

## MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

### Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

ST5534 Systematic Christian Theology 1, 3 credit hours

### Course Description

This course is a systematic study of the biblical doctrines of Bibliology, Trinitarianism (Theology Proper, Christology, and Pneumatology), and Angelology. It includes an examination of theological Prolegomena, major features pertaining to the Holy Scriptures, a study of the identity and works of the Triune God, of modern angelmania, and the reality of and the resources for spiritual warfare. Key concepts, issues, and the practical implications and integration of these doctrines in Church and Christian life are discussed.

### Course Objectives

***After completing this course, you will be able to...***

1. Articulate the meaning of key theological terms including the nature and necessity of systematic theology and the significance of theological thinking and interpretation.
2. Define key concepts pertaining to theological Prolegomena, and demonstrate comprehension of the historical development of the doctrines pertaining to Bibliology, Trinitarianism, and Angelology.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of current interest in Angels, including spiritual warfare.
4. Articulate personal positions on these doctrines within the biblical framework while employing proper theological method.
5. Define each doctrine covered under Bibliology, Trinitarianism, and Angelology with accuracy providing biblical support and identifying deviations from, or false expressions of these doctrines.
6. Formulate biblical answers to key theological questions raised by the church and/or the world that pertain to these doctrines.

### Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. Logos Bible Software Edition

Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2012.

### Audio/Videos:

- Week One Mini Lecture
- Logos Screencast: Organizing Logos for Theological Research
- Week Two Mini-Lecture
- Logos Screencast: Using Your Theological Resources to Research an Issue
- Week Three Mini-Lecture
- Logos Screencast: Attributes
- Week Four Mini-Lecture

## COURSE SYLLABUS - ST5534 Systematic Christian Theology 1

- Logos Screencast: Searching a Theology for the Term Trinity and Using the Results to Evaluate the Overall Handling of a Doctrine
- Week Five Mini-Lecture
- Logos Screencast: Using Logos Resources for Theological Issues
- Week Six Mini-Lecture
- Screencast: Information Literacy – Primary Theological Text on the Web
- Week Seven Mini-Lecture
- Consulting Commentaries in Theology

### PDFs:

- International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, *Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics*
- Feinberg, John. *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 75-80, "How Should We Understand Language About God?". Exported from Logos Bible Software, 2:12 PM August 21, 2014.
- "Apophatic Theology," by W. Corduan in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001). Exported from Logos Bible Software 5, 4:19 PM July 30, 2013.
- J. Scott Horrell, "In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," *BibSac* 166(2009): 131-46. ATLA Serials.
- Wayne Detzler, "Myths About Spiritual Warfare," *Reformation and Revival* Vol. 4 (1995): 28-42. Exported from Logos Bible Software, 1:37 PM August 21, 2014.
- Scot McKnight, "The Jesus We'll Never Know", *Christianity Today*, April 15, 2010. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/april/15.22.html>, accessed August 29, 2014.
- Bird, Michael. *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), "Christological Method".
- Dan Wallace, "Two Views on the Sign Gifts," <https://bible.org/article/two-views-sign-gifts-continuity-vs-discontinuity>, accessed August 29, 2014.
- Dan Wallace, "Uneasy Conscience of a Noncharismatic Evangelical", <https://bible.org/article/uneasy-conscience-non-charismatic-evangelical>, accessed August 29, 2014.
- Graham Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), "Excursus: Are All the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?" Exported from Logos Bible Software, 2:56 PM August 21, 2014.

### Assignments

**Guideline for the Discussion Board:** Post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Friday, 11:59pm CT). Then read and respond to at least **TWO** of your classmates' initial posts by the end of the week (Monday, 11:59pm CT).

**Standard for Written Papers:** All papers must be in Turabian style. Each page should be approximately 300 words, 12-pt. Times New Roman font on double-spaced lines with 1" margins. (Therefore, a 2-page paper is approximately 600 words; a 3-page paper is approximately 900 words, etc.) Here is a guide to Turabian style: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

**1-1 Theological Method Paper:** Many theologians would say that theology is simply (and only) an exposition of the truths about God revealed in the Bible. Grudem for example says:

“Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.” (Grudem, Systematic Theology, 21).

Notice how this definition makes biblical material the exclusive source for theological thinking (at least in theory). In 2-3 pages, compare and contrast Erickson’s discussion about theological method (his 10 steps) with approaches like Grudem’s. Identify strengths and weaknesses of each method. How might your conclusions about a theological topic look different based on these two different assumptions about theological method?

