



Online Course Syllabus
THS 660 O1
Patristic, Medieval, & Reformation Theology
Spring 2024

Contact Information

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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

Theological Reading Logs and Participation (35%; 2.5 pts/week): Our class will be centered around engaging primary sources. In order to engage these readings closely, you will submit reading logs every week (2 pts). They 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 portions of three or four. If there are multiple texts, the logs should cover multiple texts and they should cover the breadth of any given text (i.e., your logs should not merely be about the first 5 pages of a reading).

Students should submit 2 sets of 3-2-1 reading logs to Canvas by 11:59 PM on Thursday. See below for greater specification and some examples.

We will discuss each reading every week (.75 pts). There are two ways to fulfill this portion of the assignment.

Discussion Option 1: Post 2+ meaningful responses to your classmates on Canvas. Your responses should total about 400-words and they should engage both the text and your classmates reading log closely. For further details see the sections below on the nature of online discussions.

Discussion Option 2: There will be an optional weekly meeting to discuss the readings and your reading log. While you should still submit your reading log, if you choose to attend this meeting, you will NOT have to post discussion responses on Canvas.

Quizzes: (28% — 2 pts each): Each week will culminate with a quiz consisting of multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short answer questions over the lectures. Each quiz will be approximately ten questions. You are allowed to use your notes and books during the quiz, although the quiz must be taken alone and you may *not* Google answers. Quizzes will be posted at least by Monday night and must be taken before the end of the week (i.e., Sunday at 11:59 PM). Each of the fourteen quizzes is worth 2 pts (28% total).

Paper (30% total; 1 + 4 + 12.5 + 12.5 pts): This 3,000–4,000-word paper¹ will engage the themes, figures, and content of the class. You will submit an outline of the paper (1pt), detailing (A) the focus/research question of your paper, (B) an outline of your paper with headings and subheadings, (C) 150+ pages of primary source selections that you are committed to reading, (D) 50+ pages of secondary source selections that you are committed to reading, and (E) a tentative thesis of the paper and of each section. Then you will submit an initial draft of your paper on Canvas in Word or PDF format (12.5pts) and you will receive recommendations for edits. Your final draft is also worth 12.5 pts and should be submitted to Canvas. You will present your findings during the last week for 7–10 minutes (4pts).

Initial draft and final draft: Your initial draft will be graded, and you will receive recommendations on the draft. You should then make edits using “tracked changes.” Your final draft grade will be based upon the improvements that you made to your initial draft grade (and, therefore, cannot be worse than your initial draft grade). So if you choose not to make changes and simply resubmit your initial draft as the final draft, you will receive the exact same grade. For example, if you earn 11pts on the initial draft, you can simply resubmit the same paper and receive 11 pts on the final draft. Or, you can earn 11 pts on the initial draft, edit it, and earn 12.2 pts on the final draft.

There are three ways to fulfill this assignment:

Option A: Theological Dialogue Paper: This paper compares and contrasts two theologians within modern/postmodern theology and places them in dialogue — written like a script, but with footnotes. The paper will contain two sections: (1) a dialogue between your two figures (≈3,000+ words) and then (2) your own evaluation of the question at hand (≈1,00 words).

Option B: Theological Mentor Paper: This paper focuses on the life, thought, and significance of one theologian within modern and post-modern theology. It should briefly narrate their life and historical significance (≈ 1,000), then focus on a particular theme or themes within primary texts of the theologian (≈ 3,000), all seeking to answer the question “what has _____ taught you about X topic?” This should draw directly and primarily from primary sources.

Option C: Research Paper: Entering a contemporary conversation regarding one of the figures/topics introduced in the class, this paper should make a nuanced and well-supported claim that engages the sources (esp. primary sources) carefully.

Book Review (7% total; 1 + 6 pts): This is a 1,000-word book review of a recent (i.e., last 10 years) book that treats a figure or movement within this time period (roughly, the 1st to the 17th centuries).² About 750 words should be dedicated to a close summary and synthesis of the book; while about 250 words should be evaluation.

¹ This does NOT include footnotes or bibliography. Hard word-count requirements are +/- 10% of the limits listed and 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).

