



## Course Description:

This course is an introduction to theology to provide students with a starting point and system for discovering and discerning theology. Students will learn a rationale for developing theologically, skills for articulating doctrine, and a framework for systematic theology. Along the way, students will choose an area of interest in theology and go through the process in order to learn about sources, practice the skills, and intentionally deepen their understanding of God and His ways with man.

## Course Objectives (Cognitive):

Upon completion of this course, each student should be able to:

- Describe the nature, necessity, means and goals of Christian theology.
- Follow a systematic procedure for investigation and application of theological issues.
- Articulate an organized framework for theological truth that is faithful to Biblical organization.
- Formulate a survey understanding of the Biblical teaching of the nature of God, the nature of the universe, the nature of humanity and the nature of God's revelation to humanity.
- Formulate a survey understanding of the Biblical teaching on the nature of Jesus and His work, Christian salvation and life, the Holy Spirit, the nature and mission of the church, and the final consummation of God's work in this world.

## Course Goals (Mindset):

Upon completion of this course, each student should have opportunity to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the priority application of Biblical truth to all areas of life and ministry.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the primary functional authority of Scripture in all theological work.
- Demonstrate how their personal theology is an outworking of the Gospel of Christ crucified, raised and reigning as Lord.
- Demonstrate a commitment to reject false worldviews and to conform their thoughts, affections and actions to the true nature of all reality.
- Demonstrate a commitment to reject false lifestyles and to conform their thoughts, affections and actions to God's unique design for them as individuals and God's corporate design for all of human society.

## Course Resources:

### Primary Textbooks-

Holy Bible in a literal [formal equivalent] or dynamic equivalent [functional equivalent] translation (no paraphrase).

Grudem, Wayne, Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999. ISBN: 978-0310222330

Jamieson, Bobby, Sound Doctrine, Wheaton, Crossway, 2013.

ISBN: 978-1433535895

Kapic, Kelly M., A Little Book for New Theologians, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2012. ISBN: 978-0830839759

### Secondary/Supplemental Textbook-

Sproul, R. C., Everyone's a Theologian, Orlando, Reformation Trust, 2014.

ISBN: 978-1567693652

Grudem, Wayne, C. John Collins, & Thomas R. Schreiner, eds. Understanding the Big Picture of the Bible, Wheaton, Crossway, 2012.

ISBN: 978-1433431620

### Video Lectures-

This course contains a number of lectures on video. These can all be found on the course website.

### Course Documents-

This course contains a number of instructional and supplementary documents. These fall in four categories: 1) There are detailed instructions for the activities of each module. 2) There are blank lecture notes and supplementary information. 3) There are reading schedules and study guides for the course textbooks. And 4) There are a variety of supplemental documents which summarize certain parts of the course material.

### Reviews and Assessments-

There are review and assessment material for each module on the course website.

## Course Activities:

This course is divided into five separate modules, by the natural divisions of the material. There are three basic groups of student activities for each module: intake activities, interaction activities, and application activities.

### 1. Intake of course information-

The intake activities are designed for the student to gain access to and receive relevant information about the course topics. Because of the nature of theology as revelation from God, it is important that the student start with a listening posture, to receive from the faith delivered once and for all to the saints. There is certainly a time for the student to contribute their insights (in the next two types of activities), but it is important to start with receiving the information.

