



On-Campus Course Syllabus

THS 203 L1

Systematic Theology I

Spring 2025

Class Information

Day and Time: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Room Number: E208

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Jim Larsen

Instructor Email: jlarsen@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 214-818-1352

Instructor Office Hours: Contact professor for appointment

Course Description and Prerequisites

Introductory discussions to Theological Method (Prolegomena), Scripture (Bibliology), God (Theology Proper), Creation, Providence, Angels (Angelology), Humanity (Anthropology), and Sin (Hamartiology), defining the scriptural views and showing the arguments for them, refuting other views, and emphasizing the relevance of theology to the Christian life and witness. (Prerequisite: BIB 105)

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to . . .

1. Discuss major concepts and significant terms associated with these systematic subjects, including key biblical passages that relate to them.
2. Demonstrate the ability to articulate ways in which these doctrines interrelate with each other as well as with Christian faith as a whole.
3. Identify and discuss significant historical and/or contemporary controversies associated with these systematic subjects.
4. Engage in sympathetic but critical dialogue with diverse Christian articulations of concepts and scriptural interpretations associated with these systematic subjects.
5. Integrate the main ideas of these doctrines to their lives in such a way that they will impact their personal walk with the Lord.

Required Textbooks

(1) *The Bible*: The professor will normally use either the *English Standard Version (ESV)* or the *New International Version (NIV)* in class. However, students may use their preferred translation in class and on assignments.

(2) Erickson, Millard J. *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 3rd ed. ISBN 9780801049194.

(3) Glenn R. Kreider and Michael J. Svigel, *A Practical Primer on Theological Method: Table Manners for Discussing God, His Works, and His Ways*. ISBN 9780310588801.

(4) Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Turabian 9th). ISBN 9780226430577.

Recommended Reading

Course Requirements and Assignments

Required Reading (15%): The course texts form the foundation upon which lectures are built, thus it is imperative that students complete the assigned reading prior to the beginning of the indicated class session (see course Outline/Calendar below). The percentage of assigned reading completed **must be reported in Canvas prior to the beginning of the class session for which it is due**. No credit will be given for reading that is not completed and reported as indicated on the course calendar.

Scripture Memorization (15%): Students will be required to memorize a total of 26 verse-sections and be familiar with and able to summarize 13 key passages over the course of the semester (handout will be provided).

1. At the beginning of every Monday class, students will be given a written quiz to ensure that they have memorized the required verses and are conversant on the assigned key passage for that week. They will have ten (10) minutes to complete the quiz.
2. On the final day of the course, there will be a cumulative test that will count for four (4) quizzes. It will not be required for the student to recite memory verses/passages as they did on quizzes; however, it will draw on the student's ability to recall the details from within the verses in order to link specific verse references with specified phrases from those texts.
3. Missed quizzes may not be made up. However, the two (2) lowest quiz grades (not including the cumulative test) of the semester will be dropped.
4. A student may memorize and be quizzed on a translation other than the *New International Version*. To do so, the student must first get permission for the specific version that he or she would like to use. After permission has been granted, the student will e-mail to the professor the verses in the alternative translation in the form found on the handout provided in class. Only after these requirements have been met will the professor grant permission for the student to begin taking quizzes in the approved alternative translation.

Discussions/Interactions (15%): This course is intended to provide the student with an introduction to the systematic subjects of theological method (Prolegomena), Scripture (Bibliology), God (Theology Proper), creation, providence, angels (Angelology), humanity (Anthropology), and sin (Hamartiology). Consequently, assignments are designed to challenge students' thinking as well as promote more biblically mature engagement with related contemporary theological discussions. Since lectures, discussions, and reading assignments build upon each other, students must complete assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned. Assignments will be in the form of online discussions/interactions. Online discussions/interactions should be governed by the following guidelines:

