



Course Syllabus

THS 203 L2

Systematic Theology I

Fall 2026

Class Information

Day and Time: Tues & Thurs 3:15–4:30 PM

Room Number: E205

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Ty Kieser

Instructor Email: tkieser@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: (214) 818–1306; (309) 573–6624

Instructor Office Hours: Mondays 12–1 PM; Tuesdays 1–3 PM; Wednesdays 8–9 AM. Sign up [here](#)

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 end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Articulate a survey-level understanding of Christian doctrines—including their biblical, historical, cultural, and theological components—with attention to the distinctives of the evangelical tradition.
- Defend theological commitments with clarity, charity, and coherence.
- Formulate nuanced questions regarding theology and theological inquiry.
- Apply Christian doctrinal content toward its ecclesiological, cultural, and devotional ends.

We will pursue these objectives under the assumption that rigorous theological learning is an act of Christian discipleship that will, prayerfully, bring us into closer communion with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit.

Required Textbooks

Jones, Beth Felker. *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*. 2nd ed. Baker Academic, 2023.

Theological Anthology #1. Distributed in class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Grammar Quizzes: (25 pts: 5 pts each) Each “grammar week” will culminate with a quiz consisting of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions over material from the reading and lectures. Each quiz will be approximately 20 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 or use AI. Quizzes will be posted by the end of the week (i.e., by Friday at 5 PM) and must be taken before the end of the following week (i.e., by Friday at 11:59 PM). Each of the five quizzes is worth 5 pts of your final grade (25% total).

Class Preparation: (20 pts: 1 pt/submission): Before each class students will submit their notes from the reading, naming 3+ key arguments/claims/definitions from the reading that they want to remember (with citations) and 2 text-engaged-questions. See below for examples. Each entry is worth 1 pt (20 pts total). Since there are 22 classes with preparation, your lowest 2 grades drop—mostly for the sake of giving you extra time to write your essay, prepare your podcast, and live faithfully before the Lord.

Biblical-theological Meditations (10 pts: .5 pts each): Since Scripture is the ultimate source of theology and reading Scripture well is one of the main goals of theology, students theologically engage Scripture in preparation for every class. For each class session, students will meditate on at least one biblical text for at least 10 minutes. Each entry is worth .5pts (10 pts total). Since there are 22 classes with meditations, your lowest 2 grades drop—mostly for the sake of giving you extra time to write your essay, prepare your podcast, and live faithfully before the Lord.

Module Reflection and Participation (16 pts: 4 pts/module): Class meetings are intended to be for the purpose of forming students and meaningful formation often requires strong effort and commitment. So after we have completed the module, you will reflect on your and your classmates’ participation, preparation, and learning during that module—keep good notes throughout the module as go and you’ll do great! Your grade is not directly tied to other students’ assessments, but it can/will factor in.

Podcast Preparation and Recordings (16 pts: 4 pts each): At the end of every module, you will record a podcast with your podcast crew, consisting of your fellow students. Each student will submit their notes that they used to prepare for the podcast and one student in the group will submit the recording on Canvas. Your notes will be graded for their thoroughness and engagement with the reading—see below for specifics—and your group will be given a collective grade. This is basically your module exam, please treat it as such.

Theological Analysis Paper (13 pts – 1 + 2 + 2 + 4 + 4 pts): To help you think more critically about key doctrines, questions, readings, and the world that you live in, you will be asked to write a brief theological reflection (1,000–1,250-words) on a cultural artifact (e.g., art, a movie, story, etc.). The specific topics of these papers will largely be up to you but refer to the criteria below. This paper will be submitted in several steps. You will submit an outline of the paper (1 pt), reading notes and quotes from your three+ sources, at least 5 quotes/citations per source (2 pts), initial draft of the paper (4 pts), peer-feedback of another students paper (2 pts), and the final draft of the paper (4 pts)

Grade of your 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 can only improve 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 a 90% on the initial draft, you can simply resubmit the same paper and receive 90% on the final draft.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Late work: For all assignments except your reading-logs, your grade will be reduced by 10% for each calendar day an assignment is late. If your logs are late (even by a few minutes), you can only receive 50%. However, any/all missed module assignment may be submitted for up to 50% credit. However, you must submit all module 1 work before module 2, all module 2 work before module 3, and so on.