² Examples of popular recent books that could work would include, Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2021); Gavin Ortlund, *Retrieving Augustine's Doctrine of Creation: Ancient Wisdom for Current Controversy* (Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2020).

This *can be* (but does not need to be) a book that is related to your paper. However, your book must be approved by the professor.

Online Course Information

In an online course at Criswell College:

1. To meet 25–30% of the direct faculty interaction required by the college’s Credit Hour policy, instructors and all students enrolled in an online course will meet at scheduled class times throughout a semester/term using the video conferencing app, Zoom, found in the left-hand global menu in Canvas. Student cameras must remain on during the entirety of these video-conferencing sessions. (In order to be properly identified, students must upload a picture ID to their Canvas Account Profile *prior to the first online meeting.*)
2. The remaining direct faculty instruction is delivered using other means such as:
 - Lectures/instruction for students to watch at their convenience but in accordance with assignment due dates
 - Online content modules in which instructor provides feedback to student work
 - Tests/quizzes on which instructor provides feedback
 - Discussion boards on which instructor provides feedback

Canvas: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based Learning Management System (LMS). In online courses at Criswell College, instructors use Canvas to:

- organize course content on a module basis using organizational tools within Canvas,
- control the timing of course requirements through module control or assignment due dates to ensure that students are engaged for the full length of the semester or term,
- accept assignments from students only inside the Canvas course (emailed assignments are not acceptable),
- provide written feedback on assignments only within Canvas, preferably through Speedgrader,
- use the Announcement or e-mail feature in Canvas to communicate with the students rather than by broadcasting to a class email listserv outside of Canvas.
- use Zoom in Canvas for all “live” (synchronous) class sessions.

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.

Identity Verification

Students enrolled in online courses must verify their identity through the term for each course. Identity confirmation occurs through scheduled video conference calls, scheduled submission of assignments, quizzes or exams, participation in online discussions, student/instructor communication, and a picture ID submitted in the Canvas profile. For instructions on how to upload a profile picture, [click here](#).

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. Late work will not receive any feedback beyond a rubric grade.

Reading: I have a “5 hour rule,” whereby if you have not completed the weekly reading in 5 hours (of very focused attention), you are permitted to put the book down and “be done.” This is intended to prevent you from being overworked and to train you in reading wisely. You will have to learn how to skim certain sections, how to read other sections very carefully, and how to tell the difference. I did some of this work for you by placing some chapters of whole texts in bold and/or noting especially significant chapters.

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 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 “live” (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 an online 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.

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.”

NOTE: No end-of-semester extensions (i.e., “Incompletes”) will be granted for students taking Criswell College courses through Acadeum.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to the integrity of the College’s academic programs and to the success of its students. Defining and addressing academic dishonesty helps to ensure the maintenance of academic honesty among students.

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/her own,
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Course Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI can be used wisely, and it should be used accordingly in this class (if it is used at all). It should NOT be used to generate text or idea (e.g., you should never copy and paste), but can be used as a referee (e.g., double checking grammar and logic) and reference (e.g., sources; however, as with any source, “trust but verify”). Basically, any use of AI that would be considered plagiarism if pulled from another person or source is strictly prohibited. Any use of AI that would be permissible if aided by another person or resource, is permitted.

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.

NOTE: Acadeum students should have their Home Institution contact Criswell’s Acadeum Student Contact and acadeum@criswell.edu

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 Support

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 can be found 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 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

Week of January 20th — Introduction

Watch: Vides 1.1–3

Assignment: Introductory Discussion Posts

Assignment: Quiz #1

Module 1) Ante-Nicene Fathers

Week of January 27th — Creation — First Two Centuries

Watch: Videos 2.1–3

Read: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 4: 462–525 (PDF pgs. 1202–1341) [[link](#)]

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Didache [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Irenaeus, *On Apostolic Preaching*, §1–21 [\[link\]](#)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #2

