



THEO9410 Theological Method (PhD Seminar)
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2021 / Thursdays 8:00-10:50 a.m.

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

Students will read contemporary theologies and books about theological method to discover the purposes of the authors and the theological methods employed in pursuit of those purposes.

Course Objectives

1. To alert students to the decisions which must be made in writing theology.
2. To acquaint students with the methods and purposes of some contemporary theologians and systems of theology.
3. To encourage students to reflect upon their purposes in studying theology and upon methods which they might employ in writing theology.

Biblical Authority

In order to develop competent theological researchers for the twenty-first century church and academy, students in this course will be exposed to seminal works in Christian theology from a wide array of theological perspectives, including the influential works of many prominent non-evangelical theologians. Students are expected to become familiar with and demonstrate advanced, biblically guided critical engagement with the works of these thinkers.

The instructors of this course operate 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, Scripture, which is the only sufficient source of the knowledge of God, holds ultimate authority in Christian doctrine and practice. *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000) provides the confessional framework for the course.

Required Monographs

- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. 1/2. *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003. (The fancy study editions with Latin and Greek translated for you are also available from T&T Clark if you got the money, honey.)
- Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1. *Prolegomena*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- Duby, Steven J. *God in Himself: Scripture, Metaphysics, and the Task of Christian Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019.
- Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984.
- Putman, Rhyne. *When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. (My starving children appreciate your contribution to their hungry stomachs.)
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study*. 3rd ed. Translated and edited by Terrence N. Tice. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. and Daniel J. Treier. *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015.

Required Articles (Provided by Professors)

- Fiddes, Paul S. "Concept, Image, and Story in Systematic Theology." *IJST* 11.1 (Jan. 2009): 3–23.
- Frame, John. "In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism: Reflections on *Sola Scriptura* and History in Theological Method." *Westminster Theological Journal* 59 (1997): 269–318.
- Gunton, Colin. "A Rose by Any Other Name? From 'Christian Doctrine' to 'Systematic Theology.'" *IJST* 1.1 (March 1999): 4–23.
- Healy, Nicholas M. "What is Systematic Theology?" *IJST* 11.1 (Jan. 2009): 24–39.
- McGrath, Alister E. "Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art." In *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse Jr., 15–38. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

Reichel, Hanna. "Conceptual Design, Sin, and the Affordances of Doctrine." *IJST* 22.4 (Oct. 2020): 538–61.

Sarisky, Darren. "Judgments in Scripture and the Creed: Reflections on Identity and Difference." *Modern Theology*. Forthcoming.

Sigurdson, Ola. "Theology in the Middle of Things: Existential Preconditions of Systematic Theology." *IJST* 22.4 (Oct. 2020): 473–93.

Thiselton, Anthony C. "Knowledge, Myth, and Corporate Memory." In *Believing in the Church: The Corporate Nature of Faith*. A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England, 45–78. Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1981.

Tonstad, Linn Marie. "(Un)wise Theologians: Systematic Theology in the University." *IJST* 22.4 (Oct. 2020): 494–511.

Webster, John. "Principles of Systematic Theology." *IJST* 11.1 (Jan. 2009): 56–71.

White, Thomas Joseph. "The *analogia fidei* in Catholic Theology." *IJST* 22.4 (Oct. 2020): 512–37.

Williams, A. N. "What is Systematic Theology?" *IJST* 11.1 (Jan. 2009): 40–55.

Yeago, David S. "The New Testament and Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis." *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994): 152–64.

Major Review Texts (Choose One; Must Be Approved by Professor)

Charry, Ellen T. *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Cone, James. *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019.

Dulles, Avery. *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*, rev. ed. New York: Crossroad, 1995.