Extension *Gratis*: For every assignment except your class preparation you all receive a free, automatic one-day (i.e., 24 hour) extension. 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.

Extra Credit: Extra credit is baked into the course at multiple points. There will be no additional extra credit.

Technology: Cell phones should *not* be used during class time. Additionally, laptops inherently have several negative consequences on classes that prioritize discussion.¹ However, I recognize that computers also have several advantages and that some of the assigned reading will be originally accessed digitally. 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.

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.

¹ In addition to the potentially distracting nature of computers for the user and their neighbors, the negative consequences can include 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).

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

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)

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. For example, you wouldn't let your friend re-write your paper (or even an entire sentence), so you shouldn't let AI re-write your paper (or even an entire sentence).

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

Prolegomena Module

August 18th — Introduction

Introduction on Canvas

1 Tim 1:5; Prov 8:9–11—completed together during class

August 20th — What is Theology

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* & Hauerwas (*TA*, 1–3)—completed together during class

Podcast Crews Selected

August 25th — Prolegomena Grammar I

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 1 (11–20)

Prov 11:14; 18:2; 19:2

August 27th — Prolegomena Grammar II

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 1 (21–30)

Romans 11:33–12:2

Grammar Quiz #1 (due by Sep 4th)

September 1st — Revelation Grammar I

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 2 (31–42)

Romans 1:19–2:3

September 3rd — Revelation Grammar II

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 2 (43–54)

2 Tim 3:16–17

Grammar Quiz #2

September 8th — Logic of Theologizing (no in person class)

Putman, *Method of Christian Theology*

1 Tim 4:6–8

September 10th — Logic of Knowing God (no in person class)

Packer, *Knowing God*

Ps 115:1–8

September 15th — Logic of Reading Scripture

González, *Reading the Bible in Spanish*

2 Peter 1:19–21

Module Reflection and Participation #1

September 17th — Podcast

Podcast Preparation

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Why should we study theology? ² | 6. What is inspiration and why does it matter? ⁷ |
| 2. How should we study theology? ³ | 7. Is Scripture inerrant and why does it matter? ⁸ |
| 3. Can we know God in nature and why does it matter? ⁴ | 8. What is illumination and why does it matter? ⁹ |
| 4. How should we understand special revelation? ⁵ | 9. How can we read Scripture wisely? ¹⁰ |
| 5. What is the nature of Scripture? ⁶ | 10. ???????????????? |

Doctrine of God Module

September 22nd — Doctrine of God Grammar I

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 3 (55–64)

Isaiah 40:28–31

September 24th — Doctrine of God Grammar II

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 3 (65–76)

John 10:25–30

² Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, Introduction, ch. 1, ch. 3.

³ Akin (ed.), *A Theology for the Church* pages 39–66.

⁴ <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/NaturalTheology>

⁵ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1 Ch. 11

⁶ Thompson, *The Doctrine of Scripture*, chs. 2–3

⁷ Thompson, *The Doctrine of Scripture*, chs. 2–3

⁸ Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy (Ch 4. by Vanhoozer)

⁹ Miller, *Seeing by the Light*, Ch. 9

¹⁰ Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God*, ch 6

Grammar Quiz #3

September 29th — Logic of Divine Simplicity

Kapic and Kieser, “The God Who Is (and Was and Is to Come)”

Anselm, *Proslogium*

1 John 4:7–12

October 1st — Logic of God’s Triunity

Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*

Matt 3:16–17

October 6th — Logic of the Broken Trinity

McCall, *Forsaken*

John 5:19–20; Romans 5:8

Module Reflection and Participation #2

October 8th — Podcast

Prepare Podcast Topics

1. How should we argue for God’s existence?¹¹
2. What does it mean to call God “simple,” and why does it matter?¹²
3. What does it mean for God to be _____ [pick an incommunicable attribute] and why does it matter?¹³
4. What does it mean for God to be _____ [pick a communicable attribute] and why does it matter?¹⁴
5. How can we see the Trinity in the Old Testament (when read with the NT)?¹⁵
6. How can we see the Trinity in the New Testament?¹⁶
7. How has the church historically understood the Trinity?¹⁷
8. How have people historically misunderstood the Trinity?¹⁸
9. Why does it matter that God is triune for salvation and revelation?¹⁹
10. ??????????

