



**THCH 8306 Issues in Baptist Life:
Ordinances and Organization
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
July 15-17, 2025**

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This course begins on **July 15, 2025**, and, by that date, students should have access to Canvas, where they will find information and instructions about the course. Prior to that time, students should purchase the texts and be ready to participate in the course. The reading schedule is included in this syllabus so that, once students have secured the textbooks, they can begin reading their assignments.

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 is designed to involve students in the analysis and investigation of the historical context or relevant theological issues pertinent to Baptist life in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular. Students will encounter and engage significant historical, theological, and/or ministerial issues through readings, papers, and class discussions. The course is designed to promote the integration of history and/or theology in Baptist ministry and church life. Various topics may be addressed in the seminar at different times. Can also be taken as THTH8306.

Topics for this Semester

This seminar we will explore how Baptists view the ordinances in light of the emerging sacramentalist movement. We will also examine the understanding of congregational polity in light of expanding congregational structures, such as multi-campus, multi-staff, and elder-led.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student who satisfactorily completes this seminar by fulfillment of the requirements should be able to:

- Understand the varied perspectives in Baptist life regarding the doctrine(s) addressed.
- Be able to articulate a well-informed Biblically-based and confessionally Baptist description of the doctrine(s) addressed.
- Achieve greater appreciation for Baptist beliefs about the doctrine(s) addressed.
- Be able to communicate the various aspects of the doctrine(s) addressed through a sermon or conversation

Required Textbooks

Gay, David H. J. *Baptist Sacramentalism: A Warning to Baptists*. Biggleswade, United Kingdom: Brachus, 2011. ISBN: 978-0956023834. Paperback ed. by Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. ISBN: 978-1484994832

Haykin, Michael A. G. *Amidst Us Our Beloved Stands: Recovering Sacrament in the Baptist Tradition*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022. ISBN: 978-1683595854

Companion Reading

Harsch, Lloyd A. "Were the First Baptists Sacramentalists?" *The Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry* 6.1 (Spring 2009), 25-44. <https://www.nobts.edu/baptist-center-theology/journals/spring-2009.html>

Quarles, Charles L. "Ordinance or Sacrament: Is the Baptist View of the Ordinances Truly Biblical?" *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 1.1 (Spring 2003): 47-57. <https://www.nobts.edu/baptist-center-theology/journals/spring-2003.html>

Baptist Confessions of Faith - see Canvas for links

Course Requirements

A. Text Reviews: Each student will write a review of **EACH** of the Required Texts. The reviews will be written as though for an academic magazine or journal. No title page is required; please provide the name of the student and assignment as well as the date at the top of each submission. It should:

- 1) Bibliographic entry,
- 2) Biography of the author(s) (a few sentences on dates, degrees, theological tradition, academic posts held, research interests, and significant works),
- 3) Brief summary of the contents,
- 4) Evaluation of the work's strengths and weaknesses,
- 5) Compare and contrast the texts with each other.

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. Each review is worth 50 points. **Due July 15, 2025.**

B. Book Review: Each student will write a review of a book from the list below that the student has not already read. No duplications will be allowed. Sign up for your book on Canvas. Books will be assigned on a first come first served basis. The review will follow the above Text Review guidelines 1-4. Reviews should be 2-3 pages in length, single-spaced. Students will present their review during class as a basis for discussion. The review and presentation are worth 40 points. **Review presentations will begin on the first day of class, July 15, 2025.**

Choose one book you've not read to review

Brand, Chad, and Stan Norman, eds. *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views on Church Polity*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2004.

Cowen, Gerald P. *Who Rules the Church? Examining Congregational Leadership and Church Government*. Nashville: B&H, 2003.

Dever, Mark. *By Whose Authority? Elders in Baptist Life*. Washington, DC: 9Marks, 2006.

Duesing, Jason, Thomas White, and Malcolm Yarnell, eds. *Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008.

Hammett, John. *Upon This Church: A Baptist Understanding of the Church*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

Maring, Norman H. and Winthrop S. Hudson. Edited By David Gregg. *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice*. Second revised edition. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012.

Sullivan, James L. *Baptist Polity—As I See It*. Revised edition. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.

Taylor, L. Roy, ed. *Who Runs the Church? Four Views on Church Government*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.

C. Research Paper: Each student will write a research paper on a topic related to the class. Topics **must** be approved by the professor. The paper must be double spaced and follow Turabian, eighth edition, for style. 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 (excluding Sunday) an **additional 10 point penalty** will be assessed. Projects will be graded on clear organization, spelling, and grammar as well as content. Examples of Turabian form will be available in Canvas. **Research papers are worth 100 points and are due August 15, 2025.**

Grading Scale

Text Review 1	20%
Text Review 2	20%
Book Review	15%
Participation	5%
Research Paper	<u>40%</u>
	100%

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

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 or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. [Video Conferencing Help Desk](#) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Video Conferencing NOBTS classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. 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>

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. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas 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>

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.