Frei, Hans. *Types of Christian Theology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

Grenz, Stanley J. *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Hasker, William. *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

- Kelsey, David H. *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology*, rev. ed. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.
- Lash, Nicholas. *Change in Focus: A Study of Doctrinal Change and Continuity*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1981.
- Lonergan, Bernard. *Method in Theology*, rev. ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
- Louth, Andrew. *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.
- Marshall, Bruce D. *Trinity and Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- McFague, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Science of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Theology of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Newman, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*. 2d ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *The Ground and Grammar of Theology*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980.
- . *Reality & Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003.
- Tracy, David. *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*, rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *The Drama of Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Students are expected to attend every class meeting, either virtually or in-person. They are also expected to read all assigned readings for the class meeting and be ready to discuss them in class. Students who fail to do so may incur penalties on their final grade.

2. Reading Report and Discussion Guide (15%)

Each student will write one reading report (3-5 pages, single-spaced) based on the assigned reading of the day, including discussion questions, and present them to the seminar and lead in discussing the assigned reading. These reports should include a brief summary but emphasize critical response.

2. Major Book Review (25%)

Students are required to read one (1) of the texts from the bibliography throughout the course of the semester and write a critical book review. The review should include **(1)** a bibliography entry, **(2)** a brief biographical data about the author(s) (e.g., his or her position, degrees, research interests, and books), **(3)** an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book, **(4)** a concise summary of the book's contents, **(5)** a thorough critical analysis of the book, and **(6)** a conclusion with a recommendation or dismissal. The review should be between **2000-3000 words** and should conform to **Turabian** or **SBL** style guides. Because book reviews are primarily about one source, use **parenthetical citations** for the primary text and footnotes only for external sources. **This book review is due on 5/13/2021.**

A few questions to consider while reading these monographs: 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 (93–100)	B (85–92)	C (77–84)*	D (70–76) and F (0–69)
Clarity and Coherence	"A" papers clearly state the book's thesis.	"B" papers clearly state the book's thesis.	"C" papers state the book's thesis, though these	"D" and "F" papers lack evidence that the reader

			restatements could be clearer.	understands the thesis of the book and the aims of the author.
Comprehension	"A" papers demonstrate the reader's mastery over the content of the book.	"B" papers show a good working understanding of the book's contents.	"C" papers show an adequate understanding of the book's content in most areas.	"D" and "F" papers lack evidence of grasping the book's content.
Analysis and Evaluation	"A" papers demonstrate advanced critical engagement with the argument and content of the book	"B" papers show an attempt to understand the book on its own terms and critically reflect on the issues at hand.	"C" papers present the content of the book and raise preliminary critical questions for further evaluation	"D" and "F" papers limit evaluation to preformed judgments without serious consideration of the book's ideas.
Argumentation	"A" papers make clear and well-structured arguments.	"B" papers make arguments, though these arguments could be clearer and better structured.	"C" papers limit evaluation to approval or disapproval of the author's arguments.	"D" and "F" papers show no attempt on the part of the reviewer to make arguments for or against the contents of the book.
Grammar, Form, and Style	Authors of "A" papers write with professional attention to grammar, form, and style.	These papers evidence only minor errors in grammar, form, and style.	"C" papers also contain numerous grammatical errors and problems with form and style, even to the point of distracting readers from the content of the paper.	"D" and "F" papers contain major grammatical errors and show no evidence whatsoever of proofreading.

3. Research Papers (45%)

Each student will write a research paper on a topic agreed upon by the professors and the student. (Papers should be between 6000 and 6500 words in length). **The topic and initial thesis of the paper is due on 2/18. The first draft of the paper is due one week before its scheduled presentation.**

The research paper will be evaluated as follows:

1. **Clarity and Coherence:** Balance; thoroughness; organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper.
2. **Research:** Bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary, monographs, journal articles, etc.); most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations.

3. **Analysis and Evaluation:** Going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of strengths and weakness of a person; demonstration that you have thought about the material that you have researched. Give strong and insightful introduction and conclusion.
4. **Grammar and style:** Spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; and conformity to Turabian style.