Week of February 3rd — Scripture and Tradition — 3rd Century Fathers

Watch: Videos 3.1–3

Read: Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*, 243–265 (PDF pgs. 547–607) [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Clement, *Stromata*, 1:5–6, 9, 19–21 (ANF 2:305–8, 309–10, 321–35; PDF pgs. 675ff) [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, 421–29 [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Origen, *De Principiis*, 349–73 [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* [\[link\]](#) (§1-18)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #3

Module 2) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

Week of February 10th — Deity of the Son and Spirit — Nicaea and Constantinople I

Watch: Videos 4.1–3

Read: Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (including Lewis's preface)

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Nicene Creed [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Athanasian Creed [\[link\]](#)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #4

Week of February 17th — Humanity of the Son — Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II & III

Watch: Videos 5.1–3

Read: Cyril's Letters to Nestorius and Anathemas, NPNF² 14:197–98; 201–18 (PDF pgs. 408ff) [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Definition of Chalcedon [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Constantinople III: Definition of Faith (NPNF² 14:254–58) [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read either: Leo's *Tome*, NPNF² 14:254–58 [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Orations*, XXIX–XXX (NPNF² 7:301–18) [\[link\]](#)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #5

Week of February 24th — Graciousness of God — Augustine

Watch: Videos 6.1–3

Pick at least One Reading

Either Read: Augustine, *Nature and Grace*, Chs 21–39 [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Chs 1–5; 35–40 [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Either read: Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 8 (NPNF¹ 1:116–29; PDF pgs. 281–310) [\[link\]](#)

Or read: Augustine, *City of God*, Books 13–14 (NPNF¹ 2:245–83; PDF pgs. 606–90) [\[link\]](#)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Book Review Selection (due by March 2nd at 11:59 PM)

Assignment: Quiz #6

Module 3) Early Medieval Church

Week of March 3rd — Schism & Knowledge of God — Early Medieval Church

Watch: Videos 7.1–3

Read: John of Damascus, *On Holy Images*, 1–31 [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Rule*, Part 2 (NPNF² 12:9–23) [\[link\]](#)

Read: Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitory*, Ch 2 (NPNF² 11:132) [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Lombard, *Sentences* [PDF]

Read: Cassian, *On the Protection of God*, Chs 6–13 (NPNF² 11:424–30) [\[link\]](#)

Read: Palamas, *The Triads* [PDF]

Assignment: Reading Logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #7

Week of March 10th — Reading Week

Assignment: Book Review (due March 16th at 11:59 PM)

Week of March 17th — Spring Break

Module 4) High Medieval Theology

Week of March 24th — Atonement — Scholasticism Introduced

Watch: Videos 8.1–2

1st Read: Anselm, “Why God Became Man,” in *Major Works*, 260–355.

Then Read: Anselm, “Proslogion,” §2–18 in *Major Works*, 87–98

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #8

Week of March 31st — Virtue — Aquinas and Proto-Reform

Watch: Videos 9.1–3

Read: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q. 49, 51–52, 55, 61–63, 65–67, 71–73 [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

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]

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #9

Assignment: Paper outline (due March 31st at 11:59 PM)

Module 5) Reformation(s)

Week of April 7th — Justification — Reformation in Germany

Watch: Videos 10.1–3

Read: Luther, *Freedom of a Christian*, 467–538

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Luther, *95 Theses*, 13–46 [PDF]

Read: Luther, “What to Look For and Expect in the Gospels” [\[link\]](#)

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #10

Week of April 14th — Union with Christ — Swiss and French Reformation

Watch: Videos 11.1–3

Read: Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.i, I.xi, II.xv–xvi (37–39, 90–103, 425–52) [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Marburg Colloquy, 71–107 [PDF]

Read: Zell, “The Miserere Psalm Meditated, Prayed, and Paraphrased” [PDF]

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #11

Assignment: Initial draft of Paper (due April 16th at 11:59 PM)

April 21th — Commitment (and Compromise?) — Anabaptist and English Reformation

Watch: Videos 12.1–2

Pick at least One Reading

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] [\[link\]](#)

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Simons, *Foundation and Plain Instruction*, 12–39 (PDF pgs. 21–54) [\[link\]](#)

Read: Simons, *Scriptural Explanation of Excommunication*, 122–37 [\[link\]](#)

