On-Campus Course Syllabus
THS 660 L1
Patristic, Medieval, & Reformation Theology
Fall 2022

Class Information
Day and Time: Monday, 1:45pm - 4:30pm
Room Number: E209

Contact Information
Instructor Name: Dr. Ty Kieser
Instructor Email: tkieser@criswell.edu
Instructor Phone: (214) 818-1306
Instructor Office Hours: Monday: 12:30 – 1:30 PM; Tuesday & Thursday: 9:30 – 10:45 AM; 2–3 PM
Sign up here

Course Description and Prerequisites
A survey of the development of Christian theology from the end of the Apostolic Period through the Reformation Period. Special emphasis is placed on the historical and theological movements and the theologians of the period.

Course Objectives
At the end of the course, the student should be able to:
1. Identify key figures, events, ideas, and movements pertaining to the Christian church between the apostolic era and the Reformation
2. Narrate the development of theological thought from the apostolic era to the end of the Reformation with a sense of unity and cohesion.
3. Charitably analyze theological readings from the Christian tradition and contemporary scholarship.
4. Posit historical and theological claims with nuance, clarity, charity, and coherence.

Required Textbooks
Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Popular Patristics 44b. Translated by John Behr. New York: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2012. (ISBN: 9780881414097)

Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*. Oxford World's Classics. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008 (ISBN: 9780199540082).

Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian, 1520*. The Annotated Luther Study Edition. Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016 (ISBN: 9781506413518).

Recommended Reading

Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999. ISBN 9780830815050.

Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Rev. ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1978.

Nieuwenhove, Rik Van. *An Introduction to Medieval Theology*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

McGrath, Alister. *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. 4th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2012.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Theses and Participation (30%—about 2 pts/class): Our class discussions will be guided by short theses submitted by every student. Engaging with the readings, these theses are intended to aid your understanding of the text and to bring clarity and organization to our discussion of that text. We will read at least one primary text, sometimes three or four.

Students should submit 2–3 theses total (≈150–300 words total) based on the readings to Canvas by 1 PM on the day of class (with the exception of the 1st day, when no theses are due). Every day I will collect, distill, and select certain theses to be the framing theses for class discussion. Your grade is based on the theses you submit, not only the ones selected. However, I reserve the right to grade theses up/down on the basis of class engagement. See below for greater specification and some examples.

Exams (30% total; 15% each): There will be two exams taken online and are open-book/note. These exams will be composed of multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and essay questions. Exam 1 will only cover the patristic and early medieval period and exam 2 will only cover late medieval and Reformation theology.
　　*Open-book/note does NOT mean that these should be shared/discussed with other students.

Thematic Narration Paper (40% total; 5 pts + 35 pts): This 3,500–4,000 word paper[1] will narrate the development of a theological theme throughout the history of the church through the Reformation. You will submit an outline of the paper (5%), detailing (A) the theme/question of your paper, (B) at least 3 major movements/figures that you will engage, (C) 3 additional primary sources, (D) 3 secondary sources, and (E) a tentative thesis of the paper and of each section. The narrative should focus both on presenting a united story and detailing the specifics of this theme in individual periods.

> While this is a "narrative," it should present an *argument* and exemplify the characteristics of a good paper (see below). As such, while each major movement/figure should get substantial attention, the persuasive aspect of this paper implies that one section may receive additional space.

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[1] This does NOT include footnotes or bibliography. Hard word count requirements are +/- 10% — every percentage over/under 10% accrues a proportionate deduction (e.g., a paper that is 15% too long is penalized 5% of the paper grade).

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Late work: For exams and papers, your grade will be reduced by 10% for each calendar day late. However, any missed assignment may be submitted end of the semester for up to 50% credit.