	A (93–100)	B (85–92)	C (77–84)*	D (70–76) and F (0–69)
Clarity and Coherence	The paper has a clearly articulated thesis that guides the organization of the paper, the content of the paper, and the selection of resources.	“B” papers (85-92) clearly state a thesis but fail to connect the stated thesis with the organization and content of the paper. These papers include some material irrelevant to this issue at hand.	“C” papers (77-84) lack a clear thesis and structure and tend to be “survey papers” that are descriptive without argumentation.	D” (70-76) and “F” (0-69) papers make no attempt to define the problem and show no evidence of a coherent structure.
Research	Such papers also show the author’s ability to do quality research, choosing quality resources, distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, and are conversant with up-to-date literature in the field.	“B” papers evidence that the student is growing in his or her ability to do research even if some source selections are questionable.	While these papers evidence some interaction with current, quality sources, they gravitate toward secondary sources and out-of-date sources.	These papers show the author’s inability to do graduate level research, a failure to engage quality resources, and only a superficial grasp of sources that are cited.
Analysis and Evaluation	“A” papers demonstrate creative, substantive critical engagement with sources.	Authors of these papers attempt to make critical arguments and show growing skill in this area.	These papers include more summary than critical engagement, lack argumentation skills.	The student shows no ability to craft an argument or support his claims.
Grammar, Form, and Style	Authors of “A” papers write with professional attention to grammar, form, and style.	These papers evidence only minor errors in grammar, form, and style.	“C” papers also contain numerous grammatical errors and problems with form and style, even to the point of distracting readers from the content of the	“D” and “F” papers contain major grammatical errors and show no evidence whatsoever of proofreading.

			paper.	
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** In PhD seminars, students must make an 85 or above in order to have a passing grade on an assignment. Students who score a 'C' will be given the opportunity to re-write and re-submit their papers by the end of the semester. Students who score a 'D' or an 'F' will automatically fail the course.*

4. Formal Response (10%)

Each student will write a formal response that summarizes, analyzes, and critiques a paper by another student. Formal responses should also address form and style issues, particularly consistent grammatical and/or stylistic problems throughout the paper. An errata table or section is preferred.

5. Research Paper -- Final Draft (5%)

Each student will submit a final draft of the paper free of errors. Students who score a 'C' on their paper will be required to rewrite in a more substantial manner.

• Attendance and Participation	10%
• Reading Report	15%
• Major Book Review	25%
• Formal Response	10%
• Research Paper	35%
• Research Paper (Final Draft)	5%
Total	100%

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments
1/21	The Theological Task	<p><u>Primary Text</u> Vanhoozer and Treier, <i>Theology and the Mirror of Scripture</i></p> <p>Respondent:</p> <p><u>Articles</u> Healy, “What is Systematic Theology?” McGrath, “Evangelical Theological Method” Williams, “What is Systematic Theology?”</p>
1/28	Theology and the Interpretation of Scripture	<p><u>Primary Text</u> Putman, <i>When Doctrine Divides the People of God</i></p> <p>Respondent:</p> <p><u>Articles</u> Frame, “In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism” Yeago, David S. “The New Testament and Nicene Dogma” Sarisky, “Judgments in Scripture and the Creed: Reflections on Identity and Difference.”</p>
2/4	The Nature of Doctrine / Postliberal Theology	<p><u>Primary Text</u> Lindbeck, <i>The Nature of Doctrine</i></p> <p>Respondent:</p> <p><u>Articles</u> Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i> Ia.1–10, 2a2ae 8.1–3 and 9.1–3 Gunton, “A Rose by Any Other Name?”</p>
2/11	Theology in Modernity	<p><u>Primary Text</u> Schleiermacher, <i>Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study</i></p>

