

THEOLOGICAL METHOD AND BIBLIOLOGY SYLLABUS

I. COURSE 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. This course is prerequisite to all other Systematic Theology (ST) courses. 2-3 hours¹

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Hours	Description	Assessments
All Students (2 and 3 credits) Core Objectives	The student will understand essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Theological Method and Bibliology.	Mid-term objective exam Final objective exam
	The student will articulate the orthodox, protestant, evangelical doctrines Bibliology, including revelation, inspiration, authority, sufficiency, inerrancy, and canonicity of the Bible.	Section 1 (Brief Statement) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper
	The student will explain his or her doctrinal convictions regarding doctrines Bibliology, including revelation, inspiration, authority, sufficiency, inerrancy, and canonicity of the Bible with biblical, theological, and historical support.	Section 2 (Exposition) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper, including notes
	The student will relate the doctrines of Bibliology to his or her life and ministry.	Section 3 (Practical Reflection) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper
3 Hour Student Additional Objectives	The student will defend a basic orthodox, protestant, evangelical theology of revelation that is biblically, theologically, and historically grounded.	Position Paper 1
	The student will argue in favor of the classic orthodox view of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture in light of a biblical, historical, and theological evidence.	Position Paper 2
	The student will construct a preliminary theological method that is biblically, theologically, historically, and practically defensible.	Position Paper 3

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required Textbooks

1. All Students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

Bingham, Jeffrey D, and Glenn R. Kreider, eds. *Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption: A Developing and Diverse Tradition*. Chicago: Moody, 2015. (268 pp.)

¹ NOTE: The 2-credit plan is only available to students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling (MABC) degree as of Fall, 2017 or to those MABC students under an earlier catalogue curriculum who officially opted into the new 2017–2018 catalogue curriculum. All other students (including MABC students taking ST and BE courses for 3 credits) are to complete all work in this course.

Blount, Douglas K, Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. “How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth.” Part One of Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds. *Exploring Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014. (120 pp.) **NOTE: For ST101, only the first half of this volume must be read.**

Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (142 pp.)

Kreider, Glenn R., and Michael J. Svigel, *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. (144 pp.)

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. (NOTE: ALL STUDENTS (2 or 3 credit hours) must read Part III, pp. 173–448) (275 pp.)

All 3-credit-hour students

Carson, D.A., and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Scripture and Truth*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. (446 pp.)

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. (NOTE: in addition to reading above, 3-hour students must also read Parts I–II, pp. 1–172 (172 pp.)

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

See Section VII, Course Lectures and Assignment Schedule, below for reading and assignment due dates.

All students (2 or 3 credits)	All 3-credit-hour students
<p>A. Reading Assignments: The student will read required texts according to the course schedule below (Section VII). Approximate percentage of reading and listening (rounded up to the nearest 10%) will be reported on Canvas prior to the last day of finals week.</p>	
<p>A.1: Foundational Reading</p> <p>Bingham, Jeffrey D, and Glenn R. Kreider, eds. <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption: A Developing and Diverse Tradition</i>. Chicago: Moody, 2015. (268 pp.)</p> <p>Blount, Douglas K, Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. “How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth.” Part One of Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds. <i>Exploring Christian Theology</i>, vol. 1, <i>Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God</i>. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014. (120 pp.) NOTE: For ST101, only the first half of this volume must be read.</p> <p>Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. <i>Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God</i>. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (142 pp.)</p> <p>Kreider, Glenn R., and Michael J. Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. (144 pp.)</p> <p>McGrath, Alister E. <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>. 6th ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell,</p>	<p>A.2: Additional Reading</p> <p><i>Students taking this course for 3 credits will complete reading assignments for “all students” in the left column plus the following additional reading assignments:</i></p> <p>Carson, D. A., and John D. Woodbridge, eds. <i>Scripture and Truth</i>. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. (446 pp.)</p> <p>McGrath, Alister E. <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>. 6th ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. (NOTE: in addition to reading above, 3-hour students must also read Parts I–II, pp. 1–172 (172 pp.)</p> <p><i>Students should plan on spending approximately 20 hours for reading in this list of required texts. (Estimates are based on average reading speed; actual time will vary.)</i></p>