Doctrine of Creation Module

October 13th — Doctrine of Creation Grammar I

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 4 (77–88)

Genesis 1:1–5

October 15th — Doctrine of Creation Grammar II

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 4 (88–96)

Acts 17:26–27

Grammar Quiz #4

¹¹ Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 79–104

¹² Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, Discourse 3

¹³ Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, Pick your Ch.

¹⁴ Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, Pick your Ch.

¹⁵ Sanders, *Triune God*, Ch. 8

¹⁶ Sanders, *Triune God*, Ch. 7

¹⁷ Allison, *Historical Theology*, Ch. 11

¹⁸ Wilhite, *The Gospel According to Heretics*, Chs. 4–5 (Sabellius and Arius)

¹⁹ Eilers & Strobel, *Sanctified by Grace*, Ch1.

October 20th — The Logic of God, Good, and Evil

Groothuis, “The Problem of Evil”

Heb 11:3

October 22nd — The Logic of Angels & Demons

Stamps, *Angels and Demons*

Heb 1:13–14

October 27th — Logic of Food

Wirzba, *Faith and Food*

1 Tim 4:3–5

Outline of Letter to a Skeptical Friend (due October 26th at 11:59 PM)

Module Reflection and Participation #3

October 29th — Podcast

Prepare Podcast topics

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Why does non-human creation matter? ²⁰ | 6. The logical problem of evil ²⁵ |
| 2. Why does creation from nothing matter? ²¹ | 7. How should we respond to suffering? ²⁶ |
| 3. How should we read creation in Genesis 1 & 2? ²² | 8. Why do angels/demons matter? ²⁷ |
| 4. How is God involved in the world? Why does it matter? ²³ | 9. How should Christians relate to our culture(s)? ²⁸ |
| 5. Why does a good God let bad things happen? ²⁴ | 10. ?????????????????????? |

Humanity Module

November 3rd — Anthropology Grammar I

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 5 (97–107)

1 Corinthians 15:35–57

November 5th — Anthropology Grammar II

Jones, *Practicing*, ch. 5 (107–116)

Psalms 139:1–24

Grammar Quiz #5

November 10th — Logic of the Image of God

Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny*

²⁰ Jones, *Practicing Christian Doctrine*, 77–96 + 10 pages

²¹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:406–41

²² Charles (ed.), *Reading Genesis 1-2*, pick one of the first 5 chapters to read AND read the responses

²³ Allen and Swain, *Christian Dogmatics* ch. 7 (pages 148–163)

²⁴ Keller, *Reason for God*, chs. 2 & 5

²⁵ <https://iep.utm.edu/evil-log/>

²⁶ Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, chs. 8; *Theology Questions Everyone Asks*, Ch. 5 by McNutt

²⁷ <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/AngelsinChristianTheology>

²⁸ Edgar, *Created and Creating*, ch 2 (pages 51–85)

Genesis 1:26–28

November 12th — Logic of Finitude

Kapic, *You're only Human*

1 Thess 4:11–12

November 17th — Writing Week

November 19th — Writing Week

Reading Notes (due November 22nd at 11:59 PM)

Initial draft of your theological analysis paper (due November 22nd at 11:59 PM) – submit to Canvas

AND send to your classmate

November 24th — Thanksgiving Break (no class)

November 26th — Thanksgiving Break (no class)

December 1st — Logic of Fallen Sexuality

Trueman, *The Desecration of Man*

Rom 5:12–21

Peer Feedback on their theological analysis paper (due December 1st at 11:59 PM) – submit to Canvas

AND send to your classmate

Module Reflection and Participation #4

December 3rd — Podcast

Prepare Podcast topic

1. What is the meaning of the image of God?²⁹
2. What is the nature of the body and soul?³⁰
3. What is the purpose of life?³¹
4. What is the nature of marriage?³²
5. How should we think about homosexuality?³³

6. How should we think about gender? Why does it matter?³⁴
7. How should we think about race & ethnicity? Why does it matter?³⁵
8. What is the nature of sin?³⁶
9. What is original sin?³⁷
10. ??????????????

