

THEOLOGICAL METHOD AND BIBLIOLOGY

I. Catalog Description

A study of prolegomena as the nature, method, and sources of theology; revelation, especially the inspiration, authority, sufficiency, inerrancy and canonicity of the Bible; and theological hermeneutics, including an introduction to dispensationalism. (3 hours; 2 hours MABC)

This course is prerequisite to all other Systematic Theology (ST) courses.

II. Purpose of the Systematic Theology Department

The purpose of this department is to encourage students to think theologically, to help them develop systematic theology from the dispensational, premillennial interpretation of biblical revelation, and to help them comprehend the implications of theology for Christian living, for ministry in the body of Christ, and for addressing contemporary issues (Catalog).

III. Course Objectives

A. All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

1. The student will **understand** essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Theological Method and Bibliology, assessed by final objective exam.
2. The student will **articulate** the orthodox, protestant, evangelical doctrines of Bibliology accurately and succinctly, assessed by Section 1 (Brief Statement) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.
3. The student will **explain** his or her doctrinal convictions regarding Bibliology with biblical, theological, and historical support, assessed by Section 2 (Exposition) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper (including notes).
4. The student will **relate** the doctrines of Bibliology to his or her life and ministry, assessed by Section 3 (Practical Reflection) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.

B. All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

1. The student will **analyze** and **critique** the positions of the authors of a book, assessed by the Critical Interaction Paper.
2. The student will **analyze** views of the role of culture in theological method and **defend** his or her view, assessed by the Definition of Postmodernism and Response Paper.

3. The student will **demonstrate** his or her theological method, assessed by the Theological Method Paper.

IV. Course Textbooks

A. Required Reading

All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

Bingham, D. Jeffrey, and Glenn R. Kreider, eds. *Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption: A Developing and Diverse Tradition*. Chicago: Moody, 2015. (262 pp.)

Blount, Douglas K., Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds. *Exploring Christian Theology*. Vol. 1: *Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014. **NOTE: For ST 101, only the first half of this volume must be read.** (103 pp.)

Grenz, Stanley, and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology?* 6th ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (150 pp.)

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2016. (455 pp.)

All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Deere, Jack. *Surprised by the Voice of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. (384 pp.)

Geisler, Norman L., ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979. (526 pp.)

B. Suggested Textbooks

Blaising, Craig A. and Darrell L. Bock. *Progressive Dispensationalism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.

Calhoun, Jimi. *A Story of Rhythm and Grace: What the Church Can Learn from Rock & Roll about Healing the Racial Divide*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.

Chatham, James O. *Creation to Revelation: A Brief Account of the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Detweiler, Craig. *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

Detweiler, Craig and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.
Inbody, Tyron. *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.

McGrath, Alister E. *The Christian Theology Reader*. 3d ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
Perkins, Mitali. *Ambassador Families: Equipping your Kids to Engage Popular Culture*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005.

Riebock, Josh. *mY Generation: A Real Journey of Change and Hope*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009

Ryrie, Charles C. *Dispensationalism*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996.

Stone, Howard and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

White, Heath. *Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Books, 2006.

Wilson, Jonathan R. *A Primer for Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.

V. Course Requirements

All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

A. Lecture Video Sessions

Attend each module's lecture video sessions. Consider these session equivalent to class attendance.

B. Reading

Read the required texts for each module according to the reading schedule.

C. Interactions

Participate in the four (4) online course interactions. Engage in active, meaningful, helpful discussion with three (3) other students. Read and interact with one another's work ONLY after posting your own work.

1. Module 1: Meet and Greet Your Peers

Write and post a short autobiography and testimony introducing yourself to your peers. Read their autobiographies, and interact with them. Read their replies to your autobiography, and interact with their replies.

2. Module 5: Watch and discuss the excerpt of “The Lion King”

3. Module 7: Discuss “Relativism” and “Postmodernism”

4. Module 9: Read and discuss “True Words”

PLEASE NOTE: Instructions for each of these interaction assignments are posted on Canvas. Please read and follow those instructions. Each assignment asks for critical interaction with the subject. Understanding must precede criticism, and the criticism must be full of grace and truth. Failure to follow the instructions will result in no credit being given.

