



**BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY**

Course: **TH-1 Advanced Issues in Theological Method**  
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## Course Syllabus

### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine in detail the issues involved in the process of the integration of various texts in the Bible. The course will cover specific issues such as the warrant for using Scriptural passages in certain ways, the definitions and relationships of Biblical Theology with Systematic Theology, the various levels of Systematic Theology, the relationship of hermeneutics to theological method, the identification of central interpretive motifs, the validation or invalidation of theological systems, and the role of presuppositions in developing doctrine.

### Course Objectives

After taking this course the student will be able to:

- Recognize the role of presuppositions in doing theology,
- Define Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology as disciplines,
- Evaluate the various ways that biblical scholars and various traditions use the Bible,
- Analyze theological systems holistically at the system level,
- Understand how the various levels of Systematic Theology (including apologetics and ethics) work together,
- Communicate how hermeneutics as a field is broadening and how that affects the task of doing theology.

### Course Requirements

The course is divided into *three* chronological parts:

- External residency A (six weeks )
- Internal residency (one week)
- External residency B (six weeks)

For each part, the requirements are given below. These are followed by a section detailing any other requirements.

## External Residency A Requirements (Six Weeks)

### A. General Reading and Critical Analysis

The student will be expected to read **the following books and articles during this six-week period:**

Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. [Read 300 of 569 pages]

Carson, D. A. "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology" in *Scripture and Truth*, Eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983, 65-95. [31 pages]

Webb, William. *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. This controversial work will help the class explore the intersection of theological statements and the area of application. Dr. Stallard's position on application is more classical than Webb's approach (which has some serious flaws). Part of the class notes for the internal residency will consist of a recent article giving Dr. Stallard's response. [301 pages]

Robert Thomas, ed., *Evangelical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002. [Read 300 of 554 pages]\*

Lindbeck, George. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Society in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Knox Press, 1984. [142 pages] This book is the standard work in the area of this class coming from the postliberal perspective by someone who actually invented that way of talking about doctrine.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. [Read 300 of 373 pages] This text is a recent major text in theological method and should give a basis for much discussion.

Wolfe, David L. *Epistemology: The Justification of Belief*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982. I believe this has been recently republished by P&R Publishers. [90 pages]\*

*Note:* Any asterisk by any bibliographic entry throughout the syllabus means that the entry is on the general reading list or theology reading list which will be used for comprehensive exams later in the student's Ph.D. program.

The student is also to write a **one-page, single-spaced critical review of every book and article** that he reads. These reviews should express the two or three most important insights gleaned from the student's reading of the material. The instructor should be able to tell from the review that you have grasped the information.

These reviews and a report that the reading has been done are due on the **first day of the internal residency**. Late reading reports and critical reviews will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade for each and every day for which the student is late. In the case of books, which are a compendium of articles, the reader is to choose two articles from the book that are the most appropriate for the current course and write critical reviews on those two articles. However, he may include the pages of the other articles in his total number of pages read if he truly reads them.

The student should note that the reading requirement for this external residency phase is around 300 pages per week (including sections A and B of this section of the syllabus). He should divide up his time accordingly.

## **B. Other Reading in the Theologians and Preparation for Presentation**

The reading of books and articles that are required in the list above under “A” yields a total of 1464 pages. However, the student must read a total of 1800 pages during the six-week **external residency A** before the on-campus module. The remaining 336 pages are to be chosen from the unread pages of the books under “A” above or from the following:

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939, p. 19-46. [28 pages].

Buckley, James F. “Beyond the Hermeneutical Gridlock” in *Theology After Liberalism* edited by John Webster and George P. Scher. Maldin, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 187-203. [17 pages]

Buswell, J. Oliver. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. Vol. I, Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1962, p. 13-220. [208 pages]

Callahan, James. *The Clarity of Scripture: History, Theology & Contemporary Literary Studies*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001. [272 pages]

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. I. Book One: The Knowledge of God the Creator. Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XX edited by John T. McNeill, Translated and Indexed by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960. (Calvin’s original Institutes dated 1559) [Note: A different edition may be used] [203 pages]\*