### 2. Interaction with course information-

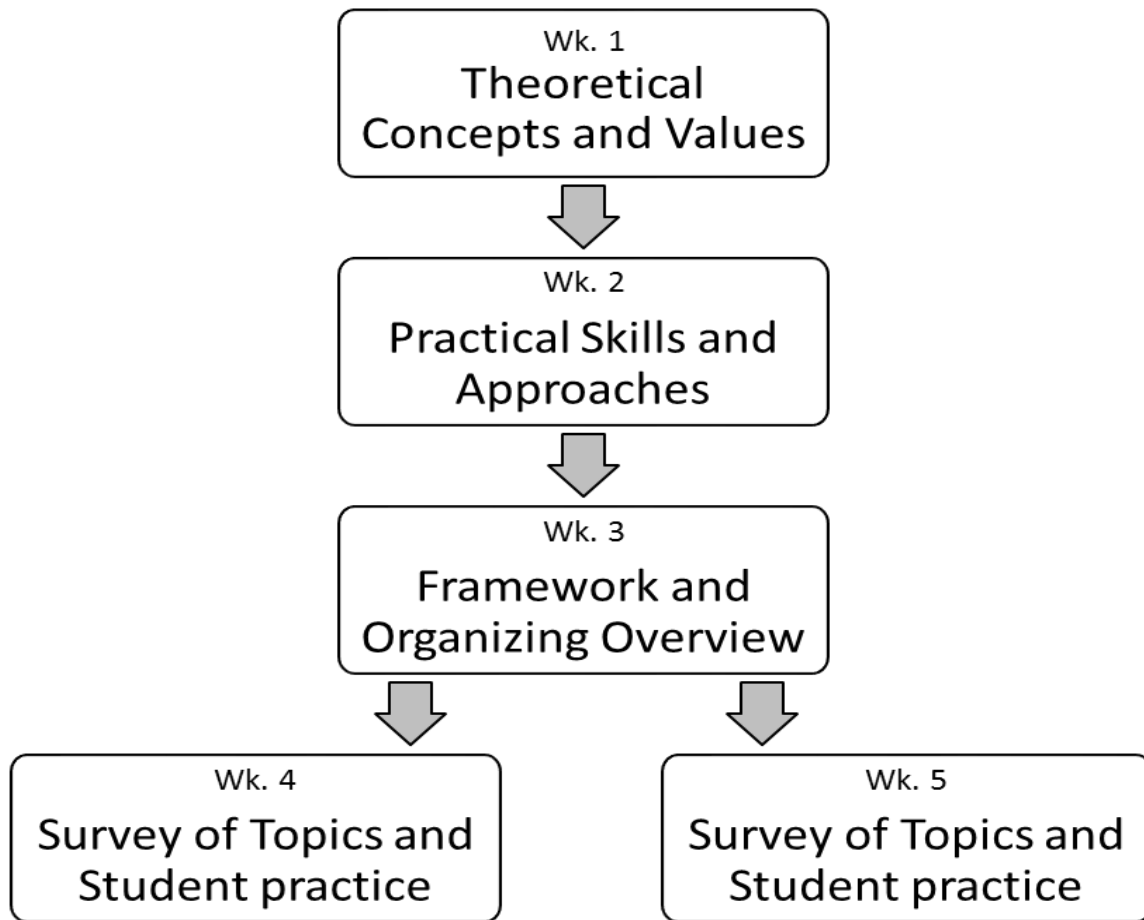
The interaction activities are designed for the student to thoughtfully process and mull over the information until they thoroughly understand it and have it committed to memory. The student will rehearse the information in a variety of ways and assess how well they have understood and retained the course content.

### 3. Application of course information-

The application activities are designed for the student to solidify their understanding by working through the ways that the course information connects with their own life and ministry in current society. The process of learning is not complete until the information is put into practice.

**Detailed instructions for each activity are included in each module.**

## Course Concept Map:



## Course Bibliography:

### Conceptual Background for Theology:

- Carson, D.A. and John D. Woodbridge, eds., Scripture and Truth, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1983.
- Frame, John M., The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 1987.
- , The Doctrine of the Word of God, Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 2010.
- Harris, Joshua, Dug Down Deep, Colorado Springs, Multnomah, 2010.
- , Humble Orthodoxy: Holding the Truth High Without Putting People Down, Colorado Springs, Multnomah, 2013.
- Lints, Richard, The Fabric of Theology, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993.
- McGrath, Alister, Understanding Doctrine – Its Purpose and Relevance for Today, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1990.
- Schaeffer, Francis A., Trilogy – The Three Essential Books in One Volume, Wheaton, Crossway, 1990.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J., Faith Speaking Understanding, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2014.
- Wells, David F., No Place for Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994.
- , The Courage to Be Protestant, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008.

### **How to Do Theology:**

- Dorani, Daniel M., Putting the Truth to Work, Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing 2001.
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2003.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme, Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2006
- , Christ-Centered Biblical Theology, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2012.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Toward an Exegetical Theology, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1981.
- Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1973.
- Lewis, Gordon R. and Bruce A. Demarest, Integrative Theology, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1996.
- Lubeck, Ray, Read the Bible for a Change, Waynesboro, Authentic Media, 2005.
- MacArthur, John, ed., Think Biblically!, Wheaton, Crossway, 2003.
- Osbourne, Grant R. The Hermeneutical Spiral, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1991.
- Woodbridge, John D. and Thomas Edward McComiskey, Doing Theology in Today's World, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1991.

### **Theological Books:**

- Ames, William, The Marrow of Theology, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1968.
- Carson, D. A., The God Who is There, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2010.
- Erickson, Millard, J. Introducing Christian Doctrine, Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2001.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., David F. Wright and J.I. Packer, eds., New Dictionary of Theology, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1988.
- Frame, John M., Salvation Belongs to the Lord, Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 2006.
- , Systematic Theology, Phillipsburg, P&R Publishing, 2013.
- Fuller, Daniel P., The Unity of the Bible, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme, According to Plan: the Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2002.
- Horton, Michael, The Christian Faith, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011.
- House, H. Wayne, Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992.
- Lewis, Gordon R., Decide For Yourself: A Theological Workbook, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1970.
- Packer, J.I., Knowing God, Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1973.
- , 18 Words – The Most Important Words You Will Ever Know, Fearne, Christian Focus, 1981.
- , Concise Theology, Wheaton, Tyndale House Publishing, 1993.
- Piper, John, Doctrine Matters, Minneapolis, Desiring God, 2014.
- Roberts, Vaughan, God's Big Picture – Tracing the Storyline of the Bible, Grand Rapids InterVarsity, 2002.
- Sproul, R. C. and Robert Wolgemuth, What's in the Bible, Nashville, Word, 2000.

