



Course Syllabus
CRIS 100
Roots of a Christian Scholar
Fall 2025

Class Information

Day and Time: M/W 9:30 to 10:45

Room Number: E 208

Contact Information

Instructors' Names	Dr. Vickie S. Brown	Dr. Curtis Woods
Instructors' Phones	214.818.1341	214.818.1316
Instructors' E-mails	vbrown@criswell.edu	cwoods@criswell.edu
Instructors' Office hours	https://calendly.com/vbrown-11	By Appointment

Course Description and Prerequisites

An introduction to the organizational structure and educational philosophy of Criswell College with special emphasis on integrating insights garnered from biblical and theological studies into every academic program.

Course Objectives

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

1. Understand the meaning of Christian Liberal Arts and Christian worldview development.
2. Appreciate the way in which biblically-based, theological convictions influence one's relationship with the triune God, especially convictions about the work of the Word and Spirit.
3. Incorporate biblically-based, theological thinking into her or his own leadership as described in the Criswell Graduate Profile.
4. Recognize various ways in which Christian theology is drawn from Scripture and articulate the central Christian doctrines.
5. Identify academic success strategies in order to overcome roadblocks to collegiate success.

Required Textbooks

Gene C. Fant Jr, *Liberal Studies: A Student's Guide* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

Philip Graham Ryken, *Christian Worldview: A Student's Guide* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013).

Michael J. Wilkins & Erik Thoennes, *Biblical and Theological Studies: A Student's Guide* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018).

College Success. University of Minnesota Libraries, 2010. (ISBN: 9781946135063). Available online at <https://open.lib.umn.edu/collegesuccess/>.

Recommended Reading

Adler, Mortimer. *How To Read a Book*. Revised ed. New York: Touchstone, 1972 (ISBN: 9780671212094).

Course Requirements and Assignments

Procrastination is the arrogant assumption that God owes you another chance to do tomorrow what He gave you a chance to do today. Rosie O'Neal

1. **Class Participation (12 points):** Repeated exposure to the classroom environment and the ongoing input of the instructor and other students in the class is vital to the purpose of the course. Class participation points may **only** be obtained by coming to class and engaging with the material.
2. **Collaborative Group Activities (12 points):** Students will work in small groups during class sessions and complete various collaborative activities. **All** collaborative group activities take place during class sessions.
3. **Reading Quizzes (20 points):** In classical Greek antiquity, Aristotle popularized the idea that "Repetition aids memory and restatement strengthens understanding." As such, you will have weekly quizzes designed to test your knowledge, comprehension, and application of the lectures and reading assignments.
4. **Comprehensive Final Exam (20 points):** This exam will test your ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate ideas presented in the course. Your study prep for your final begins the first week of class and ends the day of the exam.
5. **Writing (36 points); cannot pass course without submitting Papers 1, 2, and 3):** Students will submit a total of three (3) papers: Paper 1 demonstrates their current understanding of basic theological beliefs by assessing the student's current theological method. Paper 2 evaluates the student's maturation process. Each student should articulate core doctrines of the Christian faith with more conciseness and clarity at the conclusion of the semester. Please pay special attention to the bullet points below to attain the most possible points available.

Papers 1 and 2 (12 points each =24 total points) will answer the question: **"What do you currently believe about the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, human nature, sin, salvation, the Church, and eschatology?"**

- Place the date, your name, paper #, course #, and word count in the upper right corner of the front page. (The papers do not need a cover sheet.)