Final, revised draft of your theological analysis paper (due December 11th at 11:59 PM)

Module Late work due December 11th at 11:59 PM

²⁹ Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, Ch. 2

³⁰ Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, Ch. 4

³¹ Bavinck, *Mangalia Dei*, 11-21; Kierkegaard, *The Essential Kierkegaard*, Christian Discourses 312-32)

³² Winner, *Real Sex*, Chs. 1–2

³³ Sprinkle, *Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage?*, pick 30 pages

³⁴ Hiestand & Wilson, *Beauty, Order, and Mystery*, Ch. 2.

³⁵ Chatraw & Swallow Prior, *Cultural Engagement*, Ch. 7

³⁶ Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, Ch. 6.

³⁷ McCall, *Against God and Nature*, Ch. 4 (149–84)

Biblical Theological Meditation Examples

There are a variety of ways to complete this assignment. Each includes spending 10+ minutes _____

- Attempting to memorize the text; OR
- Praying through the passage; OR
- 4 R's: **Reading** [what do you notice in the argument, claims, truth of the text], **reflecting** [what does this mean for who you are before God], **responding** [what is God calling you to]; **resting** in truth [spend time in silence with the God of the text]

Preparation Questions

Our grammar classes will be structured around engaging the questions that you draw from the readings. Therefore, you will write 2+ questions per class (i.e., four+ per week). These questions should be engaged with the readings (including Scripture) and thoughtful. You should cite at least one claim in Jones, preferably connecting it to other claims related to that theme and/or biblical texts related the claim. These questions should have two parts: (1) the question itself; (2) the evidence and explanation of the question.

The question itself: This should be a brief, precise, and genuine question.

- Questions can be of a variety of different kinds:
 - *Clarifying* questions: “When the Jones says “X,”³⁸ does she mean Y or Z?”
 - *Evaluation* questions: “If the book says ‘X,’ but Scripture says Y, is X really true?”
 - *Interpretation* questions: “If X is true, then how should we read and understand Y biblical text?”
 - *Extension* questions: “If X is true, then is Y also true, since Y seems to follow from X?”
 - *Coherence* question: “I’ve always been taught Y, but the book says X. Do these contradict?”
 - *Applications* questions: “If it’s true that X, then does that mean the church should do Y”
- 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.

The evidence and explanation of the question: This may include some of the relevant evidence to consider when answering your question (e.g., biblical passages to consider), it may include the significance of answering one way or another, it may include clarity on definitions in the question, etc.

Example Questions

The question itself¹: When Dumbledore says, “There are things much worse than death” (6:814), is he specifically referring to a life with a lack of love?

Evidence and explanation¹: The order of the Phoenix (i.e., a “resurrection bird”) insists that death (or, a kind of death) must be embraced on the way to a life of love. Sacrificial love is regularly considered the most potent form of magic, as Harry was protected by the love of his mother from Quirrell (HP, 1:216) and as it is studied in

³⁸ X, Y, and Z are simply variables (like in algebra), so they refer to any idea/term/argument in the reading.

the department of ministries as “a force that is at once more wonderful and more terrible than death” (HP, 6:843). Since love is greater than death, a failure to love, or a betrayal of love, is worse than death. Sirius Black tells Peter Pettigrew that he should’ve “died rather than betray [his] friends” (3:375). Not only is a betrayal of love worse than death, but an absence of love is likewise worse than death. Dumbledore tells Harry, “Do not pity the dead, Harry. Pity the living, and above all, those who live without love” (7:722). So what is worse than death? According to Dumbledore, in my opinion: a life without love.

The question itself²: If Dumbledore is right to suggest that “There are things much worse than death,” then should Christians be (like Dumbledore) courageous in the face of death and not fear it (see Hebrews 2:15)?

Evidence and explanation²: While the narrative of resurrection is not as explicit as I would like in HP, I think that there is a connection between Dumbledore’s claim about death and the power of resurrection if we accept the premise that Christ has died, was raised, and will one day raise us to new life. Apart from the resurrection, death is indeed the victor and the greatest power (see 1 Cor 15:13–15; see James and Lily’s tombstone). Yet because Jesus has been raised from the grave, he can promise us, “whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matt 16:25). While Voldemort tried to save his own life from death, it is only through resurrection that we find true life. We have hope in the face of death because the “resurrection stone” (HP, 7:416) has been “rolled away” from the tomb of Christ (Matt 28:2). Because there are things worse than death, I can embrace death to my own flesh, desires, preferences and instead “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up [unto death] for us” (Eph 5:2). Knowing that if we have “died with him, we also will live with him” (2 Tim 2:11).