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments
		<p>Respondent:</p> <p>Articles Sigurdson, Ola. "Theology in the Middle of Things" Tonstad, "(Un)wise Theologians: Systematic Theology in the University."</p>
2/18	<p>Theology and Tradition</p> <p>Theology in the Reformed Tradition</p>	<p>Primary Text Bavinck, <i>Reformed Dogmatics</i>, vol. 1, chs. 1–7 (26–233)</p> <p>Respondent #1 (chs. 1–3):</p> <p>Respondent #2 (chs. 4–7):</p> <p>Articles Thiselton, Anthony C. "Knowledge, Myth, and Corporate Memory." White, "The <i>analogia fidei</i> in Catholic Theology."</p>
2/25	<p>Theology in the Reformed Tradition</p>	<p>Primary Text Bavinck, <i>Reformed Dogmatics</i>, vol. 1, chs. 8–11, 15–17 (236–351, 501–621)</p> <p>Respondent #1 (chs. 8–11):</p> <p>Respondent #2 (chs. 15–17):</p>
3/4	<p>Barth</p>	<p>Primary Text Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> I/2, §§20.2, 23–24 (pp. 585–660, 797–884)</p> <p>Respondent #1 (pp. 585–660):</p> <p>Respondent #2 (pp. 797–884):</p> <p>Articles</p>
3/11	<p>Natural Theology</p>	<p>Duby, <i>God in Himself</i></p> <p>Respondent:</p>

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments
		<p>Articles Fiddes, "Concept, Image, and Story in Systematic Theology" Reichel, "Conceptual Design, Sin, and the Affordances of Doctrine."</p>
3/14– 3/19	<p>Spring Break <i>"...give him rest from days of trouble..." (Psalm 94:13)</i></p>	
3/25	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #1: Response #1:
4/1	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #2: Response #2:
4/8	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #3: Response #3: Paper #4: Response #4:
4/15	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #5: Response #5:
4/22	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #6: Response #6: Paper #7: Response #7:
4/29	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #8: Response #8:
5/6	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #9: Response #9:
5/13	Seminar Paper Presentations	Paper #10: Response #10: Paper #11: Response #11: Major Book Review Due

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aquinas, Thomas. *A Summa on the Summa*. Edited by Peter Kreeft. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011.
- Baillie, John. *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956.
- Barr, James. *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
- Bartlett, David L. *The Shape of Scriptural Authority*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Barton, John, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. Marynoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.
- Brown, David. *Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- . *Tradition and Imagination: Revelation and Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Cunningham, Mary Kathleen. *What Is Theological Exegesis? Interpretation and Use of Scripture in Barth's Doctrine of Election*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1995.
- Dockery, David S. *Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority, and Interpretation*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- Doriani, Daniel M. *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001.
- Dulles, Avery. *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*, rev. ed. New York: Crossroad, 1995.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.
- Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity*. 2d ed. Translated by George Elliot [Marian Evans]. London: Trübner & Company, 1881.
- Frei, Hans. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
- . *Types of Christian Theology*. New Haven: Yale, 1994.
- Funk, Robert W. *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Gabler, Johann P. "An Oration on the Proper Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology and the Specific Objectives of Each." In *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930-1990*, ed. Ben C. Ollenburger, E. A. Martens, and Gerhard F. Hasel, 493–502. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992.
- Goldingay, John. *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

- Grenz, Stanley J. *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.
- Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th-Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- . *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Guarino, Thomas G. *The Foundations of Systematic Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2005.
- Gunton, Colin. *A Brief Theology of Revelation*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.
- . *Theology through the Theologians: Selected Essays 1972-1995*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- Hanson, R. P. C. *The Continuity of Christian Doctrine*. New York: Seabury, 1981.
- . *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381*. London: T&T Clark, 1988.
- Hasel, Gerhard. *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- . *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation, and Authority*. 5 vols. Waco, TX: Word, 1976–1983.
- Heyduck, Richard. *The Recovery of Doctrine in the Contemporary Church: An Essay in Philosophical Ecclesiology*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2002.
- Hick, John. *Faith and Knowledge*. 2d ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Hinze, Bradford E. *Narrating History, Developing Doctrine: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Johann Sebastian Drey*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.
- Holmes, Arthur F. *Contours of a World View*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
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- Horton, Michael Scott. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims along the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics," 1982.
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- . "Engaging the Great Tradition: Evangelical Theology and the Role of Tradition." In *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse Jr., 139-58. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- . "Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art." In *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse Jr., 15-38. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
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- . *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. 3d ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.
- . *A Scientific Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001-2003.
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- . *The Vindication of Tradition: The 1983 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Phillips, D. Z. *Belief, Change, and the Forms of Life*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1986.
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