



THCH 8305 DENOMINATIONS IN THE US

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
November 2-4, 2026

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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 seminar will explore the history, theology, and practices of the various denominational families in the United States. Attention will be given to theological and ecclesiological differences within each family, as well as current denominational trends.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to understand and interpret Christian theological heritage for the church, students, by the end of this seminare course, should be able to:

1. Describe the basic distinctive characteristics of the major Christian denominations in America.
2. Identify the leading individuals with the denomination with which they are/were affiliated.
3. Explain the polity and organizational structure of each denominational family.
4. Recognize the major differences between groups within the same denominational family.
5. Articulate and defend the varying denominations' positions on specific theological issues.

Textbooks

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. Second Edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.
ISBN: 978-0813535531

Hannah, John D. *Invitation to Church History: American*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2019. ISBN: 978-0825443855

Olson, Roger E., Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill and Craig D. Atwood. *Handbook of Denomination in the United States*. 14th edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press: 2018. ISBN: 978-1501822513

Recommended texts:

House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992. ISBN: 978-0310416616

Oden, Thomas C. *Turning Around the Mainline: How Renewal Movements are Changing the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. ISBN: 978-0801065767

Course Requirements

Students enrolled in the two-hour course will complete assignments A through D. Students enrolled in the three-hour course will also complete assignment E, research paper.

A. Text Reviews: Each student will write separate reviews for each of the three required texts. The reviews will be written as though for an academic magazine or journal. It should:

- 1) include bibliographical information (see above),
- 2) identify each book's main thesis or purpose,
- 3) give a brief summary of the contents,
- 4) include an evaluation of the work's strengths and weaknesses.

All quotations and direct references to sections in the book should be indicated by page numbers within parentheses. Citations or paraphrases from other sources should be noted and documented using either footnotes or endnotes. Reviews should be 3-5 pages in length, single-spaced. **Due November 2.**

B. Interviews: Students will interview pastors of churches from three (3) different denominational families. **Due November 2.** Include:

- What beliefs or practices of that denominational family (e.g. Lutherans) they share with other denominations (at least 2)
- What beliefs or practices of that denominational family that set them apart from other denominations
- What beliefs or practices they share with other denominations within their denominational family
- What beliefs or practices set them apart from other denominations within their denominational family
- Anything else you find of interest

C. Research Paper: Each student will write a research paper describing the historical development of a denominational family within the United States that is different from the one of which you are a part (e.g. a Baptist cannot write about Baptists). Sign up for the denomination that you wish to cover in Canvas. The link will become active two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. Duplication of topics will not be allowed and topics will be available on a first come/first served basis.

The paper must be double spaced and follow the NOBTS style guide. However, **do not use** chapters to separate sections of your paper (chapters require a new page for each new chapter and the project is not long enough to justify this). Use section headings instead. The appendix should come before the bibliography and be single spaced. The text of your paper (not counting

table of contents, appendix, or bibliography) should be 12-15 pages in length (no more, no less). Use 5 - 10 sources with a minimum of three (3) books (do not use only Internet sources). A late paper will be assessed an initial **10 point penalty**. Each calendar day after the due date an **additional 10 point penalty** will be assessed. Projects will be graded on clear organization, spelling, and grammar as well as content. A copy of the NOBTS Style Guide is available in Canvas. **Due December 4, 2026.**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

History of denomination, including splits	20 points
Summary of Doctrine	20 points
Denominational structure/organization	20 points
Ministry and missions focus	20 points
Timeline	10 points
Form/Grammar	10 points

Penalties

- A. Book Reviews, Interviews and Research Paper:** A late review or paper will be assessed an initial **10 point penalty**. For each calendar day after the due date an **additional 10 point penalty** will be assessed.
- B. Plagiarism:** A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Copying another person's work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited. Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Students for further action. **See the Graduate Catalog for more information on the Definition of Plagiarism and Consequences for Violations of Plagiarism.**

Grading Scale

Text Review 1	15%
Text Review 2	15%
Text Review 3	15%
Interview 1	5%
Interview 2	5%
Interview 3	5%
Research Paper	30%
Participation	10%
	<u>100%</u>

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale.

Attendance Policy

- You are required to be in class either in person or through viewing the lectures live for the entire seminar.
- Students who choose to attend the class through the Internet must be in a setting where they can focus on the class and follow all directions of the professor for students participating via live video.

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 ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
2. Selfserve.nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
3. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff)
4. VCHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with NOBTS Microsoft Teams (Flex & Live classes).
5. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon, Tues & Thurs 7:30am-7:00pm, Wed 7:30am-6:00pm & Fri 7:30-12:00pm Central Time)
6. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Writing Style Guide

Writing assignments should follow the NOBTS/Leavell College Manual of Form and Style (revised August 2019). To access this manual on the seminary website, please use the following link:
<https://www.nobts.edu/writing/guidelines.html>

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.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Affairs. If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact Conner Hinton immediately at chinton@nobts.edu or 504-816-8246. Students must complete the Accommodation Request Form and provide documentation of their disability. The Assistant Dean of Students notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for special accommodations on a case-by- case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Emergency Plan

In case of hurricane or any other emergency, go to the seminary web site for information:

www.nobts.edu. The administration will communicate information that relates to the seminary: the nature of the emergency, instructions for responses, evacuation, contingency plans, duration of the emergency, and plans to return to campus and/or resume the schedule.

In addition, check Canvas for instructions related to this class. Because this class is available on Canvas, there should be minimal disruption unless the emergency affects electrical power and connection to the Internet.

In any emergency, communication is important, and our best means of staying connected is through the seminary's web site and Canvas.

Bibliography

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