

THEO5300 Systematic Theology I
NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DIVISION OF THEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STUDIES
FALL 2019 • W 8:00-10:50 A.M.



ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

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*"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

Mission Statement

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.

Core Value Focus

The seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. The core value focus for this academic year is **spiritual vitality**.

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competencies addressed in this course are: Biblical Exposition and Christian Theological Heritage

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. **Be able to understand** theological method and the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, and the person of Christ biblically, historically, and systematically.
2. **Be able to apply** theology by integrating these doctrines into a coherent, comprehensive, and consistent Christian worldview.
3. **Be able to communicate** these doctrines in the particular ministry calling and context of the learner.

Statement on 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 and liberal theologians. Students are expected to become familiar with and demonstrate advanced, biblically guided critical engagement with the works of these thinkers.

The instructor of this course operates under the assumption that the Bible is the inspired, totally true and trustworthy Word of God which is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Baptist Faith and Message (2000) provides the confessional framework from which the instructor leads the course.

Required Textbooks

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Putman, Rhyne. *In Defense of Doctrine: Evangelicalism, Theology, and Scripture*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Recommended Resources

Akin, Daniel, ed. *A Theology for the Church*. 2d ed. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2014. This “systematic” theology is a collection of essays on different doctrinal topics written by some of the leading voices in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Bird, Michael F. *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. Bird is an Anglican and Reformed NT scholar from Australia who has written a systematic theology that integrates the insights of contemporary biblical theology into a systematic textbook.

Frame, John. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013. Frame is a Presbyterian and Reformed theologian in the Westminster Tradition.

Garrett, James L. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, vol. 1, 4th ed. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2011. Dr. Garrett is a SBC theologian who offers an excellent historical examination of each of the doctrines discussed. Dr. Garrett is the go-to expert on Baptist doctrine.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1994. J. Kenneth Grider was a Nazarene systematic theologian in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. Grudem, a Calvinistic Baptist with charismatic undertones, has written one of the most popular and accessible theology texts available today.

Horton, Michael F. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. Horton is a well-known Reformed theologian and apologist who engages many contemporary issues and important philosophical trends in his work.

Lewis, Gordon and Bruce Demarest. *Integrative Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. This evangelical theology—available in one-volume and three-volume editions—integrates biblical exegesis, historical research, apologetics, and pastoral application in its discussion of every doctrine.

Oden, Thomas C. *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology*. New York: HarperOne, 2011. Oden is a Methodist/Wesleyan evangelical theologian who utilizes the resources of patristic Christianity to

make a case for Christian doctrines. This book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the thought of early church fathers.

Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. 2d ed. Chicago: Moody, 1999. This volume is a systematic theology written with lay persons in mind. Ryrie writes from a classic Dispensationalist perspective.

Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. Williams was a leading intellectual figure in the neo-charismatic movement called "renewal theology." This is an excellent exposition of contemporary charismatic and Pentecostal theology.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies: lectures from the professor, reading, and directed research questions.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Students are expected to participate in classroom discussion and to read all required materials prior to class attendance. The professor reserves the right to require of students a "pop" quiz to keep them accountable for required readings. *Students will be required to hand in a reading report at the end of the semester.*

2. Theological Reflections (50%)

Every student will give **ten** 2-3 page (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt.) answers to the following questions based on reading assignments in four sets of three questions. In each of these assignments, students should demonstrate (1) reading comprehension of the assigned materials, (2) critical reflection on the ideas and content in the reading, and (3) the student's ability to apply the theological content to vocational ministry. **These questions are due in sets of three. Put all answers to a Question Set in a SINGLE document on Blackboard.**

Question Set #1 (due 9/14) – Theological Method

1. **Read Putman 1-39.** Do we need some sort of systematic theological formulation of doctrine in addition to the interpretation of the Bible? Why or why not?
2. **Read Erickson, ch. 10; Putman 209-55.** Describe how the use of authorities like the Bible shape the formation of doctrine.

Question Set #2 (due 10/5) – Revelation and Bible

3. **Read Erickson, ch. 6, any critical commentary on Romans 1:18-32.** 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. What impact does the doctrine of general revelation have on your understanding of missions and evangelism? Describe how the doctrine of general revelation can affect your communication of the Gospel. (SEE EMBEDDED ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS DOWN BELOW.)

