



Systematic Theology I THEO5300

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Studies Division
Internet • Fall 2021

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

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

Morgan, Christopher. *Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith*. Nashville: B&H, 2020.

Putman, Rhyne. *The Method of Christian Theology: A Basic Introduction*. Nashville: B&H, 2021.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies: video lectures from Dr. Putman, reading, online testing, and writing a doctrinal sermon.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Reading Report (15%)

Students are expected to view all lectures online and read all required materials for the course. Blackboard keeps a record of how much of each video is viewed by each student. Students will **submit a reading report at the end of the semester**.

2. Exams (60%)—Four Tests (15% each)

Students will take four open-book, open-note exams in this course, each of which count for 15% of the student's total grade. These examinations are timed and feature a random pool of questions. No collaboration or group work in these exams is allowed. ANYTHING from the reading, notes, or lectures is fair game for these exams, so students **must do reading and viewing of lectures in advance to finish the exams in a timely manner**.

In each of these exams, students will demonstrate their **UNDERSTANDING** of theological content (student learning outcome #1) by a number of multiple choice, true-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Students will also demonstrate their ability to **APPLY** the content of the course in **essay answers that will be written prior to beginning the objective portion of the exam** (student learning outcome #2). These answers will also demonstrate their ability to **COMMUNICATE** in a way that is appropriate to their ministry context (student learning outcome #3). For the best possible answers to these essay questions, students are strongly recommended to look at the **recommended texts** listed below in the bibliography.

3. Doctrinal Sermon (25%) -- Unit 15

Every student will write a 6–8-page double-spaced sermon manuscript for a doctrinal sermon. Students can write on any doctrine addressed in this section of Systematic Theology I (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.

Instructions on how to write a doctrinal sermon can be found in chapter 14 of Putman, *The Method of Christian Theology*.

The sermon will be graded this way:

DOMAIN	LEVEL	INADEQUATE (0–69 F)	BASIC (70–77 D)	COMPETENT (77–85 C)	GOOD (86–92 B)	EXCELLENT (93–100 A)
Understanding	The student shows an ability to understand the content of the doctrine taught.	The student fails in his or her basic understanding of the biblical doctrine.	The student has an overly simplistic understanding of the doctrine that fails to account for the major biblical data and historical resources.	The student has an adequate understanding of the theological content but does not demonstrate much critical thought in this area.	The student has a solid understanding of the issues involved in the content and shows good interaction with the resources.	The student has a superior understanding of the content and shows excellent interaction with the resources.
Application	The student demonstrates an awareness of the practical implications of the doctrine.	The student has given no serious thought to the application of the doctrine.	The student has given little attention to the application of the doctrine.	The student shows some effort at applying the doctrine but does miss key applications.	The student does well in applying the content of the doctrine to the Christian life.	The student has great insight as to how the doctrine applies to the Christian life.
Communication	The student is able to communicate the doctrine to a ministry audience.	The student fails in basic grammar and communication. This sermon has no organization or structure.	The student makes numerous grammatical mistakes and lacks good organization.	The student has some grammatical errors and shows an effort to organize the content in a way that reaches his or her audience.	The student has a good presentation of content with little mistakes that will communicate well with his audience.	The student has an excellent presentation of content that communicate extremely well with his audience.

Evaluation of Grades

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

1. Attendance and Reading Report	15%
2. Exams (15% each exam)	60%
3. 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, will be in **the first online exam**. This assignment is open book and open notes.

Embedded Assignment (from Exam One)

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. Writing Center Evaluation

Students who submit their doctrinal sermon (the complete assignment) to the **Writing Center a week before its 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.

2. Extra Credit Book Review

Students in need of extra credit can contact the professor about writing a 5–6 page book review of a book that focuses on one of the doctrinal topics covered in this course. **The text must be pre-approved**

by the professor, and students can earn up to 5% extra credit on their overall average for this assignment.

The reviews should be between **2000-4000 words** and should conform to **Turabian** or **SBL** style guides. 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 while reading these monographs: 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.

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.