> **Extension *Gratis***: The "extension *gratis*" policy is a practice that gives you all a free, automatic one-day (i.e., 24 hour) extension on every assignment. I know that life happens and the 2 hours on Friday afternoon that you were planning on using to finish your paper get stolen by car issues, family celebrations, etc. Therefore, I offer an extra 24 hours on every assignment without penalty. The best way to think of this is NOT that the "due date" has changed, but that it is as though you emailed me on Friday night asking for one extra day and I agreed to it.
>
> Because I offer this free extension, I am disinclined to offer additional extensions—except for very serious life-circumstances. Note two implications of this: (1) Any request for an extension that is made after the due date will be denied outright. So if the paper is due on Saturday and your dog dies on Sunday, I will feel bad for you, but I will not grant you an extension on top of the free extension day. (2) While the 10% penalty for the first day is waved, it still counts toward the late penalty of days 2–5. So if the paper is due on Saturday and you submit it on Tuesday morning, there will be a 30% penalty.
> *This policy CANNOT be applied to theses. Any thesis that is not submitted by 1 PM on the day of class can only earn 50% of the points for that day (although you are welcome to join the discussion if theses are not submitted).

Technology: Cell phones should *not* be used during class time. Additionally, laptops inherently have several negative consequences on classes that prioritize discussion.[2] Therefore, it is my strong preference that resources provided digitally are printed out or found in hard copy. However, I recognize that there are potential difficulties to this process and that computers have several advantages. Therefore, computers may be allowed under the condition that they are used properly. However, I reserve the right to deduct grades for misuse of any technology or designate particular periods of time as laptop-free.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Instructors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual instructors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

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[2] In addition to the potentially distracting nature of computers for the user and their neighbors, the negative consequences can include the following adverse effects: (A) Interpersonally: they create a physical barrier between humans in dialogue. (B) Mentally: your brain does not function as sharply when it is subconsciously aware that you could access the answer in two seconds with less effort than you could by simply thinking; plus you more quickly forget the content retrieved this effort-less way (see *Make it Stick*; *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*; "Is Google Making Us Stupid?"). (C) Teleologically: computers inherently prioritize efficiency; whereas a discussion is a gradual process oriented toward intellectual formation (and, therefore, is often superficially inefficient).

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the "I" will become an "F."

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at Criswell College Mental Health Resources, and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Offsite login information is available in Canvas in the "Criswell Student Training Course" under "Library Information."

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203, or schedule an appointment by emailing tutoringcenter@criswell.edu or by calling 214.818.1373.

Course Outline/Calendar

Aug. 15 — Introduction to Class

Module 1) Ante-Nicene Fathers

Aug. 22 — Creation — First Two Centuries
Read: Didache [link]
Read: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 4: 462–525 (PDF pgs. 1202–1341) [link]

Aug. 29 — Scripture and Tradition — 3rd Century Fathers
Read: Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, 421–29 [link]
Read: Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*, 243–265 (PDF pgs. 547–607) [link]
Read: Clement, *Stromata*, 1:5–6, 9, 19–21 (*ANF* 2:305–8, 309–10, 321–35; PDF pgs. 675ff) [link]

Read: Origen, De *Principiis*, 349–73 [link]

Sep. 5 — Labor Day

Module 2) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

Sep. 12 — Deity of the Son and Spirit — Nicaea and Constantinople I
Read: Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (including Lewis's preface)
Read: Nicene Creed [link]

Sep. 19 — Humanity of the Son — Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II & III
Read: Cyril's Letters to Nestorius and Anathemas, NPNF[2] 14:197–98; 201–18 (PDF pgs. 408ff) [link]
Read: Definition of Chalcedon [link]
Read: Leo's *Tome*, NPNF[2] 14:254–58 [link]
Read: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Orations*, XXIX–XXX (NPNF[2] 7:301–18) [link]
Read: Constantinople III: Definition of Faith (NPNF[2] 14:254–58) [link]
Read: John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, Book III, Chs 13–15 (NPNF[2] 9:57–64) [link]

Sep. 26 — Graciousness of God — Augustine
Read: Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 2 & 8 (NPNF[1] 1:55–60, 116–29; PDF pgs. 114–27; 281–310) [link]
Read: Augustine, *City of God*, Books 13–14 (NPNF[1] 2:245–83; PDF pgs. 606–90) [link]
Read: Augustine, *Nature and Grace*, Chs 21–39 [link]