<p>2016. (NOTE: ALL STUDENTS (2 or 3 credit hours) must read Part III, pp. 173–448) (275 pp.)</p> <p><i>Students should plan on spending approximately 20 hours for reading in this list of required texts. (Estimates are based on average reading speed; actual time will vary.)</i></p>	
<p>B. Written Assignments: All students will complete the foundational written assignment B1—Doctrinal Synthesis Paper as described below. Students taking this course for 3 credits will also complete the written assignments B2—Position Papers.</p>	
<p>B1. Doctrinal Synthesis Paper</p> <p>The student will develop a 5–7 single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper on Bibliology (including the doctrines of God’s manifold revelation as well as the inspiration, authority, sufficiency, inerrancy, and canonicity of the Bible). 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.)</p> <p>1) 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.)</p> <p>2) 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 Sanctification and Ecclesiology (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.</p>	<p><i>Students taking this course for 3 credits will complete written assignments for “all students” in the left column plus the following additional reflection, research, and writing assignments:</i></p> <p>B2. Position Papers</p> <p>Each student will write three (3) one-page, single-spaced “position papers” addressing key issues in Theological Method and Bibliology. These brief papers will present the student’s answers to specific assigned questions based on course lectures or readings, defending answers with biblical, theological, and historical arguments and documenting the answers appropriately with footnotes (see Important Instructions section below). Position Papers are due according to the course schedule (Section VI) below.</p> <p>Position Paper 1</p> <p>Define “revelation” and explain the various means God has revealed himself to humanity, defending your answer with biblical, theological, and historical sources.</p> <p>Position Paper 2</p> <p>Articulate and defend with biblical, theological, and historical arguments, the orthodox, protestant evangelical doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.</p> <p>Position Paper 3</p> <p>Describe your basic approach to theological method (“how to do theology”), defending your view with biblical, theological, and historical arguments and examples and addressing the sources of theology and methods of answering theological questions.</p> <p>Important Instructions on Position Paper Assignments</p> <p>Position Papers are not simply “journaling assignments” or “reflection papers.” They are to be well-thought-out, well-researched, well-written, and well-edited, as would be expected from graduated level work in theology. Please attend to the following important elements for quality position papers.</p>

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. Svigel, 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.

3) 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.

The Doctrinal Synthesis Paper will be turned in online through the Canvas course page according to the schedule (VII) below. All written assignments will be analyzed by Turnitin, software that compares your work with published and internet sources, including other student papers from DTS and other institutions. It will determine quite accurately what percentage of the work is yours and what percentage is unoriginal. High Turnitin scores that indicate over-reliance on written sources (with or without citation) will result in grade reduction. This work should be your own.

A sample Doctrinal Synthesis Paper (covering a completely different area of theology) is available online at the Canvas course page under "files."

Students should plan on spending approximately 15 hours for reading, research, reflection, writing, and editing the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper

1. *Introductions and Conclusions.* This is simply standard graduate level practice. Each intro can have 1-2 sentences that state the topic and your argument in a thesis statement. A good thesis statement is very direct and succinct. Try writing a short intro with a thesis that states, "This paper will address the topic of _____ and will argue that _____." Also state whether you agree with Dr. Svigel's claims and use at least two lines for a conclusion. Forgetting intros and conclusions will result in a loss of points. Your conclusion says nothing new, but summarizes and restates your thesis statement.

2. *Appropriate Use of Sources.* There is probably no good reason to actually *quote* sources in these position papers. That is, do not quote sentences or paragraphs from your sources or from the Bible. You only have one page to make your case, so the majority of the page should be your own words and thoughts, summaries, arguments, and conclusions. They should not be packed with the words of others. You are expected to summarize and synthesize the content of sources, then cite the source of the information as a footnote. Scripture verses should be noted in parenthesis, e.g. (Gal 3:15). However, it is best to state how this passage supports what you are arguing.