Writing Style Guide

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the seminary website at:

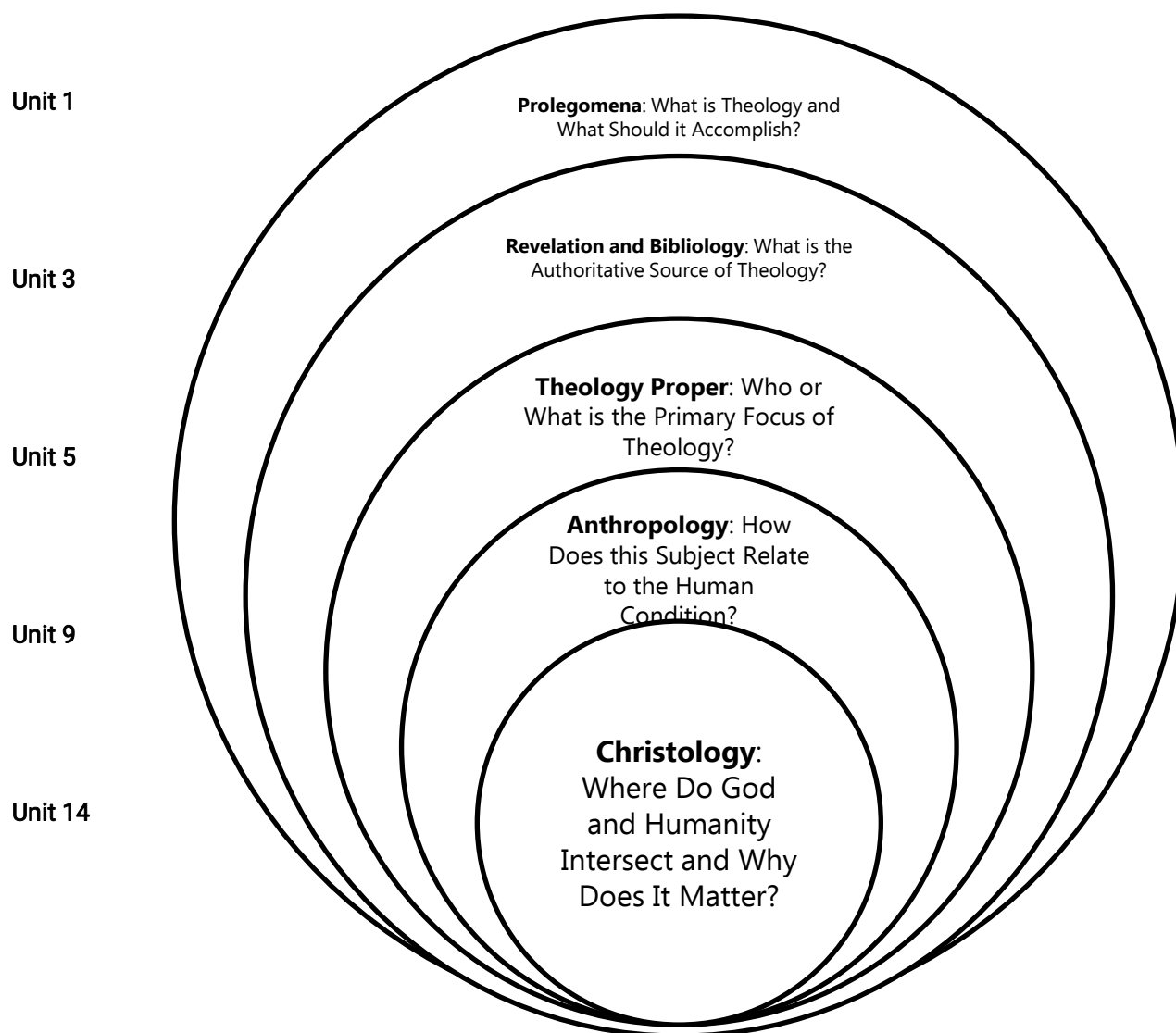
<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

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.