Module 3) Early Medieval Church

Oct. 3 — Schism & Knowledge of God — Early Medieval Church
Read: Cassian, On the Protection of God, Chs 6–13 (NPNF[2] 11:424–30) [link]
Read: Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitory*, Ch 2 (NPNF[2] 11:132) [link]
Read: John of Damascus, *On Holy Images*, 1–31 [link]
Read: Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule*, Part 2 (NPNF[2] 12:9–23) [link]
Read: Lombard, *Sentences* [PDF]
Read: Palamas, *The Triads* [PDF]
Exam: Mid-Term (due Oct. 8th at 11:59 PM)

Oct. 10 — Student Development Week [no class]

Module 4) High Medieval Theology

Oct. 17 — Atonement — Scholasticism Introduced
Read: Anselm, "Why God Became Man," in *Major Works*, 260–355.

Oct. 24 — Virtue — Aquinas and Proto-Reform
Read: Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I-II, Q. 50–52, 55, 61–63, 65–67, 71–73 [link]

Read: Julian of Norwich, Revelation of Divine Love, Chs 1–5, 58–59 (PDF pgs. 9–19; 130–35) [link]
Read: Wyclif, On the Pastoral Office, 32–38, 47–51 [PDF]

Module 5) Reformation(s)

Oct. 31 — Justification — Reformation in Germany
Read: Luther, *Freedom of a Christian*, 467–538
Read: Luther, 95 Theses, 13–46 [PDF]
Assignment: Sketch of Thematic Narration Paper (due Oct. 31st at 11:59 PM)

Nov. 7 — Union with Christ — Swiss and French Reformation
Read: Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, I.i, I.xi, II.xv–xvi (37–39, 90–103, 425–52) [link]
Read: Marburg Colloquy, 71–107 [PDF]
Read: Zell, "The Miserere Psalm Meditated, Prayed, and Paraphrased" [PDF]

Nov. 14 — Commitment (and Compromise?) — Anabaptist and English Reformation
Read: 39 articles, 487–514 [link]
Read: Schleitheim Confession of Faith, 247–53 [PDF]
Read: Simons, *Foundation and Plain Instruction*, 12–39 (PDF pgs. 21–54) [link]
Read: Simons, Scriptural Explanation of Excommunication, 122–37 [link]
Read: Hooker, vol 1: 332–336 [PDF pgs. 459–464] [link]
Read: Hooker, Vol 2:30–36, 381–427 [PDF pgs. 52–58; 403–449] [link]
Read: Hubmaier, Concerning Heretics and Those that Burn Them [PDF]

Nov 21 — Fall Break

Nov. 28 — Purgation, Justification, and Contemplation — Catholic Reformation, Mysticism, and Jansenism
Read: Cajetan, "Faith and Works" [PDF]
Read: Trent, Session 4 (pp. 17–21), Session 6 (pp. 30–49), Session 7 (pp. 53–58) [link]
Read: Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* [PDF]
Read: Pascal, *Pensées* [PDF]

Module 6) Post-Reformation

Dec. 5 — Regeneration & Sanctification — Reformed and Remonstrant; Introducing Puritanism, Pietism, and Methodism
Read: Five Articles of the Remonstrants, 545–49 [link]
Read: Canons of Dort, 581–97 [link]
Read: Herbert, The Temple [pdf]
Read: Spener, *Pia Desideria* [pdf]
Read: Wesley, "Free Grace" [pdf]
Read: Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" [link]
Assignment: Exam #2 (due Dec. 9th at 11:59 PM)

Assignment: Thematic Narration Paper (due Dec. 9th at 11:59 PM)

Theses Details

Genres of Theses

1. Explication: Provide clarity of interpretation and/or synthesis of a particular theme/claim in the reading. The goal here is the bring clarity to our understanding of the text.