3. *Overuse of Sources.* All written assignments will be analyzed by plagiarism software that compares your work with published and internet sources, including other student papers from DTS and other institutions. It will determine quite accurately what percentage of the work is yours and what percentage is unoriginal. Quoting from sources will greatly increase the percentage of unoriginal work, which is unacceptable for position paper assignments (see #2 above). High scores will result in grade reductions. If a score is higher than 50% unoriginal material, the highest score that paper can get will be a 50, because only half of the paper expresses your own work.

4. *Make a Claim and Make a Case.* A good way to write these papers is to think of these papers as a dialogue/conversation with the person or material with which you are instructed to interact. You are interacting with the author or writing and making a case for or against it, or nuancing the position in some way. Tell us what they say in a sentence or two, then why you either support, reject, or would massage the positions. Then support your claim that with Scripture (do not write out passages—see #2 and #3 above!). Also support your view with theological citations (ecclesiology or other systematic theology books) and historical sources (primary or secondary sources). So, for example, if you don't believe that there is an "eschatological aspect of holiness because we are baptized into Christ's body, and since He is holy, we are," then address the verses Svigel uses to support that concept and add the ones you think gives more weight to your argument; include

	<p>historical precedence and the input of other theologians.</p> <p>5. <i>Include Historical and Theological Support.</i> This is a requirement. Lectures often present biblical (exegetical), theological, and historical arguments to support the positions. Usually in position papers the historical dimension is missing. The historical aspect demonstrates awareness of how views have changed or developed, what the earliest Christians held and why, and how this factors into our understanding and application of Scripture. The majority of these sources are readily available in English and most are online. You can use the same sources, or find even more if you want to. But rooting your argument in history and interacting with other theologians, especially different theological positions, allows you to expand your dialogue partners and is a key difference between graduate level work in theology and undergraduate work. Get used to this.</p> <p><i>Students should plan to spend 15 hours completing 3 Position Papers (about 5 hours of reflection, writing, and editing per paper).</i></p>
<p>C. Final Exam: There will be one online, multiple choice, comprehensive final exam for this course. This exam will be closed book, closed note, and closed Bible, with no helps. The goal is to prompt thorough reviews of course materials to firm up essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Theological Method and 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 <i>Exploring Christian Theology</i> as a study guide, especially focusing on the glossary of terms in the back of the book.</p> <p><i>Students should plan on spending approximately 5 hours total on preparation, study, and examination for the final exam.</i></p>	

V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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 follow 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 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. Non-Discrimination Policy

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, such as extra time.

C. Students with Disabilities or Medical Incidents

Dallas Theological Seminary works to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with psychological, medical, physical, and learning disabilities. A student desiring or needing accommodations on the basis of such disabilities or of medical incidents such as hospitalization or severe injury is to contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://students.dts.edu/studentlife/disability-services/>). If the student is aware of a condition that may impact his/her studies, the student should contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities prior to the beginning of the semester or at the onset of a crisis.

VI. COURSE POLICIES

A. Letter-Number Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

B. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

2-hour students		3-hour students	
Required Assignments	% of Grade	Required Assignments	% of Grade
Foundational Reading	50%	Foundational Reading	25%
N/A		Additional Reading	25%
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	30%	Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	20%
N/A		3 Position Papers	20%
Final Exam	20%	Final Exam	10%
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL:	100%
Total time estimated to complete all requirements	40 hrs	Total time estimated to complete all requirements	80 hrs

C. Class Participation

Class sessions are intended to be dynamic, with the interaction of class members. The student is encouraged to participate in class and group discussions for her or his own learning and enrichment. All comments or questions should be collegial, polite, and respectful.