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.

Discussion Rubric

	A	B	C	D	E
Quality of Comments	Timely and appropriate comments, thoughtful and reflective, responds respectfully to other student's remarks, provokes questions and comments from the group	Volunteers comments, most are appropriate and reflect some thoughtfulness, leads to other questions or remarks from student and/or others	Volunteers comments but lacks depth, may or may not lead to other questions from students	Struggles but participates, occasionally offers a comment when directly questioned, may simply restate questions or points previously raised, may add nothing new to the discussion or provoke no responses or question	Does not participate and/or only makes negative or disruptive remarks, comments are inappropriate or off topic
Referencing Resources	Clear reference to text being discussed and connects to it to other text or reference points from previous readings and discussions	Has done the reading with some thoroughness, may lack some detail or critical insight	Has done the reading, lacks thoroughness of understanding or insight	Has not read the entire text and cannot sustain any reference to it in the course of discussion	Unable to refer to text for evidence or support of remarks
Active Listening	Posture, demeanor and behavior clearly demonstrate respect and attentiveness to others	Listens to others most of the time, does not stay focused on other's comments (too busy formulating own) or loses continuity of discussion. Shows consistency in responding to the comments of others	Listens to others some of the time, does not stay focused on other's comments (too busy formulating own) or loses continuity of discussion. Shows some consistency in responding to the comments of others	Drifts in and out of discussion, listening to some remarks while clearly missing or ignoring others	Disrespectful of others when they are speaking, behavior indicates total non-involvement with group or discussion

Selected Bibliography

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- Dever, Mark. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. Nashville: B&H, 2012.
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- Garrett, James Leo, Jr. *Baptist Church Discipline*. Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2004.
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- , *Upon This Church: A Baptist Understanding of the Church*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.
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- Harwood, Adam. *The Spiritual Condition of Infants: A Biblical-Historical Survey and a Systematic Proposal*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011.
- Hinson, Glenn, ed. *Understandings of the Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2002.

Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Norman, R. Stanton. *More than Just a Name: Preserving Our Baptist Identity*. Nashville: B&H, 2001.

_____. *The Baptist Way: Distinctives of a Baptist Church*. Nashville: B&H, 2005.

Sullivan, James. *Rope of Sand with Strength of Steel*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1976.

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Cathcart, William. *The Baptist Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of the Doctrines, Ordinances, Usages, Confessions of Faith, Sufferings, Labors, and Successes, and of the General History of the Baptist Denomination in All Lands: with Numerous Biographical Sketches of Distinguished American and Foreign Baptists, and a Supplement*. Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1881.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987. S.v. "Sacraments: Christian Sacraments," by Monika K. Hellwig.

Ellis, Christopher. "Baptism and the Sacramental Freedom of God." In *Reflections on the Water: Understanding God and the World through the Baptism of Believers*, ed. Paul S. Fiddes, 23-45. Oxford: Regent's Park College and Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing.

Etherington, John and Thomas Lamb. *The Anabaptists ground-work for Reformation, or, New Planting of Churches, That no man, woman, nor child, may be baptized, but such as have justifying Faith, and doe make profession thereof, before, to the Baptizer, Found false, with all things depending thereon*. London: M. Simmons; Imprimatut: James Cranford, 1644.

Fage, Robert, Jr. *The Lawfulnesse of Infants Baptisme. Or an Answer to Thomas Lamb his eight Arguments, entitled, 'The unlawfulnessse of Infants Baptisme.' And may serve also to the false minors, an old out-worne Arguments in the late book of C. Paul Hobson, till a more particular and compleat Answer come forth to anatomise the fallacies of the said Book, entitled, 'The fallasie of Infants Baptisme'*. N.p.: W. Wilson, 1645.

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A Declaration against Anabaptists: To stop the Prosecution fo their Errours, falsly pretended to be a Vindication of the Royall Commission of King Jesus, as they call it. Briefly and fully answering all their Allegations, and clearly proving the Anabaptisticall Doctrine to be against the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Church, against the Covenant of grace, and against the word of God, and priviledges of the Church made over to them by promise; And also against the Solemne League and Covenant of the three Kingdomes. In Answer to a book, by Francis Cornwall presented to the house of Commons, on Friday last, for which he is committed. London: Ja:Cranford; Printed for R.W., 1644.

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