Podcast Preparation

In preparation for the podcast discussion, you’ll submit a doc. or PDF to Canvas containing each of the following elements. Podcasts will either be recorded in individual groups OR conducted in front of class with a randomly selected set of students. Your grade will be based on your preparation and participation.

For your question on each podcast day, you should have:

Read 30+ pages from an academic book/article

5+ key quotes from that reading

3+ biblical text you’re prepared to discuss.

3+ theological concepts that you’re prepared to discuss, alongside their significance for your conclusion

3+ sub-question you’re prepared to discuss. This, especially, might relate to the practical significance of your conclusion.

Podcast Preparation Example

For example, if the topics were (unrelated to theology): “Why the Bears are going to win a playoff game” my preparation would look like:

- a. Texts
 - i. "....." — Mina Kimes, ESPN.com
 - ii. "....." — Domonique Foxworth, The Domonique Foxworth Show
 - iii. "....." — Mel Kiper Jr., ESPN.com
 - iv. "....." — Ben Johnson
 - v. "....." — Chris Berman
- b. Concepts and definitions
 - i. Dual-threat quarterback — the ability of Justin Fields to throw and gain yards with his feet. Last season he broke the single-game rushing record for a QB and amassed over 1,500 yards.
 - ii. Parity in the NFC north — with Rodgers out, the Lions poor defense, and the Vikings likely regressing to the mean, the NFC north lacks a clear favorite, which gives them a good chance to have a good division record and get a high seed in the playoffs.
 - iii. Twelve Personnel — a formation with one running back and 2 tight ends that could fit the Bears well as Khalil Herbert, Cole Kmet, Robert Tonyan Jr. are each very capable of pass-catching and blocking, providing a good run/pass option.
- c. Sub-questions
 - i. Can the bears Rookie defensive tackles, Gervon Dexter and Zacch Pickens, bring pressure and support the defense?
 - ii. Will the Montez Sweat contract be worth the money that they put into him?
 - iii. If the Bears miss the playoffs, should they draft a QB?

Theological Analysis Paper

This paper should be a theological analysis of a contemporary narrative that is being told in a book, movie, or TV series. The goal of this paper is to theologically evaluate (positively and/or negatively) a prominent theme within this narrative. The paper can take a few different structures, but should spend about 20% laying out the theme in the story with details from the story, 40% articulating this theme in Scripture/theology, and 40% theological evaluation.

Examples

"A theological analysis of . . .

- . . . "Friendship" in the *Hobbit* — with a focus on the Gospel of John
- . . . "Gender" in *Mulan* — with a focus on 1 Timothy
- . . . "Love" in *Frozen* — with a focus on Julian of Norwich
- . . . "Faithfulness" in *The Princess and the Frog* — with a focus on Psalm 37
- . . . "Parenthood" in *Onward* — with a focus on Deuteronomy
- . . . "Inclusion" in *Remember the Titans* — with a focus on Ephesians
- . . . "Conversion" in *The Grinch* — with a focus on Wesley
- . . . "Satisfaction" in *Hamilton* — with a focus on Augustine

Theological Analysis Outline

Please submit your outline to Schoology as a PDF or Docx that includes the following:

- 1) "A theological analysis of _____ [theme] in _____ [story] — with a focus on _____ [theologian or biblical passage]
- 2) Draft of your main claim
- 3) Outline of the main sections and aspects of the theme that you will analyze.
- 4) Name 3 academic sources (beyond Scripture and the class texts) that you will use to support your theological articulation

Structure of Paper

From my perspective there are two natural ways to structure this paper. There may be more, but here are the most obvious:

Option 1

Introduction to theme

Theme in _____ story

- A aspect of the theme
- B aspect of the theme
- C aspect of the theme

Theme in _____ theologian/Scripture

- A aspect of the theme
- B aspect of the theme
- C aspect of the theme

Evaluation

- Evaluating A from story in light of theologian/Scripture
- Evaluating B from story in light of theologian/Scripture
- Evaluating C from story in light of theologian/Scripture
- Summary

Option 2

Introduction to theme

Aspect A

- In story
- In theologian/Scripture
- Theological Evaluation

Aspect B

- In story
- In theologian/Scripture
- Theological Evaluation

Aspect C

- In story
- In theologian/Scripture
- Theological Evaluation

Summary

Outline Example

Theme: “Death” in Harry Potter — with a focus on 1 Corinthians 15

Main claim: Harry Potter helpfully (although imperfectly) illustrates the way that death is both an enemy of the Christian and a necessary aspect of the Christian life.