D. Use of Electronics

To promote class participation and avoid distraction, the use of electronic equipment—including cell phones, audio or video players, recording devices (except for recording lectures for personal use only), or applications such as internet or text messaging—is prohibited during class. Students may use laptop computers only for taking notes during lectures. Exceptions to this prohibition must be approved by the professor in advance.

E. Terms of Assignments

1. *Work Related to Previous or Parallel Course Work.* Work that has been done (or is being done) for other classes may not be used to earn credit in this class. However, students are encouraged to wisely use ministry- or work-related preparation in concert with coursework, and if minor adjustments

to course requirements can be made to accommodate this arrangement, the professor will be open to reasonable proposals.

2. *Plagiarism*. Take note that *plagiarism* (copying from Internet, articles, or books) or any form of deception or cheating is strictly prohibited and can be grounds for expulsion from the Seminary. All sources should be fully documented and quotation marks used when appropriate. See www.plagiarism.org for current issues in *plagiarism*. Ignorance of guidelines is not a defense against charges of plagiarism.

3. *Late Assignments*. Assignments are due on Canvas as indicated in the schedule below. Reading due dates are strong recommendations, but there will be no grade penalty for late reading that is completed by the time the reading report is due at the end of the semester. Any assignments submitted on Canvas after the published due date will receive a grade reduction of 1 percentage point per calendar day late. For example, a paper due on 12/1 but submitted at 12:01 on 12/3 will be counted as two days late. Note: *No assignments can be accepted after noon on Friday, August 4 unless special approval is granted by the Credits Committee for very extraordinary circumstances.*

F. Absences

Penalties for non-attendance will be assigned according to the *Student Handbook*. For block class instruction, 1 hour and 15 minutes of class time is counted as one class meeting missed.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Note: The above course schedule is presented as an outline only. The professor reserves the right to make modifications to the schedule.

Date	Lecture/Discussion Topics	Assignments Due
		Shaded Items Indicate additional assignments for students taking the course for 3 credits
8/27	INTRODUCTION Introduction to the Course and Syllabus	
8/29	I: PROLEGOMENA OF THEOLOGY Defining, Defending, and Doing Theology	Due: Blount, Holsteen, Kreider, Svigel, "Revelation, Scripture, and Truth," in <i>Exploring Christian Theology</i>, vol. 1, Part 1
9/3	II: REVELATION AND BIBLIOLOGY REVELATION: The Word to the World, the Word in the World, and the World of the Word	
9/5	Continued	
9/10	Continued	
9/12	Continued	Due: Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method</i>
9/17	BIBLIOLOGY: Inspiration of Scripture	
9/19	Continued	
9/24	Authority and Canonicity	Reading Due: Grenz and Olson, <i>Who Needs Theology?</i>
9/26	Continued	Position Paper 1 Due
10/1	Continued	
10/3	Continued	
10/8	Inerrancy of Scripture	
10/10	Continued	
10/15	III: THEOLOGICAL METHOD Introduction to Theological Method	Reading Due: Carson and Woodbridge, <i>Scripture and Truth</i>
10/17	The Table: Theological Method Overview	
10/22	Exegesis	
10/24	Theology	Position Paper 2 Due
10/29	History	
10/31	Philosophy & Science	
11/5	Ministry, Culture, and Virtue	
11/7	Continued	
11/12	Practice of Theological Method	
11/14	Continued	
11/18-29	Reading Week and Thanksgiving Recess	No Classes
12/3	Theological Systems	Position Paper 3 Due
12/5	Dispensational Theology	
12/10	Continued	Reading Due: Bingham and Kreider, ed., <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption</i>
12/12	Course Conclusion	
12/16-19	Final Exam Week Assignments Due Online (Canvas) By Thursday, December 19 at MIDNIGHT	McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, pp. 1–172 McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, pp. 173–448 All Reading Reports Due on Canvas Final Exam due online at course Canvas site by MIDNIGHT Thursday of Finals Week