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. I: Prolegomena, Bibliology, Theology Proper. Dallas, TX.: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947. [414 pages]\*

Demarest, Bruce and Lewis, Gordon. *Integrative Theology*. Vol. I. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. [358 pages]\*

Dembski, William. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science & Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. [302 pages] Even though I am

- not in agreement with the intelligent design movement in its particulars, this book is useful to sort out the issue of how we integrate biblical truth with other academic disciplines.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, p. 11-174 [164 pages].\*
- Erickson, Millard J. *The Living God: Readings in Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, p. 21-113. [93 pages]
- Erickson, Millard J. *Where Is Theology Going?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. [223 pages]
- Finney, Charles. *Finney's Systematic Theology*. Abridged reprint ed., Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1976. [435 pages]
- Green, Joel B. and Turner, Max. *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. [242 pages]
- Grudem, Wayne . *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, p. 15-43. [29 pages]\*
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. I. Reprint ed., Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982, p. 1-188.. (original date 1871) [188 pages]
- Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation and Authority Vol. I: God Who Speaks and Shows*, Preliminary Considerations. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976; Reprint ed., Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1999. [409 pages]\*
- Kantzer, Kenneth S. "Systematic Theology as a Practical Discipline" in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer*, Eds. Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 21-41. [21 pages]
- Küng, Hans. *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*. Translated by Peter Heinegg. New York: Doubleday, 1988. [293 pages]
- McComiskey, Thomas Edward, and Woodbridge, John D., eds. *Doing Theology in Today's World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. [First 225 pages]
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. [236 pages]
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Trinity and the Kingdom*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. New York: Harper & Row, 1981. [253 pages]

- Noble, Paul R. *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard S. Childs*. New York: E. J. Brill, 1995.\*
- Oden, Thomas C. *The Living God, Systematic Theology: Volume One*. Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1998, p. 317-404. [88 pages]
- Scalise, Charles J. *From Scripture to Theology: A Canonical Journey into Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. [124 pages]
- Shedd, William G. T. *Dogmatic Theology*. Vol. I. Reprint 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980, p. 3-147. (originally completed in 1888). [145 pages]
- Stott, John. "Theology: A Multidimensional Discipline" in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer*, Eds. Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 3-19. [17 pages]
- Strong, Augustus H. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. I. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1907, p. 1-110. [110 pages]
- Thiessen, Henry C. *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949, p. 23-90. [68 pages]\*

In addition, each student is to pick one theologian/writer from the reading list above and make a class presentation of the theological method of that theologian/writer. The class presentation will be scheduled during the one-week, on-campus module. No two students will do the same theologian. The student will be required to hand out an outline to assist others in the class in following along. If he so chooses, the student may write a formal research paper but such is *not* required. The presentation should be at least one hour in length and deal with at least the following areas:

1. The historical background of the theologian and its possible impact upon him;
2. The hermeneutical approach of the theologian;
3. How the theologian integrates passages from one part of the Bible with another part of the Bible;
4. How the theologian integrates Bible truth with academic disciplines outside of the Bible;
5. The central interpretive motif of the theologian.

### **C. Class Interaction**

Class interaction is a crucial part of this course and will be graded closely. The instructor will post questions on the BBS course web site for each of the six weeks of this period. These questions will help walk the student through some of the issues that will be discussed during the internal residency phase of the course. The questions will be handled in the context of a threaded discussion group. Instruction will be provided on how this is to be done.

The posted questions will not be “yes” and “no” questions, but will be discussion questions. The student will post a separate response to the question for the class so that all other students as well as the instructor can view the comments.

In addition to the responses to each posted question, the student must respond at least once to another student’s response or to the instructor’s response to each of the posted questions. In other words, if there are three posted questions, the student must give three responses (one for each posted question) and then three more times to respond to either the instructor or other students as they interact on the questions (for a total of six). The student must understand that this is a minimum and that his grade will be enhanced by going beyond this minimal standard.

Instructional assistance on using the threaded discussion via the Internet will be provided as necessary.

## **Internal Residency Requirements (One Week)**

### **A. Reading**

The student will read the following materials during the one-week internal residency phase of this course:

Stallard, Michael, “Some Notes on the Definition of Systematic Theology,” Unpublished paper provided in course notes. [around six pages] Must be read by Tuesday.