**1-2 Theology and the Spiritual Life Paper:** Several of your friends have recently joked about seminary being “cemetery” and the tone of their comments suggests they really mean it. A pastor mentor has approached you suggesting that all you need is to know the Bible and that you should forego the study of theology. Write a 2–3 page letter responding to these concerns OR write a 2–3 page position statement on the value of systematic theology for ministry and Christian life.

**2-1 Scripture Paper:** In 2–3 pages, critically evaluate Erickson’s doctrine of Scripture, including how the overall doctrine is constructed and which aspects of the overall doctrine he covers (and doesn’t cover). Show the biblical support for his conclusions, as well as contrasts with other theories. (Compare his approach to other treatments found in other systematic theologies in your Logos resources to provide evidence for your evaluation).

**2-2 Knowing God Paper:** A friend is struggling with the idea that only people who have the Bible can know God. Doesn’t the Bible itself say (Romans 1) that all people have knowledge of God? Can’t they know about God through general revelation? Write a 2–3 page letter to your friend OR develop a 2–3 page position paper in which you address what it means to “know God” and the role of general and special revelation in the knowledge of God.

**3-1 Attributes Paper:** In 2–3 pages, compare and contrast Erickson’s treatment of one divine attribute (in Chapter 11 or 12) with the handling in at least two other systematic theologies (you may use those in your Logos package). There may be some differences in names of attributes among various theologies, so be sure you are dealing with the same attribute in all the theologies. Discuss the limitations of human language as relevant to the attribute you are discussing, and explain how the different discussions are both helpful and (possibly) problematic. Briefly describe the practical significance of that attribute for Christian life and practice.

**3-2 God and the World Paper:** In 2-3 pages, evaluate Erickson’s discussion of immanence and transcendence. How do these paired concepts help Christians maintain their distinctiveness from competing worldviews like Pantheism and Deism?

**4-1 The Trinity Paper:** A person for whom you are ministerially responsible struggles with the concept of the "Trinity." They are actively pursuing their own spiritual formation, but wonder what this confusing, paradoxical doctrine has to do with their relation to God. It seems like just one more irrelevant, ivory tower doctrine. Write a 2-3 page letter to this person responding to their concerns, OR develop a 2-3 page position paper in which you address the relation between the doctrine of Trinity and the practical life of the Christian.

**4-2 The Trinity in Systematic Perspective Paper:** In 2-3 pages, evaluate the role the doctrine of the trinity plays in Millard Erickson's overall systematic theology. You have already read Erickson's discussion of the doctrine of the trinity.

To complete this assignment, you will need to scan or survey the rest of the volume(s) [note: you of course do not have to read all of Erickson's theology!; instead use the TOC, index and other tools as well as a quick visual scan as necessary]. A Logos search of the word trinity in Erickson should be part of your work as well (you can report statistics, but also note **where** the term is used and where it is a **significant** factor). Some of your conclusions on these larger issues may be "impressionistic," but try to work within reasonable time limits!

Your survey should consider these kind of questions: Examine the extent and depth of its coverage of the doctrine of the trinity, its integration of the trinity into the entire theological system (e.g., does the trinity shape the order of topics, or the presentations of particular sections of the theology), its focus on practical or ecclesial implications of the trinity, and any other matters that are relevant.

**5-1 Providence Paper:** In 2-3 pages, summarize your understanding of the biblical teaching on providence, focusing on the question: "Is God in Total Control of All Things?" OR "Does God Exercise Partial Control over events in the world?" In a short paper like this, you will need to focus on key issues and arguments. Be sure to respond to at least one strong argument from the opposing side of the debate. In the last paragraph of your paper, describe at least two specific practical implications of your view for Christian life and practice.

**5-2 Spiritual Warfare Paper:** In 2-3 pages evaluate the practice of spiritual warfare as seen in American popular religious practice and in ministries with which you are familiar. What are the emphases in discussions of spiritual warfare? Is the practice of spiritual warfare sufficiently biblically and theologically grounded? Are there ways in which spiritual warfare is not taken seriously enough? Include several suggestions for practical steps that can be taken in ministry contexts to insure that a biblically balanced approach to spiritual warfare is maintained.

