

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. *3 hours (2 hours MABC)*

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

1. The student will **understand** essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Theological Method and Bibliology, assessed by final objective exam.
2. The student will **articulate** the orthodox, protestant, evangelical doctrines of Bibliology accurately and succinctly, assessed by Section 1 (Brief Statement) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.
3. The student will **explain** his or her doctrinal convictions regarding Bibliology with biblical, theological, and historical support, assessed by Section 2 (Exposition) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper (including notes).
4. The student will **relate** the doctrines of Bibliology to his or her life and ministry, assessed by Section 3 (Practical Reflection) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.

B. All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

1. The student will **analyze** and **critique** the positions of the authors of a book, assessed by the Critical Interaction Paper.
2. The student will **analyze** views of the role of culture in theological method and **defend** his or her view, assessed by the Definition of Postmodernism and Response Paper.
3. The student will **demonstrate** his or her theological method, assessed by the Theological Method Paper.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

MABC Students (course taken for 2 credits)

Blount, Douglas K., Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, 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.** (103 pp.)

Kreider, Glenn R., and Michael J. Svigel. *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. (145 pp)

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

Nichols, Stephen J., and Eric T. Brandt. *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds: The Doctrine of Scripture in a Modern Age*. Nashville: Crossway, 2009. (176 pp.)

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

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Deere, Jack. *Surprised by the Voice of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. (384 pp.)

Grenz, Stanley. and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (150 pp.)

Kreider, Glenn R., and Michael J. Svigel. *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. (145 pp)

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

Nichols, Stephen J., and Eric T. Brandt. *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds: The Doctrine of Scripture in a Modern Age*. Nashville: Crossway, 2009. (176 pp.)

A statement of the percentage of reading completed must be uploaded on Canvas by **18 December**.

B. Suggested

Blaising, Craig A. and Darrell L. Bock. *Progressive Dispensationalism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.

Calhoun, Jimi. *A Story of Rhythm and Grace: What the Church Can Learn from Rock & Roll about Healing the Racial Divide*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009.

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

Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Detweiler, Craig. *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

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

Inbody, Tyron. *The Faith of the Christian Church: An Introduction to Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.

Jenson, Robert W. and Solveig Lucia Gold. *Conversations with Poppi about God: An Eight-Year-Old and Her Theologian Grandfather Trade Questions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

Johnston, Robert K. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

McGrath, Alister E. *The Christian Theology Reader*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.

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.

Stone, Howard and James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. 2d. ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

White, Heath. *Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Books, 2006.

Wilson, Jonathan R. *A Primer for Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

See course notes.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Course Format

This course is offered in a hybrid format, integrating online lectures with live classroom discussions. Students are encouraged to watch the online video lectures (available at online.dts.edu) in accordance with the course schedule (posted below) and to come to class with questions or issues to be discussed. The professor will engage those questions and supplement the material in the online lectures.

B. Reading Assignments

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

MABC Students (course taken for 2 credits)

Blount, Douglas K., Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, 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. (103 pp.)

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

Nichols, Stephen J., and Eric T. Brandt. *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds: The Doctrine of Scripture in a Modern Age*. Nashville: Crossway, 2009. (176 pp.)

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

Non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Blount, Douglas K., Nathan D. Holsteen, Glenn R. Kreider, and Michael J. Svigel. "How Firm a Foundation: Revelation, Scripture, and Truth." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, 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.** (103 pp.)

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Grenz, Stanley. and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. (150 pp.)

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

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C. **Written Assignments** (papers, journals, study exercises, charts, etc.)

All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

1) **Doctrinal Synthesis Paper**

The student will develop a 5–7 single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper on Bibliology (including inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, and canonicity). 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 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 Bibliology using technical, traditional language and covering the major issues related to 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. Svingel, 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 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.

The doctrinal paper is due by **18 December**.

2) **Final Exam.**

There will be one online, multiple choice, comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester. It will be closed book, closed note, and closed Bible, with no helps. The goal of this exam is to prompt a thorough review of the course materials to firm up essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Bibliology. Studying the major biblical texts, central issues, and key definitions will best prepare the student for the exam. It is recommended that students utilize *Exploring Christian Theology* as a study guide.

The final exam must be completed by **18 December**

All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 hours)

- 1) Critical Interaction Paper – Each student will write a short [5-6 pages] response paper [double-spaced, normal font and margins] to the book by Grenz/Olson and the “prolegomena” lectures. In this paper, the student will define theological terms (including theology, biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology) and interact with the content of the book. The paper should do more than summarize the material; instead, interact with the author’s thesis, discuss the argument, evaluate its helpfulness, and consider how the readings and lectures have impacted the way you think about God and the nature of theology.

This paper is due on **13 November**.

- 2) Definition of Postmodernism and Ministerial Response – Each student will write a short [5-6 pages] definition paper [double spaced, normal font and margins] interacting with postmodern culture. In this paper, the student will define postmodernism and culture and discuss the role culture plays in her/his theological method. The paper must discuss specific ways that theology/ministry is contextualized in a postmodern world.

This paper is due on **13 November**.

- 3) Theological Method Paper – Each student will write a 12-15 page response paper (typed, double-spaced, normal font and margins) to the assigned reading from Jack Deere. Evaluate Deere’s view of revelation and Scripture in light of the other readings for this course and the class discussions. Evaluate his presentation for biblical accuracy and critique the cogency of his arguments. Determine whether you think his view accurately handles the biblical text and explain your answer, giving specific evidence. Identify points where you don’t believe he has accurately described the doctrines of Scripture. Be gracious and fair in your response, not derisive or dismissive. Write as though Deere were going to read your critique.