- This is a five-paragraph essay with no more than **500 words**.
- You are free to consult any sources in formulating this response; however, this should be your statement of belief. Cite other sources sparingly.
- Pay attention to formal aspects such as syntax, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Do not simply leave a section blank if you do not have or are unable to articulate your beliefs on any of the particular topics. Simply indicate that in your paper.
- Submit paper in Canvas.
- Papers will be graded on substantial clarity, logical coherency, as well as very basic formal attributes (e.g., grammar, syntax, capitalization, spelling, punctuation, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font).
- Paper #2 should display a development in your theological beliefs. You are encouraged to revise Paper #1.
- **Students cannot pass CRIS 100 without submitting Paper 2.**

Papers 3 (12 points) will answer the questions: **“What are the top three to five challenges to your academic success that you identified this semester? What resources did you learn about in this course to help you succeed in light of these specific challenges?”**

- Paper is 3-5 pages.
- Submit paper in Canvas.
- Papers will be graded on substantial clarity, logical coherency, as well as very basic formal attributes (e.g., grammar, syntax, capitalization, spelling, punctuation, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font).

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Video Recording

To ensure FERPA compliance when a course is live-streamed or recorded, students can opt out of video recordings by requesting seating in a designated area off camera. Students who sit outside of this area are giving implicit permission to be recorded.

Class Attendance:

Students should only enroll in courses they are able to attend regularly.

- **On-campus** students are expected to attend class **in person** according to the course syllabus.
- Students enrolled in the **online section** must pay any applicable online course fees.
- Online students are expected to attend class **synchronously** at the scheduled time via the designated video conferencing platform, Zoom, found in the left-hand global menu in Canvas.
- Online students must have their **cameras turned on with sound muted** during class, and actively participate in discussions and activities. In order to be properly identified, students must upload a picture ID to their Canvas Account Profile *prior to the first online meeting*. For instructions on how to upload a profile picture, [click here](#).

Missed Classes:

- Each instructor may decide how attendance impacts your grade and learning objectives. Details are provided within the course syllabus.
- Students are responsible for catching up on any material missed due to absence or tardiness.

- Instructors are **not required** to allow make-up work for missed classes.

Attendance & Financial Aid:

- Students receiving **grants, loans, or scholarships** must meet participation requirements set by the college.
- It is the student's responsibility to:
 - Review relevant sections of the Academic Catalog.
 - Contact the **Financial Aid Office** for details on how attendance affects aid.
 - Understand the consequences of non-participation.

Census Period Attendance Requirement:

- Though Criswell College does not officially take attendance, it must verify that students **begin their courses** to meet federal aid regulations.
- **During the census period** (first two weeks of a 16-week semester or first week of shorter terms), students must participate in **academically related activities**, or they may be dropped from the course.

Examples of Qualifying Activities:

- Attending class in person or via live video with the instructor present
- Submitting an assignment, quiz, or exam
- Taking part in assigned tutorials, study groups, or discussion boards
- Having documented communication with the instructor about course content

Important Note:

Simply logging into Canvas or a Zoom session without participating (e.g., camera off, no interaction) **does not count** as attendance.

Canvas:

- Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based Learning Management System (LMS).
- **For 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

Important Note:

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.

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

Assigning grade definitions (i.e., above average, average, below average) is optional. Please delete the last column below if not assigning definitions. Additionally, delete these instructions when completing syllabus.

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)

As technology continues to “evolve,” students may be tempted to rely more heavily on artificial intelligence to complete projects than is academically supportive of their learning and skills’ attainment. Therefore, in this course students are not to use artificial intelligence to do more than rudimentary tasks such as have been routinely supplied in programs such as Word. **Papers composed by ChatGPT and similar programs will be considered plagiarism.**

Examples of AI-related functions you **may not use** without permission:

- Text Generation – You may not use AI to generate text for use in an assignment.
- Outline Generation – You may not use AI to generate an outline for an assignment.

AI-related tools you **may use** without permission:

- Spellcheck and grammar – built into Word, Pages, and Google Docs
- AI re-writing tools – tools that take what you’ve written and help make it clearer, such as what Grammarly offers. However, you must cite Grammarly or other sources in your assignment/paper and submit both original draft of paper and the final paper.
- AI research and summarize – tools that help you find sources to cite, such as the new AI tools built into Logos Bible Software.)

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 a wide range of academic resources and receive research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, located on the second floor of the Education Building.

Login credentials for accessing the library's databases are emailed to students near the beginning of each semester.