4. **Read Erickson, ch. 9; Putman 257-324.** Explain and defend the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. What practical implications does a doctrine of biblical inerrancy have for the way we address contemporary theological issues?
5. **Read Putman 325-73.** Suppose a skeptic were to tell you that many of the doctrines you hold dear—such as the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of inerrancy—are not explicitly stated in the Bible and therefore not valid theological positions by our own standards. What would you say?

Question Set #3 (due 11/9) – Doctrines of God, Creation

6. **Read Erickson, ch. 11.** Does God change his mind? How do you explain Scriptures that seem to indicate that he does?
7. **Read Erickson, ch. 14.** Explain the doctrine of the Trinity as you would to a student in a youth group. Be careful to avoid bad analogies that implicitly reflect trinitarian heresies.
8. **Read Erickson, ch. 17.** How do you make sense of the “days of creation” in Genesis 1. Explain your position.

Question Set #4 (due 11/23) – Anthropology, Christology

9. **Read Erickson, ch. 28.** How do you understand the “age of accountability” doctrine?
10. **Read Erickson, ch. 32.** The Scriptures repeatedly affirm the sinlessness of Jesus, but the question of whether Jesus could have sinned has significant implications for understanding the relationship between his human nature and his divine nature. Could Jesus have sinned? Is he impeccable? Why or why not?

Question Set #5 (OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT for up to one letter grade of EXTRA CREDIT; Due 12/11)

11. **Read Erickson, ch. 8.** Briefly survey the various theories on the authority (inspiration) of the Bible. What is the primary emphasis that each of these theories makes? Identify strengths and weaknesses of each position. Which of the theories do you advocate and why?
12. **Read Erickson, ch. 34.** One of the more debated issues regarding the person of Christ is the doctrine of the virgin birth. What does the Bible teach on this matter? How important is this doctrine to Christian theology?
13. **Read Erickson ch. 35 and carefully study Philippians 2:5-11.** What does this passage teach us about the person of Christ? His deity? His humanity? What was Paul’s intention in giving us this insight about Jesus of Nazareth? Did Jesus give up his divinity in the incarnation? Defend your answer.
14. **Read Erickson, ch. 31.** Give a brief overview of the four major Christological heresies regarding the person of Jesus Christ. What was each position trying to assert about Christ? What are the theological shortcomings of each position?
15. What does the expression “communication of attributes” mean? How does this expression inform our understanding of the person of Christ?
16. **Read Erickson, ch. 22.** Survey the various positions on the constituent elements of human nature. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each position. Which position do you support, and why? What implications does this issue have for a philosophy of ministry?
17. How would you describe/define sin to a person who knows nothing about the Bible? Your answer should minimize as much as possible “religious” or theologically technical words.
18. “Jesus never said in so many words, ‘I am God.’” **Read the following passages regarding who Jesus understood himself to be: Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 6:1-5; John 8:48-59; John 10:24-39.** In light of these texts, what conclusions could one draw regarding Jesus’ self-perception?

The schedule below has the reading assignments and questions asked for each theological reflection.

3. Erickson Chapter Summaries (15%)

Students must read ALL chapters required in the schedule below and submit a **one-paragraph summary** of each chapter read the day it is due in Blackboard.

4. Doctrinal Sermon (25%)

Every student will write a 4-6-page single-spaced sermon manuscript for a doctrinal sermon. Students can write on any doctrine addressed in this section of Systematic Theology (the doctrines of revelation, God, creation, providence, humanity, sin, and Christ). Each sermon should contain an introduction, a main idea, explanations of the biblical text, illustrations, applications, and a conclusion/invitation. *Students who preach or teach their lesson in a church context by the end of the semester and who provide a one-page summary of their feedback can get 25 extra-credit points on the grade of this assignment.*

The sermon may be a straightforward exposition of a doctrine in a particular text (e.g., the providence of God in Rom. 9) or a topical, yet text-driven sermon that traces a doctrine through a book or multiple books of the Bible.