- The professor will post an item for *discussion* on Canvas for which *all* students must provide an appropriate response. Unless otherwise indicated, discussion items will be posted by the beginning of the first class period of the week.
- Once the student has provided a response to the professor's post, she/he must then *interact* with the post of at least two (2) other students as well as respond to comments relating to her/his own post. Keep in mind that these posts are intended to promote *discussion*, and thus grades for these assignments reflect the quality and thoughtfulness of these interactions.
- Your postings should reflect (a) facts, (b) logical reasoning, (c) be related to the topic, (d) be written well, and (e) give other students adequate time to respond.
- While it is acceptable to disagree with the posts of either the professor or another student, disagreement *must be* civil and gracious. Remember: challenge the thought/idea, not the person.
- When posting, be sure to present your thoughts and point of view clearly, concisely, and graciously. Try to avoid sharing your personal opinions if you cannot back them up biblically or by citing other appropriate sources.
- Grades will be based on the quality of the student's initial response to the professor's post, the quality of engagement with other students' work, *and* the quality of the responses to other students' engagement with the student's own work. *All* engagement/discussion *must be completed* by the beginning of the first class session the week following the professors posting of a discussion item.

Personal Reflection/Integration Assignments (25%): The student will be required to write four (4) reflection/integration papers dealing with course topics as follows: (1) Prolegomena and Scripture; (2) Theology Proper/Triune God; (3) God and creation, divine providence, and God and evil; and (4) Angelology, anthropology, and hamartiology. Specific requirements for these papers are as follows:

1. Identify major concepts and/or terms addressed in class discussions, assigned reading, and assigned Scripture passages that have impacted the student's understanding of each topic.
2. Where appropriate, each paper should also address how other topics discussed in this course relate to/affect how one understands the topics being addressed in the paper.
3. Discuss how the student's current understanding of the topic has/will impact his/her personal walk with the Lord and engagement with the community of faith.
4. Each paper is to be between six (6) and ten (10) double spaced pages.
5. While a cover sheet is not required, at a minimum the student's name and course reference (THS 203, SP25) should be included at the top of the first page.
6. The student must use proper syntax, grammar, spelling, etc. General formatting requirements may be found in "Paper Formatting Helps" file in the Canvas "Handouts and Help Files" module.
7. Bibliographies are **not required** for these papers. However, any sources cited must be properly identified by way of footnote citations in accordance with *Turabian* 9th requirements.

Exams (25%): There will be a midterm and a final exam for this course. The midterm exam will cover required reading and lesson material discussed up to that point in the course. The final exam will cover the remaining required reading and lesson material as well as significant concepts presented during the first portion of the

course. Each exam will be timed, closed book exams, and will be administered online in Canvas. Exams **must be completed** by 4:30 p.m. on the day indicated on the course Outline/Calendar. **No late exams will be accepted.**

Class Participation (5%): Students must show up on time and must be adequately prepared to contribute to the conduct of class sessions. This may be demonstrated by asking questions, interacting with the professor and/or other students during class discussions, and/or by responding to questions posed by the professor. As one needs to be present to participate in class discussions, absences will affect the class participation grade.

Additional Assignments: While there are currently no additional requirements anticipated for this course, the professor reserves the right to incorporate additional requirements as necessary to assist students in accomplishing the stated goals of this course.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Textbooks and Supplemental Bibliography: The selection of textbooks and items on the Supplemental Bibliography should not be interpreted as implying the professor's endorsement of any of the views of the authors. Textbooks and supplemental sources are selected for their perceived value in helping to meet course goals and objectives.

Recording: As a general policy, students may not record class sessions for this course. If a student has a particular need that necessitates recording class sessions, please contact J. Gonzalez, the College's Director of Student Success (jgonzalez@criswell.edu; 214-818-1311). If permission is granted to record class sessions, under no conditions may recordings be duplicated, given, lent, or shared with anyone else. Further, permission is **expressly denied** upload these recordings to the internet **in any form** or to use them for purposes other than the student's own personal study to meet the requirements of this course. For additional information, see the "Disabilities" section below.

