

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.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. The student will appreciate the function and importance of theological thought in Christian faith and life.
2. The student will learn the nature, method, and sources of theology as these relate to the practice of theological method.
3. The student will articulate an Evangelical theological method in light of competing methodological approaches to Christian theology.
4. The student will understand, express, and defend an evangelical bibliology, including the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture.
5. The student will be introduced to historical and contemporary trends in bibliology and theological studies, including the place of Dallas Seminary within the broader community of Evangelical and non-Evangelical theology.
6. The student will grow in respect for God's written word, be encouraged to proclaim His revealed word, and be renewed in worshipful devotion toward His Incarnate Word.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

For 2- and 3-hour students

Blount, Douglas K, Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Savigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." Part One of Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Savigel, eds. *Exploring Christian Theology*, vol. 1, *Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014. **NOTE: For ST101, only the first half of this volume must be read.** (123 pp.)

Krieder, Glenn R and Michael J. Savigel. *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2016. (520 pp.)

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "True Words." In *But Is It All True: The Bible and the Question of Truth*, ed. Alan G. Padgett and Patrick R. Keifert, 34–43. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. NOTE: Available in PDF on Canvas. (10 pp.)

For 3-hour students only

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

Nichols, Stephen J. and Eric T. Brandt. *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2009. (176 pp.)

Taylor, Daniel. *The Myth of Certainty*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. (158 pp.)

B. Suggested (suggested texts are not necessarily recommended texts endorsed by the professor)

Allert, Craig D. *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon*. Evangelical Ressourcement. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Blaising, Craig A., and Darrell L. Bock. *Progressive Dispensationalism*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor BridgePoint, 1993.

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

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1, *Prolegomena, Bibliology, and Theology Proper*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1993

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

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

DeWeese, Garrett J., and J. P. Moreland. *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult: A Beginner's Guide to Life's Big Questions*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

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

Evans, Craig A. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.

- Grenz, Stanley J., and John R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Inbody, Tyron. *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Jensen, Peter. *The Revelation of God*. Contours of Christian Theology. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Johnston, Robert K. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Christian Theology Reader*. 2d ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- Perkins, Mitali. *Ambassador Families: Equipping your Kids to Engage Popular Culture*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Dispensationalism*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.
- Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. 3d ed. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Stackhouse, John G., ed. *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Stone, Howard and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. 3d. ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2013.
- White, Heath. *Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Books, 2006.
- Williams, D. H. *Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Wilson, Jonathan R. *A Primer for Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Wright, N. T. *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

All students will be expected to read the required textbooks in their entirety. The professor recommends that the reading be completed as early as possible, but that all reading must be completed by the end of the semester. The professor recommends that the books be read in this order:

Krieder, Glenn R and Michael J. Savigel. *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Blount, Douglas K., Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Savigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Savigel, 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. (123 pp.)

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 5th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2011. (536 pp.)

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "True Words." In *But Is It All True: The Bible and the Question of Truth*, ed. Alan G. Padgett and Patrick R. Keifert, 34–43. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. (10 pp.)

Bingham, D. Jeffrey and Glenn R. Kreider, *Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption: A Developing and Diverse Tradition*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015. (272 pp.)

Nichols, Stephen J. and Eric T. Brandt. *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2009. (176 pp.)

Taylor, Daniel. *The Myth of Certainty*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. (158 pp.)

The percentage of reading completed must be reported via Canvas no later than **20 December**.

B. Written Assignment

For 2- and 3-hour students

Doctrinal Synthesis Paper: The student will develop a 5–7 page, single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper on Revelation and Bibliology. 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.)

- 1) **The Brief Statement** (150–200 words or one-fourth to one-third of a page). This first section will summarize Revelation and 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.)
- 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 Revelation and Bibliology using technical, traditional language and covering the major issues related to Revelation and 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. 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 Revelation and 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.

This assignment will be due on **13 December**.

For 3-hour students only

Response Paper: Each student will write a short [5-6 pages] response paper [typed, double-spaced, normal font and margins] to Kreider/Svigel. In this paper, the student should do more than summarize the material; instead, interact with the authors' thesis, discuss the argument, evaluate its helpfulness, and consider how the reading has impacted the way you think about God and the nature/task of theology.

This paper is due on **10 October**.

C. Exams

For 2- and 3-hour students

Because of the introductory nature of this course and the opportunity for students to express analytical, synthetic, and creative thinking in the written assignment, exams will be purely objective in nature. These exams are not meant to test you on your ability to regurgitate minutiae or to memorize trivial information, but to reinforce key terms and concepts necessary for successful study of theology.

1. **Definitions Exam.** An objective exam consisting of multiple choice, matching, or true-or-false questions will allow students to demonstrate knowledge of basic theological terms foundational for theological studies. This exam will be given in person at the beginning of class on **24 October**.
2. **Final Exam.** A final exam will consist of multiple-choice, matching, or true-or-false questions. It will be comprehensive in nature, covering material from the

entire semester, including material covered in the previous definitions exam. The exam will be taken online through the course Canvas site at any time from **14–20 December**.

V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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

	B+ 91-93	C+ 83-85	D+ 75-77	F 0-69
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. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

<i>For 3-hour students</i>		<i>For 2-hour students</i>	
Reading	40%	Reading	50%
Doctrinal Synthesis	25%	Doctrinal Synthesis	20%
Response Paper	15%	Response Paper	N/A
Mid-Term Exam	10%	Mid-Term Exam	15%
Final Exam	<u>10%</u>	Final Exam	<u>15%</u>
	100%		100%

C. Class Participation

Class sessions are intended to be a combination of both lecture and discussion. Theology is best done in community. Therefore, the student is encouraged to participate in class discussions for her or his own learning and enrichment, as well as for the communal goal of building one another up in love.

D. Use of Electronics

To promote class participation and to 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 internet browsing and 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.* All assignments, unless otherwise noted, are to be turned in at the beginning of the designated class. Without a valid excuse, late homework may lose five points per day of classes.

F. Absences

Penalties for non-attendance will be assigned according to the *Student Handbook*. N.B.: Each 75-minute class period missed counts as one absence.

VII. COURSE LECTURES

Date	Lecture and Discussion Topics
8/29	Introduction Defining the Discipline
9/5	Defining the Discipline cont.
9/12	Defining the Discipline cont. Faith Seeking Understanding
9/19	Theological Method
9/26	Theological Method cont.
10/3	Culture and Theology
10/10	A Brief History of the Church
10/17	Postmodernity
10/24	An Evangelical View of Revelation Inspiration of Scripture
10/31	Inerrancy of Scripture
11/7	Authority of Scripture
11/14	NO CLASS—READING WEEK
11/21	NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING
11/28	Sufficiency of Scripture
12/5	Canonicity of Scripture
12/12	Dispensationalism
12/19	FINALS WEEK

Note: The professor reserves the right to make modifications to the above schedule.