**6-1 Christological Method Paper:** In 2-3 pages, describe the debate about Christological method as presented in Erickson, chapter 30. Integrate the additional reading resources on the topic into your analysis (McKnight & Bird). Quickly summarize key areas of disagreement in the debate and describe your own proposal for the best and most faithful method for learning about Jesus.

**6-2 The Person of Christ Paper:** You are asked by a church member to provide some information on an evangelical view of Jesus. His nephew is attending university and has been exposed to the ideas of the Jesus Seminar and is beginning to question the orthodox view of Jesus. In 2-3 pages, briefly describe an evangelical understanding of Jesus' person and provide a defense of the deity and humanity of Christ to help this student.

**7-1 Atonement Paper:** In 2-3 pages, describe your understanding of the nature and significance of Christ's atoning work. Place your understanding within the larger historical discussion about the atonement (including the varied historical views). Include a brief discussion of the practical implications of your view of the atonement for Christian spirituality and the corporate life of the church.

**7-2 Spiritual Gifts Paper:** In 2-3 pages, describe your position on spiritual gifts and their place in the life of the church today. Include a discussion about the debate regarding continuationism/cessationism and practical thoughts about how to deal with these differences in ministry contexts.

**7-3 Theological Synthesis:** During the course, as each topic is completed you are required to produce a one-page, single spaced summary of your personal understanding of the theological topic under consideration. Your summary should contain your conclusions and the biblical support (references only) for your view. Be sure to cover the full range of topics in each area. You do not need to cover unorthodox views, other orthodox options than the one that you hold, or the historical development of the doctrine. Simply describe to the best of your ability your conclusions, using to the extent possible your own words. Provide biblical references for some of the key texts supporting your positions.

At the end of the course, you will submit all the topics in a single document (compile in a Word document [docx format] so you can create a personal book in Logos with your final product). You should, however, produce these summaries as we go through the course while each topic is fresh in your thinking. Prepare this document as though you would be submitting this to a church during a job search or at an ordination council. **You will also save this assignment as an artifact in your M.Div. program portfolio.**

Include the following topics:

1. Scripture
2. The Doctrine of God, including the Trinity (Theology Proper)
3. Creation and Providence
4. Christology
5. Pneumatology (The Holy Spirit)
6. Angelology and Spiritual Warfare

## Assessments

Graded Item	% of Total
Discussions (7)	15%
Papers (14; 5% each)	70%
Theological Synthesis	15%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Description
A	96 – 100	Exceptional work
A-	94 – 95	Excellent work
B+	92 – 93	Very good work
B	89 – 91	Good work
B-	87 – 88	Above average work
C+	83 – 86	Average work
C	79 – 82	Work needs improvement
C-	75 – 78	Minimally acceptable work
F	< 75	Unacceptable work

## Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Though students may wish to check out books via inter-library loan, the online database has a number of articles and reviews available for download. You can access the online database by logging into your account at [my.moody.edu](http://my.moody.edu). If you have not previously accessed the library database you may wish to complete the database tutorial at <http://library.moody.edu>. Here are additional tutorials on how to use the Crowell Library:

- "Finding Resources in the Moody Online Library: **Overview**" - [http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video\\_Files/BI-5528\\_Koehler\\_Overview.wmv](http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video_Files/BI-5528_Koehler_Overview.wmv)
- "Finding Resources in the Moody Online Library: **References**" - [http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video\\_Files/BI-5528\\_Koehler\\_Reference.wmv](http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video_Files/BI-5528_Koehler_Reference.wmv)
- "Finding Resources in the Moody Online Library: **eBooks**" - [http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video\\_Files/BI-5528\\_Koehler\\_eBooks.wmv](http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video_Files/BI-5528_Koehler_eBooks.wmv)

- "Finding Resources in the Moody Online Library: **Articles**" - [http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video\\_Files/BI-5528\\_Koehler\\_Articles.wmv](http://openaudiovideo.moody.edu/OSAM/OSAM/Video/wmv/Education/Courses-Blackboard/Video_Files/BI-5528_Koehler_Articles.wmv)

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk> or [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars

The final resource that deserves mention here is **iTunes University**. Apple has developed a platform for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures available on iTunesU from various schools such as Dallas Theological Seminary, Seattle Pacific University, Duke, Yale, Covenant Theological Seminary, and others that may benefit in your studies or understanding of this course.

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