Stallard, Michael, “A Proposal for Theological Method: Systematic Theology as Model Building,” Unpublished paper provided in course notes. [around fifteen pages] Must be read by Tuesday.

Stallard, Michael, “Literal Interpretation, Theological Method, and the Essence of Dispensationalism,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1 (Spring 1997): 5-36 [also provided in the course notes]. Must be read by Tuesday.

Stallard, Michael D., *The Early Twentieth-Century Dispensationalism of Arno C. Gaebelin*, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2002). [264 pages] Must be read by Friday of the internal residency phase of the course. **NOTE: It is important for the student to refrain from purchasing this book from any source until he comes to campus for the internal residency. On Monday of the internal residency Dr. Stallard will provide the book to each student at author’s cost plus shipping and handling (please pay by check made out to the author). If I can buy at least five copies, the price (not counting s&h) would be \$54.95. This is the main text for the internal residency, so it is my goal to get it at that price rather than the high list price of \$119. This price may be variable based upon the publishers latest price for authors.**

A reading report of all of the materials read during the on-campus week should be turned in by the end of class on Friday of the internal residency phase of the course.

### **B. Class Discussion**

Each student will be assigned to lead discussion on a portion of the in-class reading of *The Early Twentieth-Century Dispensationalism of Arno C. Gaebelin*. This early dispensational figure will serve as a case study in the area of theological method (both good and bad). Assignments will vary based upon the number of students in the class and will be established the first day of class. In addition to being graded on his leading of discussion on a section of the work on Gaebelin, the student's grade on class discussion will also include how he interacts throughout the week. ***There are to be no non-participants in the class.***

### **C. Student Presentations**

Based upon the assignment indicated during the external residency A, section B of this syllabus, each student will make a presentation of at least one hour teaching the class about the theological method of a chosen theologian. See that particular section of the syllabus for details.

## **External Residency B Requirements (Six Weeks)**

### **A. Reading for Research**

This phase of the external residency is designed to accomplish detailed research in the area of theological method with a finished product in the form of a research paper (see below). The student is to read an additional **600 pages** (minimum) during this six week period as he writes his research paper for the course. A reading report of these 600 pages is to be turned in to the instructor no later than the last day of the course. A penalty of one letter grade per day will be assessed for any late reports. (*Note: These pages bring the total number of pages to be read for the entire course to around 2850 pages.*)

### **B. Writing of Detailed Outline for Research Paper**

After preliminary research, the student is to write a detailed outline of his proposed research paper and send it via email to the instructor and to all of the other students in the class. This is to be done by the end of the third week of the external residency B. Within one week, each student should send a short critique of one or two paragraphs back to the other students in the class after reviewing the outline. This is not intended to be a major time consuming assignment but to get feedback before the paper is actually written.

### C. Writing of Research Paper

The student will write a research paper according to Turabian format that will be at least 35 pages long, double-spaced. This does not include front matter or bibliography but does include notes. The instructor prefers footnotes to endnotes. A title page and table of contents is required. There is no maximum number of pages set for the project. Most of the research paper should be written during the last two weeks of the external residency B although some of it may already be written before this time.

The student must choose **one** of the two options below (no other options allowed):

- He must write a research paper on the essence of Systematic Theology as an academic discipline. This paper should be definitional and validate the entire discipline of Systematic Theology. It would be expected that interaction with various views of Biblical Theology pertain to the discussion as well.
- He must write a research paper on the theological method of one particular theologian. This paper would be much like the one on Gaebelein discussed during the internal residency. The particular theologian must be chosen in consultation with the instructor.

The student must decide on this topic by the end of the internal residency week for the course.

*Note:* It is suggested that the 600 pages of extra reading be accomplished during the first three weeks of this external residency while the last three weeks are devoted to the actual writing of the research paper itself.

The research paper is due **on the last day of the class**. Late papers may be subject to a penalty of one letter grade for each day late.

This research paper may be chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor as one to be delivered in a later Interdisciplinary Seminar.