This written project is not intended to be a summary of the material nor a book review. Rather, it is expected that the student will demonstrate critical thinking skills as he/she evaluates Deere’s presentation. Note that the focus of the response paper is on Deere’s view of revelation and the related doctrines of Scripture. Focus the paper on these issues and do not become entangled in the numerous other issues raised in this book.

This paper is due by **18 December**.

C. Quizzes and/or Exams

It is unlikely that quizzes will be given in this course, unless students request them.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Summary of Time Estimates for This Course

The *Student Handbook* states, “Graduate-level work is expected to be more rigorous than at the undergraduate level. However, in order to help ensure that the amount of work required of students in their classes at the Seminary is appropriate, the faculty follow the guideline that for every hour students spend in class each week, they may expect to spend on average two to three hours outside of

class on reading and other assignments. The amount of work required for classes will vary based on the material and content of each course” (*Student Handbook 2016–2018*, p. 7, “Academic Workload”).

The Academic Dean has advised professors to estimate 2 hours of homework for every “class hour” (50 minute period). For a three-hour class, that is a total of 84 hours of work outside of class (3 class hours per semester week x 14 class weeks x 2). For MABC students taking this course for two credit hours while participating in the 3-hour class period, the total hours of work outside of class should total approximately 42 hours (2 class hours per semester week x 14 class weeks x 2 = 56, minus 14 hours spent in the extra third hour of class participation).

Please note that any time estimates are based on reasonably established averages; therefore, they are approximations only. Actual time spent on assignments will necessarily vary based on content of reading, the nature of assignments, and student’s own reading speeds and workload capacities. Students are encouraged to plan according to their own strengths. The inevitable variables between students and between assignments is a key factor in establishing time estimates that are on the lower end of the *Student Handbook’s* “average two to three hours outside of class.”

B. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

The overall course grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth or necessarily of the amount of information that a student feels that he or she has learned. Rather, it is a cumulative figure that bears a relationship to the student’s successful completion of the course requirements. This figure is determined in the following manner:

For MABC students (course taken for 2 credits)

Reading	45 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	50 points
Final Exam	5 points

For non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Reading	35 points
Critical Interaction Paper	10 points
Postmodern/Culture Paper	10 points
Theological Method (“Deere” Paper)	20 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	20 points
Final Exam	5 points

D. Class Participation

Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and to support their classmates in Christian theological conversation. Theology is best done in community. The professor assumes that all students share in this conviction and desire to build up one another in love.

E. Late Assignments

Late assignments are generally not accepted. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the professor in extreme circumstances. Such exceptions will usually include a significant grade reduction of up to a letter grade per day late.

PLEASE NOTE: “Students needing additional time to complete course work must petition the Credits Committee for an extension. The petition form is available on CampusNet, and must be submitted before the last day of the semester or session. Financial and grade penalties may apply to students who do not petition for extensions before the end of the semester or session. Students must read the extenuating circumstances criteria (Section 1.33) prior to submitting the petition, and must specify how their circumstances fit the criteria” (*Handbook*, 1.20.4)

The professor cannot grant extensions beyond the last day of the semester (see *Catalog* for the date for this semester).

F. Absences

Attendance at class sessions is required. Students will be responsible for keeping track of their attendance and reporting the number of absences on the final exam. The attendance policy in the *Student Handbook* will be followed in this course.

G. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. The selection of textbooks should not be interpreted as implying the professor's endorsement of any of the views of the authors. Textbooks are selected for their perceived value in helping to meet the course goals and objectives.
2. "The purpose of the Department of Theological Studies is to equip godly servant-leaders for worldwide ministry by: passing onto students an understanding of the church's one true faith embraced within a distinctively dispensational, premillennial evangelicalism; encouraging students to think theologically as a response to Scripture with a sensitivity to the history of theology, philosophy, and culture; [and] helping students gain perspectives essential to spiritual formation, global servant-leadership, and the evaluation of contemporary issues and trends." (*Catalog*).
3. Lecture notes will be made available online.dts.edu and are intended to facilitate your study. Other materials may be given from time to time. PLEASE NOTE: These materials are for your use only. Do not copy or distribute them to individuals not registered for this course. Any requests for these materials by non-registered individuals should be directed to the professor.
4. Students may not tape class sessions without permission of the professor. If a student desires to tape record a class session, written permission must be obtained in advance of the taping. Please submit a written request explaining the purpose of taping and the extent of use of the tapes. Under no conditions may tapes be duplicated, given, or lent to anyone not registered for this class. No transcriptions of class lectures or discussions are allowed.
5. Please turn off cell phones and paging devices during class sessions.
6. Work that has been done for other classes may not be used to earn credit in this class. Submission of work for this class is presumed to include an affirmation that it is the student's own work and has not previously been submitted in another course. "Plagiarism is defined as 'passing off as one's own ideas, writings, etc., of another.' Plagiarism is academically dishonest and is contrary to biblical standards. Any course work involving dishonest academic practices will be graded as zero without any resubmission permitted. In each case, the Dean of Students' Office will be notified" (*Student Handbook*). Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be referred to the professor or the Dean of Students.
7. Students are responsible for any additions or corrections made to this syllabus at the discretion of the professor and announced in class.
8. Written assignments must be submitted online at online.dts.edu. To login, use your name (First.Last) and your password is your student identification number.
9. *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.*

10. Electronic Etiquette: “Students should refrain from using cell phones, laptop computers, or other devices in a manner that distracts others in the class. Playing games, browsing the Internet, using email, instant messaging, or text messaging, etc., are considered unacceptable when class is in session. Unless permitted by the professor, students should turn off all electronic devices during tests and quizzes.” (Student Handbook). The professor requests that students refrain from talking on their cell phones or having headphone(s) in ear(s) during class.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Please see Canvas for schedule and other course information.