2. Evaluation: Make a judgement on the truthfulness/coherence/biblical-rootedness/historical-precedence of a claim.

3. Extension: Illustrate the potential applied value a claim in relation to another discussion or context.

4. Enquiry: Ask a pointed question that seeks to find clarity, coherence, or significance in the text.

Example theses on John 1

[Explication – main claim in bold, support follows] **The language of "Word of God" connects the doctrine of revelation in John 1 and the filial theme of "sonship," reinforcing the intimate relationship of the Word and God and thereby the validity of Jesus' revelation of the Father**. Even when John is addressing the theme of light (likely indicating revelation), he moves to an articulation of soteriological adoption (1:12) that "he gives" (v. 12c) when they "receive him" (v. 12a)—foreshadowing the adoption of sons and daughters in the Son that is flushed out in Ephesians 1. Second, again in the context of the revelation of glory that is seen by the people (v. 14b) and that brings truth, John describes Christ as the "only Son from the Father." Here, the intimacy of the Father and Son recalls the intimacy of the "Word" and "God" in 1:1. Finally, the one who makes the invisible God "known" is the one "at the Father's side" and (some manuscripts say) "the only Son."

[Evaluation] **The Johannine prologue, and whole gospel, attend to the humanity of Christ in continuity with the synoptic gospels,** even though John is often perceived to be focused on the exalted status of Jesus in tension with the low-christological claims of the synoptics. In the prologue, Jesus bears human flesh (1:14), he is born in time (1:15), and he is announced by John as the sacrificial lamb (1:29). Throughout the gospel Jesus does ordinary human things: does the will of the Father (6:38), asks for a drink (4:6-7), thirsts (19:28). He also shares in human emotional experiences: he weeps (11:35); feels sorrow (11:33–35), and his soul is troubled (13:21). This is in continuity with, not contrast to, the presentations of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

[Extension] **Christ's accurate revelation of God on the basis of his intimate relationship with the Father, as testified to in John 1, addresses and corrects the frequent insecurity with the Father's love for many of us modern Christians.** Many modern Christians reflect the sentiment, "Jesus loves me, but God I'm not so sure about." However, the gospel of John and the prologue in particular articulate the intimacy of Christ's relationship with the Father in order to express the accuracy of his revelation of God. John 14:9 expresses Jesus as the image of the Father to the degree that if we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. Likewise, John

1:18 says that "no one has seen God" yet Jesus has "made him known." As such, the character and action of Jesus reflect of the character and action of the Father. We need not be unsure about the Father's love or relationship to us because we know of Jesus' love and relationship toward us.

[Enquiry] **Does the conjunction of verse 18a ("no one has ever seen God") and verse 1c ("the Word was God") signal a "contradictory Christology," such that our human reasoning about the hypostatic union necessarily results in an antinomy**? If the Word is *homoousia* with the Father (whom no one has seen, nor could see), then how can the Word make God known (1:18d)? You might say, "he make him known in his visible humanity (see 1 John 1)," yet on such an account the Word would seemingly only be revealing that which is expressible in human form and not the "eternal, immortal, invisible" God (1 Tim 1:17).

Other examples might include a comparison of a quote in the reading with a passage of Scripture (e.g., "Augustine's account of _____ might be considered a reflection on X biblical text"), the provision of an illustrative analogy (e.g., "Augustine's account of _____ might be illustrated by Y analogy").

Theses Rubric
Theses will be graded on their attention to the text, clarity of the claim, and evidence provided in its defense (understanding the limitation of space/words). See the rubric in Canvas. Most basically, a sub-par thesis is one that could have been written without reading the text, a good thesis reflects a careful reading of the text, and a superior thesis shows close engagement with the text and incisive reflection, causing us all to think and to *look at the text*.

Principles of Good Seminar Discussions

Principle of Charity

Charitably relate to each other: Loving the Lord and your neighbor is our ultimate goal. In 10 years you might not remember the content of these discussions, but you might remember how others treated you.

Charitably disagree and question: Civil disagreement is a good thing when done charitably. It helps us understand each other and the topic. However, when you think you disagree, first seek to understand. If someone says something, consider it in the best possible light.

Phrases to use: Any genuine compliment. "When you say _____, do you mean _____, or _____, or something else?"

Principle of Curiosity

Curiously engage the topic: Seek to understand. Assume that we have something to learn from this discussion.

Curiously seek truth: This is a journey of intellectual formation toward truth, not merely an intellectual exercise.

Phrases to use: "Help me understand _____." "How does _____ work with the author's earlier claim to _____?"