D. Learning Activities

Complete each module’s learning activity, present your work to your peers, and discuss one another’s activities. Follow the detailed instructions for each module’s activity. Use the resources provided to help you complete the learning activity. See the sample posted under “Course Files” for the format of the paper.

1. Module 9: Doctrinal Synthesis Paper

The student will develop a 5–7 single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper of Bibliology (including inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, and canonicity). There are three distinct parts to the paper: 1) a Brief Statement, 2) a Detailed Exposition, and 3) a Practical Implications Reflection. (Note that elements of this doctrinal synthesis paper will be reused in ST106 Eschatology in the student’s final capstone doctrinal synthesis assignment.)

The Brief Statement (150–200 words or one-fourth to one-third of a page). This first section will summarize Bibliology in non-technical (but biblically and theologically accurate) language similar to an article in a church’s or ministry’s doctrinal statement. It will include parenthetical key Scripture references and will reflect the orthodox, protestant, evangelical faith. (See sample doctrinal synthesis paper provided on Canvas.)

The Detailed Exposition (500–750 words or two-thirds to three-fourths of a page). This second section will provide a succinct but thorough elucidation of Bibliology using technical, traditional language and covering the major issues related to Bibliology (see course description and outline for major issues in this area of doctrine). This exposition should read like a paper one would submit as part of an ordination or interviewing process. Substantiating

his or her detailed exposition, the student will include three to five single-spaced pages of endnotes (not footnotes) that provide biblical-exegetical, historical-theological, and scientific-philosophical evidences, arguments, and explanations of the doctrinal assertions. These endnotes will include not only key biblical references but also interpretive notes that incorporate commentaries, theological works, or historical citations. Biblical citations should be without quotation, except when an exegetical point is not obvious. Justify interpretations of ambiguous passages with clarifying notes. Exegetical, theological, and historical sources, references, and observations should explain the student's reasons for the affirmations in the main Detailed Exposition. In these notes, the student should incorporate insights gained from other courses in the curriculum, especially from other courses in the Biblical Studies and Theological Studies divisions. Bibliographic references should use Turabian formatting. E.g., Glenn R. Kreider, "Wise Unto Salvation: Gospel, Atonement, and Saving Grace," in Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svingel, eds., *Exploring Christian Theology*, vol. 2, *Creation, Fall, and Salvation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2015), 127. The student must incorporate sources beyond the required reading for this course.

The Practical Implications Reflection (500–750 words). This section will provide a discussion of practical applications and ministry implications of Bibliology. In this section, the student will integrate insights from the course into his or her ministry emphasis, degree program, or anticipated area of vocational ministry focus. The student should also incorporate any insights gained from other courses in the curriculum, especially from the Ministry and Communications Division, as well reflections on his or her Christian walk and ministry experiences. Footnotes in this section should be minimal, but the student must properly cite any sources or quotations.

2. Module 10: Final Exam.

There will be one online, multiple choice, comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester. It will be closed book, closed note, and closed Bible, with no helps. The goal of this exam is to prompt a thorough review of the course materials to firm up essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Bibliology. Studying the major biblical texts, central issues, and key definitions will best prepare the student for the exam. It is recommended that students utilize *Exploring Christian Theology* as a study guide.

All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 hours)

1. Module 3: Critical Interaction Paper

Each student will write a short [5–6 pages] response paper [double-spaced, normal font and margins] to the book by Grenz/Olson and the

“prolegomena” lectures. In this paper, the student will do two things: define theological terms (theology, biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology) and interact with the content of the book. The paper should do more than summarize the material; instead, interact with the author’s thesis, discuss the argument, evaluate its helpfulness, and consider how the readings and lectures have impacted the way you think about God and the nature of theology.

2. Module 6: Postmodern/Culture Paper

Each student will write a short [5–6 pages] definition paper [double spaced, normal font and margins] interacting with postmodern culture. In this paper, the student will define postmodernism and culture and discuss the role culture plays in her/his theological method. The paper must discuss specific ways that theology/ministry is contextualized in a postmodern world. This statement should be a synthesis of the material covered in the videos in this module and your own study of the subject.

3. Module 10: Theological Method Paper

Write a response paper in Turabian style to the assigned reading of *Surprised by the Voice of God* by Deere. This paper, properly formatted and well argued, should be 12–15 pages in length. More instructions are given in Module 10.