Outline:

1. Introduction — using Dumbledore’s claim “There are things much worse than death” (HP 6:814)
2. Death in Harry Potter
 - a. Death as enemy — the death of Dumbledore
 - b. Death and resurrection — especially in Harry’s “death,” the resurrection stone, the contrast between the “death eaters,” and the “Order of the Phoenix” (“resurrection bird”)
 - c. Death and self-sacrifice — Lily (HP, 1:216) and Peter Pettigrew (HP 3:375)
3. A theological account of death
 - a. Death as enemy — 1 Cor 15:20–28; Gen 2:17; Romans 6:23; Plantinga
 - b. Death and resurrection — 1 Corinthians 15:35–58
 - c. Death and self-sacrifice — Matt 16:25, Eph 5:2, and Philippians 2:3–8
4. Evaluation
 - a. Death as enemy

- b. Death and resurrection
- c. Death and self-sacrifice
- d. Summary — While the narrative of resurrection is not as explicit as I would like in HP, the theme of death in HP helpfully depicts it as both an enemy of the Christian and a necessary aspect of the Christian life. We recognize that death is “not the way it’s supposed to be” (Plantinga), yet because Jesus has been raised from the grave, he can promise us, “whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matt 16:25). While Voldemort tried to save his own life from death, it is only through resurrection that we find true life. We have hope in the face of death because the “resurrection stone” (HP, 7:416) has been “rolled away” from the tomb of Christ (Matt 28:2).

Sources:

Kelly Kapic and Ty Kieser, “Not Like Those Who Have No Faith, Hope, or Love: Owen and Macrina on Christian Dying,” in *John Owen Among the Theologians: Conversations Across the Christian Tradition* (Crossway, 2026).

J. Todd Billings, *The End of the Christian Life: How Embracing Our Mortality Frees Us to Truly Live* (Brazos Press, 2020).

Matthew Levering, *Dying and the Virtues* (Eerdmans, 2018)

Charity Street Covenant:

“Dear [classmate], whenever you are as certain about something as I am go forward with me; whenever you stick equally fast seek with me; whenever you notice that you have gone wrong come back to me; or that I have, call me back to you. In this way let us set out along Charity Street together, making for him of whom it is said, *Seek his face always* (Ps 105:4). This covenant, both prudent and pious, I wish to enter into in the sight of the Lord our God with all who [hear] what I [say] . . . especially such as these where we are seeking the unity of the three, of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. For nowhere else is a mistake more dangerous, or the search more laborious, or discovery more advantageous.”³⁹

I make this covenant, “in the sight of the Lord our God,” with all of my fellow classmates and professor, promising to serve and be served in accordance with the above commitments:

_____ [signature]

³⁹ This is modified from Augustine, *De Trin.*, I.3.5.

[Optional] Technology Agreement:

Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front

By Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.

And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a card
and shut away in a little drawer.

When they want you to buy something
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.

Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.

Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.

Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.

Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.

Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.

Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.

Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?

Go with your love to the fields.
Lie down in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is highest your thoughts.

As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go.

Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

Technology is a good part of creation, but it can be used to avoid mortality, deny finitude, and shortcut our formation. Therefore, this semester I will deliberately embrace my finitude and avoid turning to technology. This includes:

- Not using AI for any course content
- Not using my phone for more than 3 hours per day
- Not watching shows/movies for more than 1 hr/day (on average)
- Taking a 5 minute walk every day
- Sitting in silence for 5 minutes every day
- Praying for 5 minutes every day

_____ [signature]

Week:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th
Completed?																

Complete nearly every week and bring it back to me. I'll buy you a coffee and ask: "How did the Lord grow you in wisdom through this?"