“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

1 Timothy 4:16

The Mission of the Seminary

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description

This first course in systematic theology introduces the student to the methodology of theology (Prolegomena) and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ. The biblical foundations and the relevant historical developments are considered in construction of a Christian understanding of each doctrine.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught. Annually, the President will designate a core value that will become the focus of pedagogy for the year. For 2014-2015 academic year that core value is Spiritual Vitality.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to understand and interpret Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church, the student, by the end of the course, should:

1. Be able to apply their knowledge and understanding of the following concepts to interpreting Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church:

   - The processes, methods, assumptions, and worldviews of historical, theological, and philosophical disciplines.
   - The key Christian doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ.
2. Value a Christian understanding of doctrine.
3. Respond positively to the idea of respecting the influence of various historical, theological, philosophical traditions, and worldviews.
4. Be able, with the help of resources, to practice prolegomena, the methodology of the study of theology.
5. Be ready to articulate and defend evangelical and Baptist positions on specific theological issues.

**Biblical Authority**

This course operates 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, the Bible holds ultimate authority in Christian doctrine and practice. *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000) provides the structure of this course’s content.

**A Note about Web-Based Learning**

Web-based courses are, by nature, a different kind of learning experience than courses taught in the traditional classroom. Because of this structure, this web-based course is more reading and writing intensive than traditional classroom courses. Rigorous study of the deep things of God can be a rewarding experience for anyone who participates in it, but it also calls for extra diligence and integrity in completing the work. This reality does not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in equipping you, the student, for effective, God-honoring ministry. It simply means utilizing a different strategy. Internet courses allow room for independent learners to thrive—to work at a responsible pace, to engage in student-led discussions, and to take ownership of the learning of course content. Note that your instructors are praying for your success.

**Required Texts**

*Allison, Gregg R. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.* Dr. Allison designed his textbook to be a companion to Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology.* This book contains valuable background information about the historical development of doctrines treated in this course. **It is recommended that you read your assignments from this text AFTER READING GRUDEM AND/OR ERICKSON.**

*Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.* Millard Erickson’s text is one of the best contemporary Baptist treatments of Christian doctrine available presently. This textbook is slightly more challenging than Grudem’s text because it includes more philosophical and apologetic content. Erickson writes from a modified Calvinistic perspective.

*Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.* Grudem’s text is a very readable introduction to Christian doctrine. It is also practical and helpful in a number of ways. It includes devotional content, a glossary of terms, and a great bibliography for research papers. Grudem writes from a more traditional five-point Calvinistic perspective.

**Recommended Texts**


**Course Requirements**

1. **Reading Quizzes (15%)**

   Students will take weekly quizzes based on the assigned readings from Erickson, Grudem, and Allison. The quizzes draw on key terms, the theological ideas of the authors, and significant figures and movements in the history of theology. Quizzes can consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and matching questions. Students are **strongly encouraged to read ALL of the assigned reading materials before beginning the quiz.** These are **NOT** open-book quizzes.

2. **Biweekly Discussion Board Questions (20%)**

   Students will be required to answer discussion board questions on a **weekly basis.** These discussion questions will be based on the assigned reading and additional resources located in Course Documents. Students are required to make at least three (3) substantive posts each week to each question. The **first post** will be your answer to the question posed. This post should be longer and more detailed than the remaining posts. The other two posts should be offered in response to other student posts. A substantive post is defined as a post that both exhibits a thoughtful response based upon the class material and that, in the case of response posts (see above), furthers the discussion thread by posing new questions or thoughts to which other students may respond. To earn credit, students MUST post their first comment no later than three days after the question opens in order to give classmates time to respond.