### D. Weekly Progress Report

The student will be expected to send the instructor a **weekly email log** during external residency B which gives (1) a log of hours spent on the research project for that week (including reading), and (2) a list of questions, if any, which the student wants clarified as he works on the project.

## Grading

*The grading scale that will be used for the course is the following:*

A	96-100
B	88-95
F	87 & Below

*Grading for the class will also be according to the following proportions:*

Reading & Reviews – External Residency A	10%
Class Participation and Discussion – External Residency A	10%
Class Participation, Reading, and Presentations – Internal Residency	30%
Class Participation and Research Project – External Residency B	50%

The student must remember that for a Ph.D. course, a letter grade of “B” is necessary to pass the course.

## Course Schedule

The course schedule to be followed is given below. The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule somewhat based upon the number of students in the class and upon any new developments that take place in this field of study. The dates for the course are as follows:

External residency A	Monday, September 3, 2007 to Friday, October 12, 2007
Internal residency	Monday, October 22, 2007 to Friday, October 26, 2007
External residency B	Monday, October 29, 2007 to Friday, December 14, 2007 (one week taken off for Thanksgiving—Nov. 19-23)

The table below will be a helpful guide and checklist for how the course will generally proceed.

<b>External Residency A</b>	
<b>Week # 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Student begins reading the 1800 pages of required reading for the six week period and writing critical reviews and continues throughout the external residency A.</li> <li>⇒ Student begins working on presentation of the theological method of one theologian in preparation for the internal residency.</li> <li>⇒ Web interaction with questions about the definitions and relationships of <i>Biblical Theology</i> and <i>Systematic Theology</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Week # 2</b>	⇒ Web interaction with questions about presuppositions.
<b>Week # 3</b>	⇒ Web interaction with questions about warrant.
<b>Week # 4</b>	⇒ Web interaction with questions about integration.

<b>Week # 5</b>	⇒ Web interaction with questions about integration and system validation.
<b>Week # 6</b>	⇒ Web interaction with further questions about method and theologians.
<b>Internal Residency</b>	
<b>Monday</b>	⇒ Reading report due at the beginning of class from the “external residency A” phase of the course with critical reviews ⇒ Schedule to be established for student presentations on the theological method of various theologians ⇒ Various issues to be determined by the instructor
<b>Tuesday</b>	⇒ Reading of all articles by Stallard due today (does not include dissertation on Gaebelein). ⇒ Discussion of <b>presuppositions</b> and Gaebelein’s method ⇒ Various issues to be discussed by the instructor
<b>Wednesday</b>	⇒ Discussion of <b>basic hermeneutics</b> and Gaebelein’s method ⇒ Various issues to be discussed by the instructor
<b>Thursday</b>	⇒ Discussion of <b>integration</b> and Gaebelein’s method ⇒ Various issues to be determined by the instructor
<b>Friday</b>	⇒ Discussion of <b>central interpretive motif</b> and Gaebelein’s method ⇒ Various issues to be determined by the instructor
<b>External Residency B</b>	
<b>Week # 1</b>	⇒ Student begins reading of final 600 pages for research and begins to think about outline for paper ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor
<b>Week # 2</b>	⇒ Student continues reading of final 600 pages for research and continues to think about outline for paper ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor
<b>Week # 3</b>	⇒ Student finishes reading of final 600 pages for research. ⇒ Student sends initial outline of paper to list serve for instructor and peer feedback ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor
<b>Week # 4</b>	⇒ Student receives feedback from instructor and peers on his initial outline ⇒ Student begins writing his research paper. ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor
<b>Week # 5</b>	⇒ Student continues writing his research paper ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor
<b>Week # 6</b>	⇒ Student finishes his research and turns in the paper on the last class day ⇒ Weekly log sent to instructor

## **Bibliography**

### **A. Reading List to be Used for Class Reading**

A bibliography for reading material to be addressed in this course appears earlier in this syllabus. If the student desires to deviate from that prior list, he must obtain permission from the instructor first.

### **B. Other Selected Bibliography**

The student is encouraged to check the reading list for theology which is given in preparation for the comprehensive exams. That list is available on the private website for Ph.D. students. As time permits other bibliographies will be listed for the student's benefit.