VI. Course Policies

A. Summary of Time Estimates for This Course

The Student Handbook states, “Graduate-level work is expected to be more rigorous than at the undergraduate level. However, in order to help ensure that the amount of work required of students in their classes at the Seminary is appropriate, the faculty follows the guideline that for every hour students spend in class each week, they may expect to spend on average two to three hours outside of class on reading and other assignments. The amount of work required for classes will vary based on the material and content of each course” (Student Handbook 2016–2018, p. 7, “Academic Workload”).

The Academic Dean has advised professors to estimate 2 hours of homework for every “class hour” (50 minute period). For a three-hour class, that is a total of 84 hours of work outside of class (3 class hours per semester week x 14 class weeks x 2). For MABC students taking this course for two credit hours while participating in the 3-hour class period, the total hours of work outside of class should total approximately 42 hours (2 class hours per semester week x 14 class weeks x 2 = 56, minus 14 hours spent in the extra third hour of class participation).

Please note that any time estimates are based on reasonably established averages; therefore, they are approximations only. Actual time spent on assignments will necessarily vary based on content of reading, the nature of assignments, and student's own reading speeds and workload capacities. Students are encouraged to plan according to their own strengths. The inevitable variables between students and between assignments is a key factor in establishing time estimates that are on the lower end of the Student Handbook's "average two to three hours outside of class."

B. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

The overall course grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth or necessarily of the amount of information that a student feels that he or she has learned. Rather, it is a cumulative figure that bears a relationship to the student's successful completion of the course requirements. This figure is determined in the following manner:

For MABC students (course taken for 2 credits)

Video Lectures	10 points
Interactions	30 points
Reading	35 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	20 points
Final Exam	5 points

For non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Video Lectures	10 points
Interactions	15 points
Reading	20 points
Critical Interaction Paper	5 points
Postmodern/Culture Paper	5 points
Theological Method	20 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	20 points
Final Exam	5 points

C. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

	B+ 91-93	C+ 83-85	D+ 75-77	F 69-0
A 96-100	B 88-90	C 80-82	D 72-74	
A- 94-95	B- 86-87	C- 78-79	D- 70-71	

B. Late Assignments

Submit all learning activities on time. Except for rare emergency situations, expect a grade penalty for late work. Adjust the time zone setting in your Canvas profile to assure accurate time-date stamping of your work.

PLEASE NOTE: “Students needing additional time to complete course work must petition the Credits Committee for an extension. The petition form is available on CampusNet, and must be submitted before the last day of the semester or session. Financial and grade penalties may apply to students who do not petition for extensions before the end of the semester or session. Students must read the extenuating circumstances criteria (Section 1.33) prior to submitting the petition, and must specify how their circumstances fit the criteria” (Handbook, 1.20.4)

The professor cannot grant extensions beyond the last day of the semester (see Catalog for the date for this semester).

VII. Course Supplemental Information

DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

The Presence of the Professor

While the online learning environment is different than the live classroom environment, your professor is still involved and available. You can expect your professor to participate in the required interactions/discussions regularly and substantially. You can also expect your professor to have at least 3 virtual live “office hours.” Your professor will inform you of the times and means that these will occur. Most professors will likely use the Chat feature provided by our online platform at online.dts.edu.

VIII. Course Schedule:

Prolegomena		
Module	Title	Reading Assignment
1	Introduction	Online Syllabus
2	What is Theology?	Svigel/Holsteen
3	Faith Seeking Understanding	Grenz/Olson, pp. 9-148
4	Role of History in Theology	McGrath, Parts 1 and 2
5	Role of Culture in Theology	McGrath, Part 3
Bibliology		
6	Forms of Revelation	Deere, 1-15
7	A Biblical View of Inspiration	Deere, 16-22
8	Corollaries of Inspiration: Inerrancy	Geisler, <i>Inerrancy</i>
9	Corollaries of Inspiration: Authority, Sufficiency, & Canonicity	
10	Interpretation & Dispensationalism	Bingham, D. Jeffrey & Glenn R. Kreider, <i>Dispensationalism</i>
11	Course Wrap-up & Conclusion	