Course Description

This is a theological studies methods course. Its primary purpose is to teach you skills for developing a Christian mind, by helping you construct a solid foundation for thinking through life’s most important issues. We will begin by establishing the reality and nature of truth and then learn that rightly interpreted Scripture is the final arbiter of truth. You will learn about various sources for theology and the way that different people use and misuse these sources. This course endeavors to enable people to think theologically and construct a biblical worldview that makes the Christian’s witness relevant to all people in need. This course is a prerequisite to all other required courses of theology.

Course Objectives

What You Will Know . . .

1. The student will understand that theology is more than just an academic discipline reserved only for professional theologians, but that it is a fountain from which all people may daily drink.

2. The student will know the different sources from which we derive our understanding of truth and direction.

3. The student will develop a broader perspective of theology in general and learn how theology is done within the Christian community.

4. The student will learn that the Scriptures are the only consistently reliable source of theology.

What You Will Do . . .

1. The students will glorify God through their humble submission to His command to love Him with “all their mind” (Matt. 22:37).
2. The students will critically evaluate their own theological method and worldview by learning how to test and critique the validity of their core beliefs.

3. The students will critique various sources from which they derive their beliefs with the purpose of establishing the Scripture as their primary source for their beliefs.

4. The students will place greater confidence in theology and the process of doing theology.

5. The student will learn to value the unity and diversity of the Body of Christ.

**Course Textbooks**

**Required:**

- Bible (preferably New American Standard or New English Translation)

**Assignment Description (see course schedule for due dates)**

1. Reading: There will be various reading assignments during the ten-week period. Each student will be expected to read and be prepared to discuss the material. The student will also be expected to read selected chapters in the course textbooks.

2. Scripture memorization: Each student will memorize the passages provided on the Scripture memorization sheet. Once completed, the student will recite the memorized Scripture to a partner who will affirm the completion by signing the Scripture memorization sheet. The Scripture should be memorized in one of the following translations:
   - New American Standard
   - New English Translation (NET; available at [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org))
   - English Standard Version
   - New International Version (though not preferred)
3. Case Studies: There will be two case studies that must be completed. These will be handed out by the teacher.

4. Vocabulary Quizzes: There will be two theological vocabulary quizzes given during the course of the semester. See schedule for dates.

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class No.</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Theology Program</td>
<td>Reading Assignment: <em>Mosaic of Christian Belief</em>, pp. 11-27; <em>Systematic Theology</em> pp. 21-43</td>
<td>Class 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Defining Theology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Class 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Categories of Theology</td>
<td>Reading Assignment: <em>Representing Christ to a Postmodern World</em> (handout: download from <a href="http://www.bible.org">www.bible.org</a>)</td>
<td>Class 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Postmodern Epistemology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Class 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Christian Epistemology</td>
<td><strong>Reading Assignment: <em>Systematic Theology</em>, pp. 105-138</strong></td>
<td>Class 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Essentials of Theology</td>
<td>Case Study #1&lt;br&gt;Vocabulary Quiz #1</td>
<td>Class 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Traditions of Christian Theology</td>
<td>Reading Assignment: <em>Systematic Theology</em>, pp. 47-72; <em>Mosaic of Christian Belief</em>, pp. 49-69</td>
<td>Class 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sources of Theology</td>
<td>Read Assignment: <em>Mosaic of Christian Belief</em>, 71-88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Does God Still Speak Today?</td>
<td>Reading Assignments: <em>Systematic Theology</em>, pp. 73-104; <em>Mosaic of Christian Belief</em>, 29-48</td>
<td>Class 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Unity and Diversity</td>
<td>Case Study #2&lt;br&gt;Vocabulary Quiz #2</td>
<td>1 week after Class 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note, these class schedules are suggested for a 10 week course with weekly meetings, conducted on a church or school campus.
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

Required Reading


Essential Reading


Suggested Reading


**Honors Reading**

From the *Suggested Reading* list, read one book marked with a single asterisk (*) or read all books marked with double asterisks (**).

Name _______________________________
SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION SHEET

- Deut. 18:18-22 (summarize the message in your own words)
- Deut. 13:1-3
- Rom. 1:18-20
- Heb. 1:1-2
- Matt. 22:37-38
- Deut. 29:29
- Jn. 17:17
- Num. 23:19

I __________________________ have listened to __________________________
and confirm that he or she has recited the above Scriptures to me without any aid.
Signature___________________________
CASE STUDY #1:
THE THEOLOGICAL PROCESS

Introduction to Theology

This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for thirty minutes to an hour. This person may or may not be a Christian. With notes in hand the topic of your conversation is going to be explaining the theological process: notes pages 19-32.

• Ask these questions before you begin:

1. What is Theology?
2. How does a person come to an understanding of theology?
3. What common mistakes do you think that a person commits with regards to the Bible and theology?

• After this, explain the different categories of theology on pages 19-21.

• Then go through the theological process and the common mistakes that people make with regard to the use of the Bible in this process on pages 22-32.

The object of this assignment is to help people understand the theological process in relation to Scripture.

After you are done, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone will receive an “A” who completes this.
CASE STUDY #2: 
ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

Introduction to Theology

This is going to be a “real life” case study. You are to find a person who would be willing to sit down and talk to you for thirty minutes to an hour. This is to be one who professes to be a Christian. With notes in hand, you are to explain what you have learned concerning the distinction between the essentials and non-essentials: pages 49-56.

- Walk through the Quadrant of Objectivity and then ask the questions of page 52. Help the person to think through where they place them.

- Explain the Concentric Circle of Importance.

- Finally, explain the Chart of Certainty on page 54 and ask the questions on page 55.

The object of this assignment is to help your friend understand how to think through issues that concern faith, objectivity, and certainty.

Upon completion, write a half page to a page summary of the encounter and hand it in. Grades will be based upon the completion of the assignment, not the effectiveness of the presentation. Everyone will receive an “A” who completes this.