For more information or assistance, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu or visit www.criswell.edu/academics/wallace-library/.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to enhance their skills and build confidence. All tutors are recommended by faculty to ensure they are qualified to support the student body. To meet with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly at <https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>. The Tutoring Center is located in room E203 of the Education Building.

For questions, email tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

W K	DATE	CLASS CONTENT	READING	Quizzes	Paper
1	8-18 (M)	Intro to Course			
	8-20 (W)	Intro to Course		Adjusting to Criswell Activity Planners Activity Scavenger Hunt	
2	8-25 (M)	Overcoming Academic Imposter Syndrome/Criswell's Mission, Vision, and Values	SS. Ch. 1 College Experience SS. Ch. 4 Taking Notes		
	8-27 (W)	Graduate Profile & Note-Taking Student Success Officer	Graphic Organizers	Planners Due Scavenger Hunt Due Timesheet Activity	
3	9-01 (M)	Labor Day: No Class			
	9-03 (W)	Organizing Your Time Library/Tutoring Center Field Trip	SS. Ch.2 Organization	Timesheet Activity Due	
4	9-08 (M)	Christian Liberal Arts Education	Fant: 1-50	Quiz 1	Paper 1
	9-10 (W)	Healthy Living			
5	9-15 (M)	Don't Call Me Liberal! (Wisdom and Liberal Learning)	Fant: 51-109	Quiz 2	
	9-17 (W)	Collegiate Writing	SS. Ch. 8 Writing & Presenting	Library/Tutoring Center Activities Due	
6	9-22 (M)	That's The Way, I see it! (What is a Worldview?)	Ryken: 1-44	Quiz 3	
	9-24 (W)	Remembering & Thinking	SS. Ch. 3 Thinking SS. Ch. 4 Remembering	Critical Thinking Activity	

7	9-29 (M)	The Good Ol' Days (The Way We Were)	Ryken: 45-74	Quiz 4	
	10-01 (W)	Taking Exams	SS. Ch. 6 Preparing to Test		
8	10-6 (M)	Are We There Yet? (A Work in Progress)	Ryken: 75-100	Quiz 5	
	10-08 (W)	Faculty Student Relationships	SS. Ch. 7 Interacting with Faculty	Who's Who Faculty Activity	
10-13 and 10-15 Student Development Week: Catch Up, Get Ahead, Take a Breath					
9	10-20 (M)	Faith Seeking Understanding (What is Theology?)	Wilkins & Thoennes: 1-40	Quiz 6	
	10-22 (W)	Metacognition	Problem Solving	100 Year-Old Decision	
	**10-23	**Last Day to Withdraw			
10	10-27 (M)	Biblical Studies	Wilkins & Thoennes: 41-84	Quiz 7	
	10-29 (W)	Stewardship and Money Financial Aid	SS. Ch. 11 Finances		
11	11-03 (M)	Theological Studies	Wilkins & Thoennes: 85-112	Quiz 8	
	11-05 (W)	Your Future Program Directors' Day	SS. Ch.12 Future Choices	Program Organizer Activity	
12	11-10 (M)	The Church and Salvation (Ecclesiology and Soteriology)	Read Ephesians	Quiz 9	
	11-12 (W)	Biblical Wholeness Mental Health Strategist			
13	11-17 (M)	Eschatology (God Fulfilling His Purposes)		Quiz 10	
	11-19 (W)	Life Strategies Going Forward	Alumni Panel		
	11-24 & 11-26	Thanksgiving Week			
	12-01 (M)	Corporate Formation: Legacy			Paper

14	12-03 (W)	Jullien Gordan			2 Due
15	12-08 (M)	Comprehensive Exam Prep			Paper 3 Due
	12-10 (W)	Comprehensive Exam			Final

Selected Bibliography

Hudak, P. & Gordon, J., *101 Things to Do Before You Graduate*, Real World 101, 2011.

Seemiller, C. & Grace, M., *Generation Z Goes to College*, Jossey-Bass, 2016.