Evaluation of Grades

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| 2. Theological Reflection Question Sets (5% each question) | 50% |
| 3. Chapter Summaries | 15% |
| 4. Doctrinal Sermon | 25% |
| Total | 100% |

All assignments must be submitted to pass the course. Students who fail to complete an assignment will not receive a passing grade.

Embedded Assignment

All students enrolled in every section of Systematic Theology I have a common Embedded Assignment utilized in evaluating our projected Student Learning Outcomes. The assignment, listed below, is one question one of the Theological Reflection Question sets listed above. The

Embedded Assignment (from Question Set #2 of the Theological Reflections)

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.

The rubric below shows how the question will be evaluated in terms of addressing Student Learning Outcomes. Students may use this rubric as a guide for how they answer other questions in the Theological Reflections Question Sets.

| DOMAIN | LEVEL | INADEQUATE (0 PTS) | BASIC (1 PT) | COMPETENT (2 PTS) | GOOD (3 PTS) | EXCELLENT (4PTS) |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| UNDERSTANDING | Able to understand the doctrinal topic. | | | | | |
| APPLICATION | Able to apply knowledge by relating it to the broader Christian worldview. | | | | | |
| COMMUNICATION | Able to communicate the doctrine to a ministry audience. | | | | | |

Extra Credit Opportunities

1. Hearers and Doers Reflection (worth a letter grade)

Read *Hearers and Doers* by Kevin Vanhoozer. Write a two-page double-spaced summary of the book's contents, offer a one-to-two-page critique, and then write two pages about their own plan for integrating doctrine into their own discipleship ministry (5-6 double-spaced pages total)

2. Additional Theological Reflection Questions

Students may earn up to seven points on their final grade by submitting the optional Theological Reflection Question Set #5. **Due May 16. Students who receive poor grades on any of the reflection question sets are strongly encouraged to take this assignment up.**

3. ETS Report

Students attending the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego, CA on November 20-22, 2019 write a 1000-word report on papers attended (at least three). Students can earn up to seven points on their final grade with submission. For registration information, please visit <http://www.etsjets.org>.

4. Writing Center Evaluation

Students who submit one (1) reflection paper (the complete assignment) to the **Writing Center a week before their due date** will receive a ten-point bonus on their paper grade. Students must show proof of this by attaching the email from the Writing Center.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

[Other items may be included, such as: expectations for reading assignments, policy on late assignments, academic honesty, classroom demeanor, extra credit]

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Week 1

Prolegomena: What is Theology and What Should it Accomplish?

