Mission Statement

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

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.

Statement on Internet Learning
Web-based courses are, by nature, a different kind of learning experience than courses based in the traditional classroom. This reality does not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in equipping you, the student, for effective, God-honoring ministry. It simply means utilizing a different strategy. Internet courses allow room for independent learners to thrive—to work at your own pace, to engage in student-led discussions, and to take ownership of the course content. Because of this structure, this web-based course is more reading and writing intensive than traditional classroom settings. Rigorous study of the deep things of God can be a rewarding experience for anyone who participates in it, but it also calls for extra diligence and integrity in completing the work.

Required Textbooks

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.


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 doctrine.


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**


**Course Teaching Methodology**

The course will involve the following methodologies: assigned reading, online lectures, online class interaction, theological reflection, and critical writing assignments.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Weekly Reading Quizzes (10 pts each, 16% of total grade)**

   Every student will take eight quizzes (closed-book) based on assigned readings from Erickson, Grudem, and Allison. The quizzes draw on key terms, the theological ideas of the authors, and significant figures and movements in the history of theology. Quizzes can consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and matching questions.

2. **Biweekly Application Posts (20 pts each, 16% of total grade)**

   Every student will respond to four theological reflection prompts with bearing on church ministry. Students will write a 300- to 500-word response to the prompt on the Discussion Board by an initial due date, read all other students' posts for that prompt, and respond to two other students' posts with a critique or suggestion to further their thought by a final deadline. Application posts will be graded for grammar, responsible application of study material to the prompt, and coherent contribution to the class discussion.

Application Reflection Prompts:

1. **Read Putman**, p325-73. 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?

3. Scriptures that seem to indicate that he does? Can Christians reasonably plead with God?

3. Read Erickson, ch. 25. How would you define and describe sin to a friend who knows nothing about the Bible? Your answer can supported by parenthetical biblical references but should minimize as much as possible "religious" or theologically technical words.

4. Read Erickson, ch. 30-32 and Philippians 2:5-11. Suppose a church member read this passage in private Bible study and asked you if the Son gave up his divinity in the incarnation. How would you respond? What would you tell this church member the central point of Phil 2:5-11 is?

3. Theological Reflections (40 pts each, 32% of total grade)

Every student will respond formally to eight theological reflections (due in four sets of two). The response to each prompt will be 2-3 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt.). 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) ability to apply the theological content to vocational ministry. Textbook references should be given in parenthetical citations, but any outside source used should be cited using footnotes with a complete citation.

Set #1 (due 6/13) — Theological Method

1. Read Putman, p1-39. 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. 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.)

Question Set #2 (due 6/27) — Scripture

3. Read Erickson, ch. 8. Briefly survey the various theories on the inspiration of the Bible. Identify the primary emphasis and the strengths and weaknesses of each position. Which of the theories do you advocate and why?

4. Read Erickson, ch. 9 and Putman, p257-324. 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?

Question Set #3 (due 7/18) — God & Creation

5. Read Erickson, ch. 14. Suppose a fifth grader (~11 year old) in your church tells you that morning in Sunday School, the teacher explained that we worship three gods (Father, Son, and Spirit). How would you explain the doctrine of the Trinity to this child? How would you begin a conversation with the teacher? Be careful to avoid bad analogies that implicitly reflect trinitarian heresies.

6. Read Erickson, ch. 16 and Genesis 1-2. How do you make sense of the "days of creation" in Genesis 1? Explain your position. How do you explain the differences between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2?

Question Set #4 (due 7/31) — Humanity & Christ

7. Read Erickson, ch. 28 and Grudem, ch. 24. How do you understand the "age of accountability?" Are children born with inherited guilt from Adam’s sin? How do your responses impact your approach
8. Read Erickson, ch. 31 and Allison, p365-377. Give a brief overview of the four major Christological heresies regarding the person of Jesus Christ in the fourth and fifth centuries. What was each position trying to assert about Christ? What are the theological shortcomings of each position?

4. Doctrinal Sermon or Bible Study (80 pts, 16% of total grade)

Every student will write a 4-6-page single-spaced manuscript for a doctrinal sermon or Bible study. 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 or study should contain an introduction, a main idea, explanations of the biblical text, illustrations, applications, and a conclusion/invitation. The sermon or study 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. **Students should submit a doctrinal topic and plan for approval by 6/13. The manuscript is due 7/11.**

5. Critical Book Review (100 pts, 20% of total grade)

Every student will write an 8-10 page (double-spaced) book review of a selected monograph listed below. Students must review a book on a different doctrinal topic than their sermon/Bible study. The review should follow Turabian style, use parenthetical citations for page references, and include:

- a bibliography entry
- a brief biography about the author (e.g., career position, degrees, research interests, and other works) (1 paragraph)
- an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book (2 paragraphs)
- a concise summary of the book’s contents (no more than 3 pages)
- a thorough critical analysis of the book (4-5 pages)
- a discussion of the relevance of the book to the student’s ministry context (2 paragraphs)
- a conclusion with a recommendation or dismissal (1 paragraph)

Some questions to consider in writing the critical analysis include: Did the author fulfill their purpose? What are some of the author’s working assumptions which impact their thinking (e.g., their denominational background, field of research/method, or view of Scripture)? Does the author provide strong biblical, philosophical, and historical support for their positions? Are there any points of contact between this book/writer and other texts read during the course of the semester? Are there any ideas that changed your particular way of thinking on the subject matter at hand? What specific insights set this book apart, and what specific weaknesses hinder the author from communicating well?

**Students should request a book for approval by 6/13. The book review is due 7/31.**

Texts available for review:

- Crisp, Oliver D. *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*. Cambridge: University Press,
2007.


**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.

**Embedded Assignment (from Question Set #1 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>INADEQUATE (0 PTS)</th>
<th>BASIC (1 PT)</th>
<th>COMPETENT (2 PTS)</th>
<th>GOOD (3 PTS)</th>
<th>EXCELLENT (4PTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td>Able to understand the doctrinal topic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATION</td>
<td>Able to apply knowledge by relating it to the broader Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation of Grades
The student’s grade will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Course Points</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>16% 80 pts total</td>
<td>A: 93-100 (465-500 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biweekly Application Posts</td>
<td>16% 80 pts total</td>
<td>B: 85-92 (425-464 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Reflections</td>
<td>32% 160 pts total</td>
<td>C: 77-84 (385-424 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrinal Sermon or Study</td>
<td>16% 80 pts</td>
<td>D: 70-76 (350-384 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Book Review</td>
<td>20% 100 pts</td>
<td>F: below 70 (&lt;350 pts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grade</td>
<td>100% 500 pts possible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment Submission & Late Policy
Due to the constricted schedule of the summer internet term, it is vital that students submit work on time meeting all assignment requirements. All assignments must be completed/submitted in the course Blackboard shell. Emailed submissions will not be accepted unless by explicit request of the instructor.

Writing assignments should be submitted as .doc or .pdf files only. A late writing assignment will be assessed a 10 percent penalty if it is submitted after the due date with an additional 10 percent penalty for every calendar week after the due date.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments Due on Saturday by 11:59pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6/1-6     | Theological Method   | E: 1-5 G: 1 A: 8  | • Discussion Board Introduction Post  
                        • Reading Quiz #1  
                        • Application Post #1: Personal Post |
| 6/7-13    | Revelation           | E: 6-10 G: 4 A: 3 | • Request Sermon Topic and Book Review  
                        • Reading Quiz #2  
                        • Application Post #1: Two Responses  
                        • Theological Reflection Set #1 (Method) |
| 6/14-20   | Theology Proper      | E: 11-13 A: 9     | • Reading Quiz #3  
                        • Application Post #2: Personal Post |
| 6/21-27   | Trinity              | E: 14 G: 14 A: 11, 17, 20 | • Reading Quiz #4  
                        • Application Post #2: Two Responses  
                        • Theological Reflection Set #2 (Revelation) |
| 6/28-7/4  | Creation             | E: 15-16, 21 G: 15 A: 12 | No assignments due on July 4, but use this break to make progress on sermon and book review |
| 7/5-11    | Providence & Evil    | E: 17-19 G: 16 A: 13 | • Reading Quiz #5 (will include questions from last week’s readings on creation)  
                        • Application Post #3: Personal Post  
                        • Doctrinal Sermon/Bible Study |
| 7/12-18   | Humanity             | E: 20, 22-24 G: 23 | • Reading Quiz #6  
                        • Application Post #3: Two Responses  
                        • Theological Reflection Set #3 (God & Creation) |
| 7/19-25   | Sin                  | E: 25-29 A: 16    | • Reading Quiz #7  
                        • Application Post #4: Personal Post |
| 7/26-31   | Person of Christ     | E: 30-34 G: 26    | • Reading Quiz #8  
                        • Application Post #4: Two Responses  
                        • Theological Reflection Set #4 (Humanity & Christ)  
                        • Critical Book Review |

Reading assignments represent full chapters from the required textbooks. Please be sure you have the third edition of Erickson so that the chapters line up correctly:

- E: Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*
- G: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*
- A: Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology*
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias


Systematic and General Theologies


Berkouwer, G.C. *Studies in Dogmatics*. 14 vols. Grand Rapids:
Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952-76.