   Please note the following about the general revelation discussion board question (unit 3 question: this assignment is an embedded assignment that will be completed by all students for all sections of this course. The rubric for grading this assignment is attached to this syllabus. Please complete the assignment according to this rubric.
3. Critical Book Review (20%)

All students are required to read and review Adam Harwood’s *The Spiritual Condition of Infants*. The review should include (1) a bibliography entry, (2) a brief biographical data about the author(s) (e.g., his position, degrees, research interests, and other works), (3) an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book, (4) a concise summary of the book’s contents (NO MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE TOTAL REVIEW SHOULD BE SUMMARY), (5) a thorough critical analysis of the book, (6) a discussion of the relevance of the book to your particular ministry, and (7) a conclusion with a recommendation or dismissal. The reviews should be between **1500-2000 words** and should conform to *Turabian’s* style guide. Because book reviews are primarily about one source, use parenthetical citations for the primary text and footnotes only for external sources.

A few questions to consider when preparing for a critical book review: 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 papers (93-100)** clearly state the book’s thesis, successfully and succinctly outline its argument in its own terms, demonstrate advanced critical engagement with the argument and content of the book, make clear and well structured arguments, and exhibit a proficient grasp of grammar, spelling, and style.
- **B papers (85-92)** clearly state the book’s thesis, show an attempt to understand the book on its own terms and critically reflect on the issues at hand, make arguments, and show sufficiency in grammar, spelling, and style.
- **C papers (77-84)** state the book’s thesis, present the content of the book, raise preliminary critical questions for further evaluation, limit evaluation to approval or disapproval of the author’s arguments, and make repeated mistakes in grammar, spelling, and style.
- **D (70-76) and F (0-69) papers** lack evidence of grasping the book’s thesis and content, limit evaluation to preformed judgments without serious consideration of the book’s ideas, contain major grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors, and demonstrate little or no attempt to proofread.

4. Trinity Ministry Project (15%)

Theology done well should result in faithful Christian ministry. After reading the course materials on the doctrine of the Trinity, students will be required to do a ministry project related to the doctrine of the Trinity. Students may either write (1) a full-length sermon or Bible study manuscript on the doctrine of the Trinity and **present it in a church or Bible study group** or (2) share the gospel with a member of a cult that denies the doctrine of the Trinity (e.g., Jehovah’s Witnesses or Mormons) and write a detailed report of the witnessing encounter. Whatever option the student chooses, he or she must write a **brief personal**
reflection on the value of doctrinal study for completing these tasks. These reports should be between 3-5 double spaced pages.

5. Theological Research Paper (25%)

All students are required to write a brief research paper (12-15 double-spaced pages in length) on a particular doctrinal topic/question. The paper should conform to Turabian’s style guide. Students may choose from the following topics or seek approval from the professor on another topic.

PLEASE READ THE DOCUMENTS IN THE “PAPER WRITING RESOURCES” SECTION BEFORE WRITING—particularly John Frame’s paper “How to Write a Theological Research Paper.”

A more focused paper is usually a better product than an overly broad paper (e.g., like trying to cover all the doctrine of Christ in ten pages!). Students may select a doctrinal topic and seek to investigate how a particular theologian in history addressed that issue, or one may start with a particular theologian and investigate his or her unique theological perspectives (e.g., Calvin’s understanding of imputation or Karl Barth’s doctrine of inspiration). Students may also feel free to pick one of the doctrinal topics below and offer a biblical, philosophical, and historical analysis of the doctrine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Paper Topics (or Mix and Match)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Inspiration of Scripture</td>
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<td>The Authority of Scripture</td>
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<td>Biblical Inerrancy</td>
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<td>General Revelation and World Religions</td>
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<td>Arguments for God’s Existence</td>
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<td>God’s Incommunicable Attributes</td>
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<td>God’s Communicable Attributes</td>
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<td>The Trinity</td>
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<td>Creation</td>
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<td>Providence</td>
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<td>God and Evil</td>
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<td>The Image of God</td>
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<td>The Imputation of Adam’s Sin</td>
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<td>Total Depravity</td>
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<td>The Age of Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Historical Jesus</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Humanity of Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Peccability/Impeccability of Christ</td>
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<td>The Hypostatic Union</td>
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6. Reading Report (5%)

Students will complete the semester by giving a reading report of the total percentage of reading completed.
Prolegomena: What is Theology and What Should it Accomplish?