Principle of Collaboration

Collaboratively speak: Building off of what has come before and not interjecting clever thoughts 30 minutes after we moved on from the topic.

Collaboratively include: Every one is included in the conversation. It is not a two-person, dialogue, series of monologs, or a sustained Q & A with the professor.

Collaboratively listen: Listen well to classmates. Do not interrupt.

Phrases to use: "Like Sue said, _____. I might add, _____ for further support." "Sue, what do you think about adding _____ to your list?"

Principle of Courage

Courageously speak up: Some of us need the courage to share our opinion with others. Please do! We will all benefit when you do.

Courageously stake a claim: Make the strongest defensible claim you can. It's easier to describe than evaluate, but be courageous. Make a claim and defend it (always in accordance with the previous principles.).

Courageously boast in weakness (see 2 Cor 12): Admit we do not know everything. Admit we are wrong.

Phrases to use: "I do not know." "I was wrong about _____." "I think _____ is true."

Characteristics of a Good Paper

Sharp: A good paper is clear, nuanced, and well organized. It has an identifiable thesis that is supported throughout the paper. Each of the sections work well together. Papers that are not clear, evidence thinking that is not clear. So, strive to write clearly.

Helpful exercise: Print a draft of your paper, highlight the main thesis and the main claims of each section [and if you cannot find them, write them]. Revise these repeatedly. Ask yourself how the highlighted texts relate; ask yourself if the unhighlighted text supports the highlighted text.

Supported: A good paper is well supported with evidence from the primary source. The evidence is "support" for the author's thesis, so it should be summarized well and not over-quoted. A well-supported paper might "play defense" as well as offense and consider potential objections to its claims.

Helpful exercise: Consider what claims are "necessary" for your project to "work" and how they flow together. If you have material that is not necessary, cut it. If you cannot think of what is needed to make it "work," then you probably have a topic not a thesis.

Significant: A good paper is significant for theological and devotional thought. While your paper does not need to "contribute" to academic scholarship, a good thesis is not obvious to everyone nor agreed to by everyone. For example, saying, "justification and sanctification are related" is not very significant (because few dispute that claim), but saying that "justification and sanctification are only related insofar as they are both effects of union

with Christ" is significant—because it disagrees with many people who more closely align the two doctrines. Further, the implications of the thesis should be attended to and made clear to some degree.

Helpful exercise: Consider the alternatives to your theses. Are those alternatives commonly held by theologians/church-people? Are they interesting? If you cannot think of alternatives, or they are uninteresting, keep revising your thesis.

Thematic Narration Paper

Necessary Paper Details to Include in Month-Prior Submission
Specific Theme:
Specific movements/figures engaged: (name at least three)
Anticipated additional sources to include: (name at least three primary sources and three secondary sources)
Working Thesis: (of paper and each section)

*I recognize that papers morph as you write them. Therefore, you are not obligated to retain every detail in your final draft. However, if there are substantial changes (e.g., a new theme), please let me know.

Example Themes
The nature of "grace" in Augustine and its reception in sixteenth-century Catholic and Protestant traditions
Conceptions of womanhood in medieval Catholic and later Reformation traditions
Pastoral virtues from the apostolic fathers to the Baxter
The role of experience in monks, mystics, and Puritans
The Lord's Supper in medieval and Reformation theology
Authority in Eastern Theology from 400—1054
The divine will in Augustine, Scotus, Aquinas, and Luther
The role of Philosophy in the Apologists, medieval scholastics, and Protestant scholastics
Christ's human flesh in the ecumenical councils and Reformed-Lutheran debates
The role of Scripture in medieval theologians and the Proto-Reformers

Example Thesis Genres

(Incremental) *Development* — "Theme X progressively builds throughout Y period, beginning with W and ending with Z."
(Surprising) *Discontinuity* — "While Y period is nearly unanimous about W view of X, Z movement/person does not retain this view.
(Surprising) *Continuity* — "Despite significant material differences on Z, several theologians in Y period shares W common assumption about X."
(Undervalued) *Influence* — "Nearly all people with Y period after Z person depend upon him/her for W view of X."