Course Outline/Calendar: The schedule provided below is intended to give the student a general idea of the flow of course topics/discussions. While the professor intends to keep as closely as possible to the indicated topic dates, he reserves the right to modify class topics as necessary to meet course objectives as well as deal with potential issues raised by students deemed appropriate to meet these objectives. Unless otherwise indicated, deviations from indicated topics will not affect due dates for listed assignments.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

NOTE: Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

NOTE: A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

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.

Course Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the completion of *any* assignment in this course is strictly prohibited.

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.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

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. Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence. 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 schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

TUE	Topic	Quiz/Exam Scripture Passages	Assignments
Jan 21 Jan 23	*Introduction to the Course *Theological Method		
Jan 28 Jan 30	*Theological Method *Revelation	MV = #1–2 KP = #1	E = Chs 1–2 K/S = Preface – Introduction
30 January: Last Day to Drop			
Feb 4 Feb 6	*Revelation	MV = #3–4 KP = #2	E = Chs 3–4 K/S = Ch 1
Feb 11 Feb 13	*Scripture	MV = #5–6 KP = #3	E = Chs 5–6 K/S = Ch 2
Feb 18 Feb 20	*Scripture	MV = #7–8 KP = #4	E = Ch 7 K/S = Ch 3
Feb 25 Feb 27	*Theology Proper	MV = #9–10 KP = #5	E = Chs 8–9 K/S = Ch 4 Reflection/Integration #1
Mar 4 Mar 6	*Triune God	MV = #11–12 KP = #6	E = Chs 10–11 K/S = Ch 5
Mar 11 Mar 13	*God and Creation	MV = #13–14 KP = #7 Midterm Exam	E = Chs 12–13 K/S = Ch 6 Reflection/Integration #2
March 17-21 – Spring Break			
Mar 25 Mar 27	*Divine Providence	MV = #15–16 KP = #8	E = Ch 14 K/S = Ch 7
27 March: Last Day to Withdraw			
Apr 1 Apr 3	*God and Evil	MV = #17–18 KP = #9	E = Ch 15 K/S = Ch 8
Apr 8 Apr 10	*Angelology	MV = #19–20 KP = #10	E = Ch 16 K/S = Ch 9 Reflection/Integration #3
Apr 15 Apr 17	*Anthropology	MV = #21–22 KP = #11	E = Chs 17–18 K/S = Ch 10
21 April (8 A.M.): All Course Requirements for Graduating Seniors Complete			
Apr 22 Apr 24	*Anthropology	MV = #23–24 KP = #12	E = Ch 19 K/S = Ch 11
Apr 29 May 1	*Hamartiology	MV = #25–26 KP = #13	E = Chs 20–21 K/S = Ch 12
May 6 May 8	*Hamartiology	Cumulative Scripture Quiz	E = Ch 22
May 12-16 – Final Exam Week Reflection/Integration #4 (May 13) Final Exam (May 15)			

MV = Memory Verse(s)

KP = Key Passage

E = Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*

K/S = Kreider/Svigel, *A Practical Primer on Theological Method*

Selected Bibliography

General Reference

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- Grenz, Stanley J., David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.
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- Holcomb, Justin S. *Know the Creeds and Councils*. Know Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Holloman, Henry W. *Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005.
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- Tanner, Norman P., ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. 2 vols. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990.
- Treier, Daniel J., and Walter A. Elwell, eds. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Trueman, Carl R. *The Creedal Imperative*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.

Systematic Theologies and Other Sources

Arminian/Wesleyan/Methodist

- Carter, Charles W., R. Duane Thompson, and Charles R. Wilson, eds. *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury, 1983.
- Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1988.
- Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville: Kingswood, 1994.
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Baptist

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Calvinist/Reformed

- Barth, Karl. *Systematic Theology*. 31 vols. Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Translated by G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, and Harold Knight. Study ed. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2009.
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Covenantal Theology

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Dispensationalism

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