Revelation and Bibliology: What is the Authoritative Source of Theology?

Theology Proper: Who or What is the Primary Focus of Theology?

Anthropology: How Does this Subject Relate to the Human Condition?

Christology: Where Do God and Humanity Intersect and Why Does It Matter?

Unit 2

Unit 3

Unit 6

Unit 11

Unit 13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Readings / Quiz Materials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduce yourself, Watch Grudem videos</td>
<td>Read Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prolegomena and Theological Method</td>
<td>Prolegomena Quiz</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 1, 3-5, Grudem, ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Revelation and Natural Theology</td>
<td>Discussion Board, General Revelation Quiz</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 6, Allison, ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 1</td>
<td>Scripture, Pt. 1 Quiz</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 7-8, 10, Grudem, chs. 2, 4, Allison, chs. 3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Special Revelation and Bibliology, pt. 2</td>
<td>Discussion Board, Scripture, Pt. 2 Quiz</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 9, Grudem, chs. 5-8, Allison, ch. 5, 7, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>God’s Attributes, pt. 1</td>
<td>God, Pt. 1 Quiz, Book Review Due (6/21)</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 11-13, Grudem, ch. 11, Allison, ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>God’s Attributes, pt. 2</td>
<td>God, Pt. 2 Quiz, Discussion Board</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 12, Grudem, chs. 12-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Trinity</td>
<td>Trinity Quiz, Paper Topics Due (6/28)</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 14, Grudem, ch. 14, Allison, ch. 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Creation Quiz, Discussion Board</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 16, Grudem, ch. 15, Allison, ch. 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7/2 Independence from the British (forever) and Theology (for a few days)!

| 10   | Providence | Providence Quiz, Trinity Ministry Project Due (7/12) | Erickson, chs. 17-18, Grudem, ch. 16, Allison, ch. 13 |
| 11   | Theological Anthropology | Anthropology Quiz, Discussion Board | Erickson, chs. 21-23, Grudem, chs. 21-23, Allison, ch. 15 |
| 12   | Hamartiology | Sin Quiz | Erickson, chs. 25-29, Grudem, ch. 24, Allison, ch. 16 |
| 13   | Christology, pt. 1 | Christology, Pt. 1 Quiz, Discussion Board, Watch videos | Erickson, chs. 30, 32, Grudem, ch. 26A |
| 14   | Christology, pt. 2 | Research Paper Due (7/26), Reading Report Due (7/26) | Erickson, chs. 31, 33, Grudem, ch. 26B-C, Allison, ch. 17 |
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Collections


SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, EMBEDDED ASSIGNMENT, AND RUBRIC

Student Learning Outcomes

The student, by the end of the course, should:

i. Be able to understand theological method and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ biblically, historically, and systematically.

ii. Be able to apply theology by integrating these doctrines into a coherent, comprehensive, and consistent Christian worldview.

iii. Be able to communicate these doctrines in the particular ministry calling and context of the learner.

Embedded Assignment

1. Using the materials from your assigned systematic theology textbook and other theological resources (like commentaries, other theological textbooks or monographs), briefly explain your understanding of the doctrine of general revelation, highlighting the differences between general and special revelation.

2. What impact does the doctrine of general revelation have on your understanding of missions and evangelism?

3. Describe how the doctrine of general revelation can affect your communication of the Gospel.

4. This assignment should be 800-1200 words in length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>INADEQUATE (0 PTS)</th>
<th>BASIC (1 PT)</th>
<th>COMPETENT (2 PTS)</th>
<th>GOOD (3 PTS)</th>
<th>EXCELLENT (4 PTS)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td>Able to understand the doctrinal topic.</td>
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<td>APPLICATION</td>
<td>Able to apply knowledge by relating it to the broader Christian worldview.</td>
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<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Able to communicate the doctrine to a ministry audience.</td>
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