Read: Hubmaier, *Concerning Heretics and Those that Burn Them* [PDF]

Pick at least One Reading

Read: 39 articles, 487–514 [\[link\]](#)

Read: Schleithem Confession of Faith, 247–53 [PDF]

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #12

April 28th — Purgation, Justification, and Contemplation — Catholic Reformation, Mysticism, and Jansenism

Watch: Videos 13.1–3

Read: Cajetan, “Faith and Works” [PDF]

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* [PDF]

Read: Pascal, *Pensées* [PDF]

Read: Trent, Session 4 (pp. 17–21), Session 6 (pp. 30–49), Session 7 (pp. 53–58) [[link](#)]

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #13

Module 6) Post-Reformation

Week of May 5th — Regeneration & Sanctification — Reformed and Remonstrant; Introducing Puritanism, Pietism, and Methodism

Watch: Videos 14.1–3

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Five Articles of the Remonstrants, 545–49 [[link](#)]

Read: Canons of Dort, 581–97 [[link](#)]

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation” [[link](#)]

Read: Spener, *Pia Desideria* [pdf]

Pick at least One Reading

Read: Herbert, *The Temple* [pdf]

Read: Wesley, “Free Grace” [pdf]

Assignment: Reading logs and responses

Assignment: Quiz #14

Week of May 12th

Assignment: Presentation of Paper (due May 16th at 11:59 PM)

Assignment: Final draft of Paper (due May 16th at 11:59 PM)

Theological Reading Logs (3-2-1s)

Engaging with primary sources is the cornerstone of this class. In order to facilitate this, we will submit reading logs over our readings following the 3-2-1 format. Each week, you should submit 2 sets of 3-2-1s (so 12+ observations/claims/questions in total).

3-2-1 Basics

3 — careful observations connected to the text (what you observed and WHY/HOW it’s true **FROM the text**)

2 — questions (especially about clarity, coherence, application, evaluation, or devotional significance)

1 — “take away” you hope to embrace, believe, apply

3-2-1 Explanation and Examples

Observations should be closely engaged with the text, focusing on at least one specific quote (or connecting multiple claims together). Quotes can be copied and pasted, but the observation should be in your own words. A good observation does **not simply say “that”** something is the case, **but “why”** and **“how”** something is the case.

Lazy Observations

- Bare historical facts: Augustine died in 430 AD.
- Broad facts: “Augustine was a theologian.” “Augustine believed in original sin.”
- Obvious evaluations: “When Augustine says, ‘God exists,’ he is right.”
- Unengaged with the readings: My grandma really likes Augustine because he said, “_____”
- Observations about chapter headings/sub-headings: Augustine has a theology of grace.
- [basically any observations that you could make WITHOUT doing the reading or WITHOUT thinking about the readings]

Helpful Categories of Observations and Examples:

- **Central historical idea:** The main historical idea of this chapter is _____ as illustrated by the author’s claims that “_____” and “_____.”
- **Central theological idea:** The main theological idea of this chapter is _____ as illustrated by the author’s claims that “_____” and “_____.”
- **Thematic:** “When Luther says, “_____” [citation], it illustrates his “theology of the cross” (defined as _____) [citation]
- **Definitional:** Luther’s “theology of the cross” [citation] seems to mean _____ [your own summary]
- **Historical influence:** Luther’s work to reform the church in Germany seemed to have influenced the start of _____ because it follows Luther’s view of _____ and _____
- **Analogical:** Luther’s “theology of the cross” [citation] could be illustrated as a(n) _____ because _____
- **Biblical:** Augustine’s doctrine of original sin seems to draw heavily from Romans 5, since Augustine says, “_____” [citation] like Paul (Rom 5:19).
- **Polemical:** When Augustine says, “_____” [citation], it seems likely that he is opposing Pelagius who said, “_____” [citation].
- **Similarity:** When Luther said, “_____” [citation], it reminds me of Augustine’s claim, “_____” [citation]