Course Schedule

Units Dates	Topic	Assignments
#1 8/16–8/22	Introduction to the Course Prolegomena and Theological Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read syllabus • Watch video lectures (“What is Systematic Theology?”) • Read Putman, <i>Method</i>, chs. 1–4 <p>Meet the Professor / Syllabus Q&A on Blue Jeans (optional) meeting</p>
#2 8/23–8/29	Prolegomena and Theological Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“The Procedure of Christian Theology”) • Read Putman, <i>Method</i>, chs. 5–6, 11–12
#3 8/30–9/5	The Doctrine of Revelation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“The Nature of Revelation,” “General Revelation”) • Read Putman, <i>Method</i>, pp. 101–163 • Read Morgan, pp. 35–54 •
#4 9/6–9/12	The Doctrine of Scripture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“The Doctrine of Scripture”) • Read Putman, <i>Method</i>, pp. 163–220 • Read Morgan, pp. 55–85 • Exam One—Method and Revelation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essay Question #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. 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. (This assignment should be 2–3 double-spaced pages in length. See the section entitled “embedded assignment” above.) ○ Essay Question #2a (choose 2a or 2b)—Explain and defend the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. What practical

Units Dates	Topic	Assignments
		<p>implications does a doctrine of biblical inerrancy have for the way we address contemporary theological issues? (2-page double-spaced answer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essay question #2b (choose 2a or 2b): Explain what a worldview is and its constituent elements as described in your textbook (Putman). Why is a worldview important for Christian disciple-making? ○
#5 9/13–9/19	Theology Proper – The Trinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“The Trinity, Pt. 1”; “The Trinity, Pt. 2”; “The Trinity, Pt. 3”) • Read Morgan, 87–114
#6 9/20–9/26	Theology Proper – Existence and Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“The Incommunicable Attributes of God,” “The Communicable Attributes of God”) • Read Morgan, pp. 115–160
#7 9/27–10/3	Theology Proper -- Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“Creation”) • Read Morgan, pp. 160–13
10/4–10/10	FALL BREAK	
#8 10/11–10/17	Theology Proper – Providence and Evil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“Providence,” “The Problem of Evil”) • Exam Two—God, Creation, and Providence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exam Question #1: 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 (2-page double-spaced answer). ○ Exam Question #2: How do you make sense of the “days of creation” in Genesis 1. Defend your position using biblical, historical, and theological data. (2-page double-spaced answer)
#9 10/18–10/26	Introduction to Theological Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“The Image of God”) • Read Putman, <i>Method</i>, pp. 223–284 • Read Putman,
#10 10/25–10/31	Theological Anthropology – The Human Constitution and Human Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“The Human Constitution,” “Biblical Sexuality”) • Read Morgan, pp. 169–194
#11 11/1–11/7	Hamartiology – The Doctrine of Sin, pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“The Doctrine of Sin”) • Read Morgan, pp. 195–221 •

Units Dates	Topic	Assignments
#12 11/8–11/14	Hamartiology – The Doctrine of Sin, pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“Does the Bible Teach an ‘Age of Accountability’ Doctrine? Competing Views”) • Exam Three—Theological Anthropology and Hamartiology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exam Question #1: A friend who claims to be Christian is living with a particular sexual sin (you can identify which). Write a two-page letter to him which underscores a biblical sexual ethic. ○ Exam Question #2: Do you affirm an “age of accountability” doctrine? Defend your answer (2-page double-spaced answer).
#13 & #14 11/15–11/21	Christology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lecture (“Jesus Christ in the Biblical Story”) • Watch video lecture (“Jesus Christ in Christian Truth”) • Read Morgan, 253–64 • Doctrinal Sermon Due
11/22–11/28	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
#15 11/29–12/5	Christology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video lectures (“Impeccability,” “The Virgin Birth,” “The Sinlessness of Christ”) • Read Morgan, 223–53 • Exam Four—Christology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exam Question: 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?

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. Erickson represents a moderate Calvinistic framework. Erickson is philosophically and apologetically robust as a theologian and provides great historical content along the way. His text is the basis of many of the lectures in this course.

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.

Putman, Rhyne. *When Doctrine Divides the People of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. Putman is concerned with how Christians can better disagree about theological topics. This book covers the topics of why we disagree about doctrine and what we should do with our disagreements.

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.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

- Angeles, Peter A. *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974-78, 1985.
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