## Helpful Online Resources:

Not all doctrines are at the same level -

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/not-all-doctrines-are-at-the-same-level-how-to-make-some-distinctions-and-determine-a-doctrines-importance/>

Why doctrine matters - <https://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/why-doctrine-matters-1233758.html>

How to read the Bible and do theology well -

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-bible-and-theology-don-carson-nivzsb/>

What is theology about? - <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/what-is-theology-about.php>

4 Things you can't do without systematic theology -

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-things-you-cant-do-systematic-theology/>

## Helpful Information:

- Please realize that, at best, this course can only be an introduction to Christian theology. It is hoped that this course will give you a foundation upon which to launch a lifetime of study, devotion, teaching and preaching from these Biblical truths. Be encouraged to continue in your study of theology even after the course.
- Finally, do not lose God in the process of education. Take time to interact with Jesus about every part of your life. Specifically, invite the Lord to teach and lead you in the course material. The Bible was written out of lives of prayer, worship, devotion and wisdom's wrestling with life and the Mighty Acts of God. It would be a tragedy and violation of the books if you treated this course as only an intellectual exercise. God revealed these theological truths, so that you could know Him and serve Him with your whole life. I also hope that you learn to rely on Him for the strength to learn and grow and fulfill all of the expectations placed on you. "Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God." Phillips Brooks.

## Course Presuppositions:

The motivation for teaching a course on Christian theology is rooted in our presuppositions and the implications of those presuppositions regarding the nature and function of God's Holy Word, the Bible. These introductory words will serve to articulate our core values concerning the Scripture and provide a framework for the task being learned and practiced.

Our presuppositions regarding the Scriptures cover the nature of the Bible, core values regarding the interpretation of the Bible, and the implication of the above for the church. In terms of the nature of Scripture we affirm the following:

- We affirm that “the Bible is a supernatural book, God’s written revelation to his people given through prepared and selected spokespersons by the process of inspiration.”<sup>1</sup>
- We affirm that the Bible is God’s infallible, inerrant Word and is authoritatively true and is effectual in accomplishing its purpose.
- We affirm that “the Bible manifests unparalleled spiritual worth and a capacity to change lives. The Bible has the unique power to affect the reader spiritually.”<sup>2</sup>
- We affirm that the Bible is characterized by both unity and diversity. It is diverse in that it represents a variety of human authors, different languages, different cultures, and a variety of literary genre that comes to us over a vast span of time. It is unified in that the Bible possesses an inherent unity because ultimately it has one divine author.<sup>3</sup>
- We affirm “that the Bible is understandable; it is an accessible book. It presents a clear message to anyone willing to read it, and that is why people throughout history have understood its teachings.”<sup>4</sup>
- As spiritual descendants of the Great Reformation “we accept the 66 books of the canon as the entirety of God’s scriptural record to his people.”<sup>5</sup>

In terms of interpreting the Scripture we affirm the following:

- We affirm that truth and meaning are to be found in the text. We deny that truth and meaning are dependent upon the reader or the interpreter. Meaning is not to be imposed on the text, rather, the reader or interpreter will gain understanding by submitting to the authority of the Bible, applying sound interpretive technique, and heeding the presence of the Holy Spirit who brings understanding through illumination.
- We affirm that a text contains only one meaning, however, in some cases there may be many appropriate applications of a text to life.
- We affirm that proper interpretation must take into account issues of continuity and discontinuity in the relationship between the Testaments. This means that we recognize a promise/fulfilment motif with Jesus Christ being the ultimate fulfilment of God’s redemptive plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Klein, Dr. William W. and Blomberg, Dr. Craig L. and Hubbard, Jr., Dr. Robert L. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1993. (88)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid (91)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid (91-92)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid (92)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid (92)

These affirmations regarding the Scripture and its interpretation form the basis on which to place the techniques which will be learned in this course of study. It is of utmost importance that exegetical procedures be performed with these core values in mind.

It is not enough, however, to merely learn responsible hermeneutical procedures without thinking of applying truth to the lives of God's people. In light of this we affirm the following in regards to God's church:

- We affirm that the church is in constant need of reformation.
- We affirm that sound theology based on biblical exegesis is one of the primary means God uses to bring reformation about.
- We affirm that the ideal for the Christian is a synthesis of intellectual excellence and a relational, passionate faith. Whenever reformation has occurred, the Church has been able to achieve something of this synthesis. This synthesis is accomplished through bringing all of life under the authority of God's Word, which is the goal of exegesis.
- We affirm that the health of the church depends on its use of the Scriptures. The authority of the Scriptures must be believed and practiced in every aspect of the life of the church. The mission of the church as salt and light is gauged in part by its use and treatment of the Scriptures.

The presuppositions articulated in this prologue provide you, the student, with a frame of reference that reveals our positions on important matters regarding the nature and function of the Word of God. We have not attempted to defend our positions in this prologue. We have merely put them forward and we are committed to conducting ourselves in such a way that we will be faithful to these core values.

See the [Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy](#), and the [Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics](#) for further information and documentation of these presuppositions.