Questions should move from specifics in the text to our lives today. The more concrete the better. That is, these should not just be impressions from the readings (e.g., “this reading made me feel _____”), but they should draw concretely from specific claims. Further, they should not be general recommendations or encouragements (e.g., this calls me to love God more), but apply specifically to specific situations in life. If you don’t want your professor and classmates to know the specifics of your application, you can simply insert a _____---

For example,

- ❖ **Clarification:** “When Augustine says “X,” does she mean Y or Z? It might be Y because of _____ and it might be Z because of _____.
- ❖ **Coherence:** “When Augustine says, “X,” how does he square it with “Y” claim that he made earlier. He may do so by understanding “X” in _____ way.”
- ❖ **Connection:** Connection questions: “Calvin’s claim X sounds similar to Aquinas’ claim Y because _____. Is he drawing this from Aquinas?”
- ❖ **Application:** “If Augustine is right when he says, ‘x,’ ‘y,’ and ‘z,’ then do our churches need to start incorporating more songs about ‘x, y, and z’ (because we don’t, currently,

sing any/many)? If we fail to sing songs about this, do we miss out on the beauty that Augustine describes in point 'z?'

- ❖ **Evaluation:** "Is Augustine right when he says, 'X?' If he's right then it seems to imply that we should sell all of our possessions and give everything to the poor; However, Matthew 19 is not meant to be taken literally as we see in the ministry of Paul for the Jerusalem church (1 Corinthians 16:1–2)."
- ❖ **Devotional significance:** "If Augustine is right when he says, 'X,' does this mean that I should stop being jealous of _____'s car."

Notice that the above questions are (A) engaged with the readings and (B) engaged with your own knowledge. Minimally, they are not "lazy" questions. For example, "What does X mean?" and "is X true" are lazy questions. But the above are not lazy because they engage the reading or your own knowledge.

Take aways should be as personal and directly applicable as possible. However, personal does not mean disconnected from the reading. So focus on specifics in the texts and specifics in your life/beliefs/church/etc.

Principles of Good Discussions Online

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 from what has come before and not interjecting clever thoughts 30 minutes after we moved on from the topic.

Collaboratively include: Everyone 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."

Discussion Responses

Embodying the above principles, your discussion responses will likely enact one+ of the following:

- 1) **Ask** a clarifying question of their post. For example, you might provide two valid interpretations of your classmate's post and ask if they mean A or B.
- 2) **Note** something that you've learned about the text, yourself, or God from your classmate's post.
- 3) Charitably **disagree** with the explanation/analysis of the quote and provide reasons for your position.
- 4) **Expand** upon their analysis. For example, you might suggest that in addition to your classmate's point Y, Z is also true.
- 5) **Compare/connect** your classmate's response to another text from the reading. Ask if they appreciate this comparison or think it is valid?
- 6) **Explore** the implications of your classmate's claim. For example, you might suggest that "if you're right about Y, then implications 1, 2, and 3 must also be 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.

Paper outline details

Necessary Paper Details

Specific topic:

Specific Theologians engaged:

Anticipated additional sources to include: (name at least three primary sources and three secondary sources)

Working Thesis: (of your concluding section)

Working outline: (of your concluding 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.

Dialogue Paper Details

This assignment presents two sides of a theological discussion introduced within this time period as though it were a transcribed dialogue between Christians on both sides defending their position. This should not simply be quotes from both sides stacked against each other but should be an articulation of these positions in the readings. You should imagine yourself as the moderator and your specific theologians as the dialogue partners.

For example, you might place John Murray and Barth in dialogue about the role of faith in baptism.

[intro]. . .

Ty: Now that we’ve gotten introductions out of the way, why don’t we start with your definitions of what baptism is?

Barth: I believe that baptism is the human act of obedience in response to the faithfulness of God; therefore, requiring humans to be able to take responsibility and enact that obedience (CD IV/4, 101)—actions that infants are not yet capable of (CD IV/4, 165).

. . .

Murray: But, Dr. Barth, if God exercises his love in freedom (as you suggest), then it seems as though you have as much power to bring yourself to faith as an infant has to bring herself to the waters of baptism, making baptism most fitting for infants.

...

Evaluation: While Warfield point about _____ is valuable because of _____, I side with Barth's claim because _____