Week 3

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

Week 5

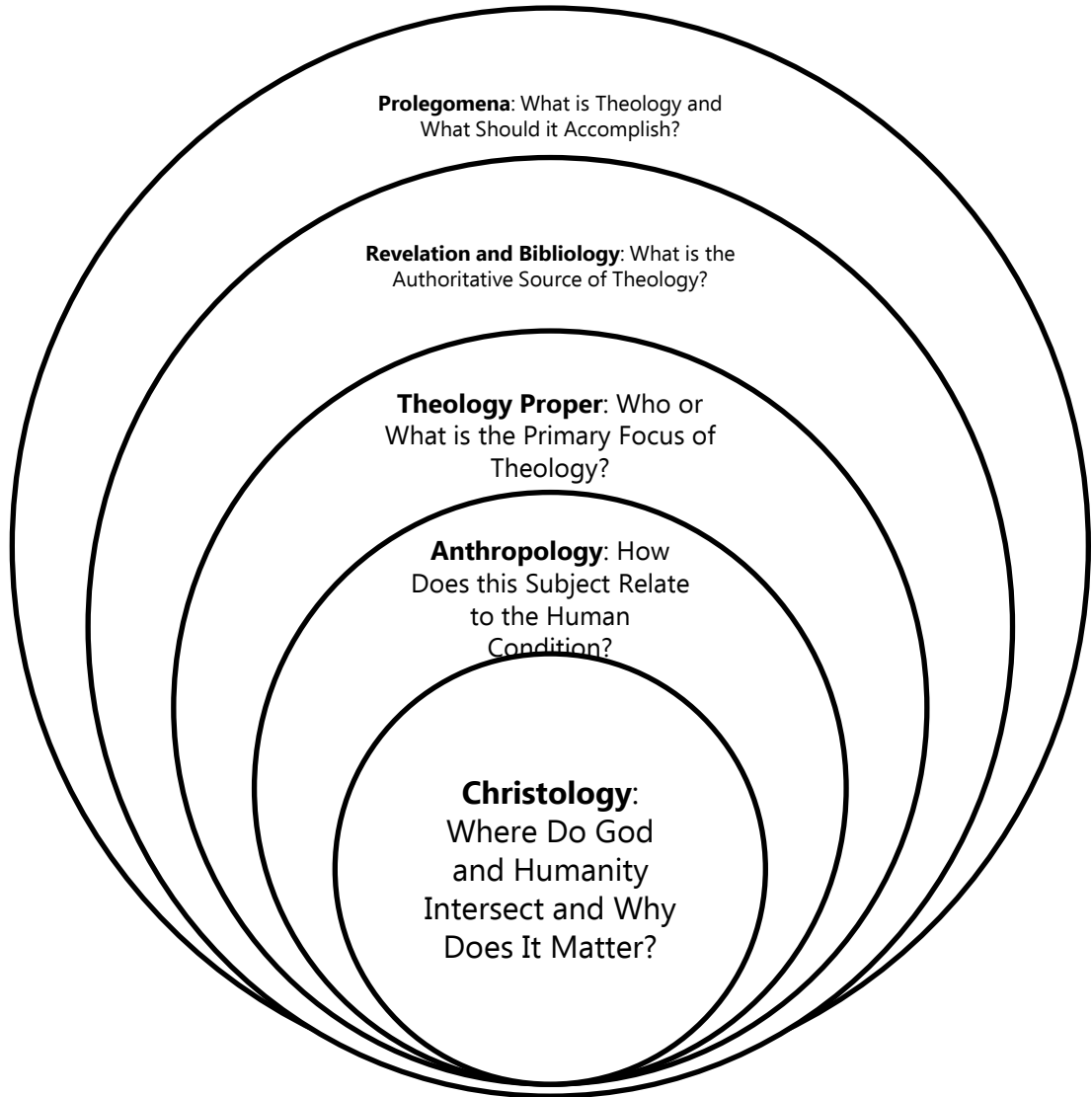
Theology Proper: Who or What is the Primary Focus of Theology?

Week 10

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

Week 12

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



Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Assignments |
|-------------|--|--|
| 8/21 | Introduction to the Course Prolegomena and Theological Method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ the syllabus |
| 8/28 | Prolegomena and Theological Method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 1, 3-4 |
| 9/4 | The Doctrine of Revelation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 6-7 |
| 9/11 | The Doctrine of Scripture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 8-10 • Theological Reflection Question Set #1 (METHOD) Due 9/14 at 11:59 p.m. |
| 9/18 | Theology Proper – Existence and Attributes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 11-13 |
| 9/25 | Theology Proper – The Trinity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summary: Erickson, ch. 14 |
| 10/2 | Theology Proper – Creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summary: Erickson, chs. 16, 21 • Theological Reflection Question Set #2 (REVELATION) Due 10/5 at 11:59 p.m. |
| 10/9 | Theology Proper – Providence and Evil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 15, 17-18 |
| 10/14-10/18 | FALL BREAK <i>"...give him rest from days of trouble..."</i> (Psalm 94:13) | |
| 11/6 | Theological Anthropology – Image of God, Human Constitution, and Human Sexuality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 22-23 • Theological Reflection Question Set #3 Due 11/9 at 11:59 p.m. (GOD, CREATION) |
| 11/13 | Theological Anthropology – Sin and Its Effects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter summaries: Erickson, chs. 25-28 |
| 11/20 | Evangelical Theological Society Meeting (Library Day) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theological Reflection Question Set #4 Due 11/23 at 11:59 p.m. (ANTHROPOLOGY, CHRISTOLOGY) |
| 11/27 | THANKSGIVING WEEK | |
| 12/4 | Theological Anthropology – Image of God | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erickson, chs. 30-31 |
| 12/11 | Theological Anthropology – The Human Constitution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erickson, chs. 32-34 • Doctrinal Sermon due |

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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