ware, chapters 1-4
3/10 pm 2:00-3:00		Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom (A): Determinism, Sovereignty, and Freedom	Feinberg; chapter 13 Erickson, chapter 4 Allen/Lemke, chapters 5, 10 Lemke, “Agent Causation”
3/10 3:00-4:00		Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom (B): Compatibilism and Libertarian Freedom	Feinberg; chapter 14 Erickson, chapter 4 Allen/Lemke, chapters 5, 10 Lemke, “Agent Causation” Lemke, “Agent Causation and Moral Accountability”
Thursday, 4/7			
4/7 am 8:00-9:00		Freedom and Foreknowledge	Feinberg, chapter 15 Allen/Lemke, chapter 3 Lemke, “Transdimensional God”
4/7 am 9:0-10:00		Divine Providence and Evil	Feinberg, chapter 16 Allen/Lemke, chapter 11
4/7 am 10:00-11:00		An Arminian Doctrine of God	Ware, chapters 5-6 Picirilli, <i>Grace, Faith, and Freewill</i>
4/7 pm 1:00-2:00		A Baptist Doctrine of God	Allen/Lemke, chapters 1, 4-7
4/7 pm 2:00-3:00		Catch up time or first paper	
4/7 3:00-4:00		Catch up time or first paper	
Thursday, 5/5			
5/5 am 8:00-9:20		Paper	
5/5 am 9:30-10:50		Paper	
5/5 pm 1:00-2:20		Paper	
5/5 pm 2:30-4:00		Paper	

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Articles on God's Goodness

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** Copies of these articles may be available in the “Course Documents” section of the class Blackboard pages.