

COURSE SCHEDULE

Media requirements and assignments are listed on the week that they are due. Class Discussion will follow study of the required media listed.

Week 1: Introduction to Systematic Christian Theology

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Explain** the nature and necessity of systematic theology.
2. **Describe** a proper method for systematic theology.
3. **Formulate** doctrines in a form contextualized for the contemporary world.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 3-117

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week 1 Mini-lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast (organizing Logos for theological research)

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 1-1** Describe your opinion about the value and importance of theology before you started this class as well as (or alternatively) the view of other Christians you know and especially those in your ministry setting. In what ways has this week's reading from Erickson changed (or not changed) your view of theology? What would you say to clarify or change the view of those around you if you had the chance? Are there some remaining questions or concerns about theology that you would still like to address?]

OR

Erickson discusses the issue of contextualization in chapter 4 of his theology. Why is this important? What are the dangers of contextualizing? Can you think of ways in which evangelical theology has adapted to Western (and often American) culture? What are some areas we might learn from Christians in other cultures as they do theology?

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Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 1-1 Theological Method Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 1-2 Theology and the Spiritual Life Paper**

Week 2: Revelation and Scripture

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Explain** the modes of general and special revelation, along with the proper uses and limits for each kind of revelation.
2. **Demonstrate** comprehension of the historic debate on the use of general revelation.
3. **Define** the doctrines of inspiration, inerrancy and authority and show the relationship between the doctrines.
4. **Formulate** biblical answers to contemporary challenges to the doctrine of Scripture.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 121-229

PDFs:

- ☐ *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy & Exposition*

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week 2 Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast: Using Your Theological Resources to Research an Issue

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 2-1** Answer the following question: Erickson describes a variety of different modes of revelation (both special and general). What can we learn from general revelation? What do we need special revelation for? How does our understanding of the relationship between these two types of revelation shape the way we do theology? How does the idea of revelation as both general and special relate to the issue of the “conflict” between science and the Bible (or other similar debates)? How should our understanding of general revelation shape the way we should include the findings of science as a source for our theological method?

OR

When people hear the term inerrancy, they often bring assumptions about what the term means to the text without considering it with care or precision. The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy is one attempt by evangelicals to clarify what is (and is not) meant when we use the term “inerrancy.” After reviewing the statement, describe something that was new to you or surprised you about

the statement's explanation of inerrancy? Can you think of any implications of the statement's explanation of inerrancy?

Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 2-1 Scripture Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 2-1 Knowing God Paper**
- ☐ **Theological Synthesis:** This week, you should begin your theological synthesis. In approximately one page, summarize your own conclusions and convictions about the doctrine of scripture.

Week 3: God's Person and Attributes

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Explain** how our understanding of theological language helps us understand what it means to talk about God.
2. **Define** key divine attributes and apply them to Christian life and ministry.
3. **Articulate** responses to current debates about the nature of God.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 233-313

PDFs:

- ☐ Feinberg, *How Should We Understand Language about God?*
- ☐ Corduan, "Apophatic Theology," EDT

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week 3 Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast: Attributes

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 3-1** Answer the following question: Apart from the trinity (we'll be exploring that more directly over next week), what do you think are the greatest misunderstandings people have about the nature and person of God? How do they express themselves in contemporary churches, culture, literature, and the arts? Provide specific examples if possible.

OR

What are some of the implications of the limits of human language to talk about God as we do theology? In the Eastern Church, Apophatic Theology is one response to these concerns. How should we think about language about God, especially when we describe attributes which have human parallels? How can we help people understand these limits?

Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 3-1 Attributes Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 3-2 God and the World Paper**

- **Theological Synthesis:** Continue working on your theological synthesis. Begin to summarize your own conclusions and convictions about the topics covered this week (the nature and attributes of God). You will complete this topic next week when we cover the trinity. [Note: this topic may extend beyond a single page, but try to distill it down]

Week 4: The Trinity

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Explain** the historical development of the doctrine of the trinity.
2. **Identify** heretical understandings of the trinity.
3. **Show** the relevance and practical significance of the doctrine of the trinity.
4. **Locate** key primary historical texts in the development of Christian doctrine.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Reeves, pp. 19-130

PDFs:

- ☐ Horrell, “In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week Four Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast Searching a Theology for the Term Trinity and Using the Results to Evaluate the Overall Handling of a Doctrine

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 4-1** Answer the following question: What are the greatest misunderstandings or confusions about the trinity we find in the contemporary church? How do those misunderstandings present themselves? What factors contribute to these misunderstandings?

Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 4-1: The Trinity Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 4-2: The Trinity in Systematic Perspective**
- ☐ **Theological Synthesis:** Continue working on your theological synthesis. Complete your summary on the doctrine of God’s person.

Week 5: Creation, Providence, and Angels

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Demonstrate** comprehension of the historical debates over creation and providence.
2. **Articulate** a personal position on the doctrine of providence.
3. **Formulate** biblical answers to the problem of evil.
4. **Explain** current interest in angels and spiritual warfare, and articulate a personal position on the issue.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 317-420

PDFs:

- ☐ Detzler, “Myths About Spiritual Warfare”

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week 5 Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast: Using Logos Resources for Theological Issues

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 5-1** What is the relationship between the doctrine of creation and other doctrines? This includes things like the trinity, eschatology (last things), sin and salvation, humanity, and doctrines more closely linked to creation like God’s preservation and governance of the universe. Explore several areas, if possible. What is the practical significance of being able to link creation to these other doctrines?

OR

Reflect on how the debate about providence (i.e., Calvinism and Arminianism) is normally carried out in church or academic contexts. What are the points most often focused on? Which points are sometimes ignored or misrepresented? Do these discussions generally shed more heat than light? What are some practical steps we can take (or general observations we might make) that would help improve the quality of these debates.

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Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 5-1: Providence Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 5-2: Spiritual Warfare Paper**
- ☐ **Theological Synthesis:** Continue working on your theological synthesis. In approximately one page, summarize your own conclusions and convictions about the doctrines of creation and providence.

Week 6 : Christology and Overview of the Work of Christ

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Demonstrate** comprehension of the historical debates about method in Christology and articulate a personal conviction on this debate.
2. **Define** an orthodox understanding of the person of Christ and identify heretical Christologies.
3. **Explain** the overall work of Christ.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 603-673, pp. 695-712

PDFs:

- ☐ McKnight, "The Jesus We'll Never Know"
- ☐ Bird, Evangelical Theology: Christological Method

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week Six Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast Information Literacy: Primary Theological Texts on the Web

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 6-1** In the early church, the deity of Jesus was accepted and the humanity questioned. In the modern era, his humanity has been generally accepted but his deity questioned. Do you think these emphases (driven by apologetic concerns in the respective cultures) have been a help or a hindrance in theological thinking? What dangers or challenges do you think our current cultural setting presents? What steps can we take to avoid an imbalanced view?

OR

Most Christians (and churches) focus almost exclusively on the death of Christ (the atonement) when talking about the work of Christ. Given the broader range of events associated with Christ's work (whether framed as stages or functions [offices]), why do you think that is? Are there any dangers in de-emphasizing other aspects of Christ's work? What other elements deserve fuller treatment? Support your observations with biblical and/or theological evidence.

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Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 6-1: Christological Method Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 6-2: The Person of Christ Paper**
- ☐ **Theological Synthesis:** Continue working on your theological synthesis. In 1-2 pages, summarize your own conclusions and convictions about the person of Christ.

Week 7 : The Atonement and the Holy Spirit

Lesson Objectives:

1. **Define** the doctrines of the personality and deity of the Spirit.
2. **Define** the key historical views on the atonement and articulate a personal position on the atonement.
3. **Articulate** a personal position on the contemporary debate about spiritual gifts.

Study Requirements:

Books:

- ☐ Erickson, pp. 713-768, pp. 771-821

PDFs:

- ☐ Wallace, "Two Views on the Sign Gifts"
- ☐ Wallace, "Uneasy Conscience of a Noncharismatic Evangelical"
- ☐ Cole, Are All of the Spiritual Gifts for Today?

Watching/Listening:

- ☐ Week Seven Mini-Lecture
- ☐ Logos Screencast (consulting commentaries in theology)

Assignments:

Discussions:

- ☐ **DB 7-1** What is the importance (theologically and practically) of the concepts of the personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit? Are these realities consistently reflected in your personal and your church's corporate spiritual life?

OR

One of the divisive issues in contemporary Christian life is the debate between continuationists and cessationists. What are some practical ways we might be able to deal with some of these differences in ministry contexts? What kind of factors might create barriers preventing cooperation among those with differing views?

Other Assignments:

- ☐ **Assignment 7-1: Atonement Paper**
- ☐ **Assignment 7-2: Spiritual Gifts Paper**

- **Assignment 7-3: Theological Synthesis Paper:** Continue working on your theological synthesis. Complete your statement on Christology [this one too may extend slightly beyond one page] and prepare an approximately one-page summary on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Submit your statement for all the course topics in .docx format. **You should save this assignment as an artifact in your M.Div. program portfolio.** You should also compile the document as a personal book so you can access it in Logos.