

NOTE: Here is a draft of the syllabus. The readings are set so you can begin reading. There will be no changes in the readings or assignments. See instructions for preparing on the following page. I am still making some changes in the course organization.

Intro to Christian Theology

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Organizational Purpose

The Institute of Biblical Studies (IBS) exists to help develop Christ-centered missionaries who possess the biblical and theological competencies they need (head, heart and hands) to live out the Great Commandment and helpfully fulfill the Great Commission through the ministry of Cru. This course explores twenty Christian doctrines that are foundational to our life and mission.

Course Description

Good theology is vital to the life and health of the church. Theology helps us answer questions like, 'What is God like?' 'How does God speak to us?' 'Why did God create the world?' 'What does it mean to be human?' 'What's wrong in the world?' 'Who is Jesus Christ and what did he do for us?' 'What is the good news of the gospel?' 'Who is the Holy Spirit?' 'What is a church?' 'How will God's story end?' This course will introduce you to the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith affirmed in the Cru Statement of Faith. Not only will you gain a deeper understanding of these doctrines but you will also discover how these doctrines should practically shape our lives and ministries.

Learning Outcomes

1. Deepen your motivation to know, love and worship the triune God and to reflect God's character as an image-bearer.
2. Gain greater confidence in Scripture as the inspired, truthful, authoritative, sufficient and powerful Word of God.
3. Develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith expressed in our Statement of Faith.
4. Grow in your capacity to teach these foundational doctrines from Scripture and relate them to ethics, personal growth, evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, and cross-cultural mission.
5. Become more familiar with major viewpoints, differences, and conflicts which exist among Christians regarding key doctrines.
6. Grow in your awareness of the ways in which culture shapes our reading of Scripture (and hence our theologies) as well as the importance of listening to believers in other cultural and ethnic contexts.
7. Be better prepared to partner with those who hold differing theological views allowing for difference of opinion on matters not central to our Statement of Faith while pointing people to a compelling center (i.e., Christ, the gospel and our mission).
8. Develop a deeper understanding of and greater confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Required Texts

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). ISBN-13: 978-0310286707. Grudem's systematic theology is one of the most readable graduate-level texts available. You will read several chapters from this book. It is a great reference tool to have in your library. Wayne Grudem is a professor at Phoenix Seminary. [ST]

David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*, revised and updated (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2017). ISBN-13: 978-1414390383. Theology includes not only what we believe but also how we live (ethics). Every doctrine we will discuss in this class has ethical implications. Platt relates a number of contemporary issues (poverty, abortion, sex slavery, marriage, sexual morality and ethnicity) to the gospel. David Platt is the head of the International Mission Board (IMB) for the Southern Baptist Convention. [CC]

Tim Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, 2009). ISBN-13: 978-0525950493 (Paperback: ISBN-13: 978-1594483493). This book addresses cultural objections to a number of the doctrines we are examining in the class. Tim Keller is the pastor Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. [RFG]

Recommended Texts

Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

Learning Tasks

1. **Reading:** You will be reading selections from Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, Keller's *Reason for God*, Platt's *Counter Culture* as well as several articles posted online (roughly 440 pages). **Given the compressed nature of this course, it will help if you can complete some of the reading prior to the first session. Every year on the course evaluation, staff write "I wish I had completed the reading before I came to class."** See "Course Schedule and Assignments" for a list of required readings. The last day of class you will electronically submit a reading report indicating how much of the required reading you completed. As you read, you may find it helpful take notes on what you are reading. Not only will this help you digest the material, but it will also provide something you can refer to in the future without re-reading the text. **DUE: Wednesday, January 24**
2. **Attributes Project:** The purpose of the "Attributes Project" is to help you grow in your ability to read Scripture theologically. You will study a specific attribute of God in Scripture. You will find detailed instructions in a worksheet which will be posted online. **DUE: Tuesday, January 16 at the beginning of class.**

3. **Final Exam, Wednesday, Jan. 25, 9:00-11:00am.** The final exam will be objective (true/false, multiple choice and matching). You will have two hours to complete it. The purpose of the exam is to reinforce what you have learned about the basics of Christian doctrine as well as the theological identity of Cru. The exam will focus *exclusively* on the material covered in the lectures and the Cru Statement of Faith. (You will NOT be tested on any content from CC, RFG or ST.) While you do not need to memorize the wording of the Cru SOF, you need to be familiar with the positions that Cru takes on key theological issues (which we have discussed in class). The best thing you can do to prepare for the exam is to review the lecture notes. For each session, I would recommend that you identify (1) key points that were made and (2) important theological terms. Here are some terms you will want to be familiar with:

Convictions
Persuasions
Opinions
Ethics
General revelation
Special revelation
Inspiration
Dictation theory
Verbal plenary inspiration
Canon
Apocrypha
Inerrancy
Infallibility
Attributes of God discussed in class
Incommunicable attributes
Communicable attributes
Trinitarian terms (person, nature, essence)
Modalism
Tritheism
Arianism
Atheistic evolution
Theistic evolution
Progressive creationism
Young earth creationism
Image of God
Ethnicity
Race
Imputation
Inherited guilt
Inherited corruption
Pelagianism
Augustinianism
Semi-pelagianism
Wesleyanism

Christological terms
Incarnation
Christological heresies
Humiliation of Christ
Exaltation of Christ
Offices of Christ
Atonement
Representations of the Holy Spirit
Baptism with the Holy Spirit
Filling of the Holy Spirit
Second blessing
Election
Universal gospel call
Effective calling
Prevenient grace
Regeneration
Conversion
Justification
Imputed righteousness
Assurance
Adoption
Sanctification
Preservation
Arminian
Local church
Universal church
Visible church
Invisible church
Kingdom of God
Voluntary societies
Eschatology
Return of Christ
Millennium

Course Grade

In Cru, we talk about the five “E’s” of development: education, experience, exposure, environment and evaluation. Evaluation, the fifth E, plays an important role in our growth. Because this is a graduate level course, you will receive a letter grade

Reading	20 %
Attributes Project	30 %
Final Exam	<u>50 %</u>
Total	100 %

Grading Scale

94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
84-89	B
82-83	B-
80-81	C+
74-79	C
72-73	C-
65-71	D
0-65	F

Note: A grade of C- or better is required to apply this course toward your IBS requirements

Course Schedule and Assignments

Note: Class will meet on Saturday, January 13 but not Monday, January 15.

Date	Topic	Reading Due
Wednesday January 10	What is Theology and Why does it Matter?	“Doctrinal Convictions and Persuasions” Scholes [13pp, online] CC intro, pp. xi-xv [5pp]
	Convictions, Persuasions and Opinions	
Thursday January 11	God Speaks: Revelation, Inspiration and Canon	“The Bibliographical Test” [read p. 1, 11-12, 3pp, online] RFG c7 [20pp] ST c4 [17pp]
	Authority and Truthfulness of God’s Word	
Friday January 12	What is God Like?	RFG c2 [17pp] RFG c5 [16pp] CC c3 [22pp]
	Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit	
Saturday January 13	Creation: God Made All Things	RFG c6 [13pp] ST c15, pp. 262-273 only [12pp] CC c5 [24pp] Watch “Biblical Theology of Race” by Jemar Tisby (15 min)
	Creation: What Does it Mean to be Human?	
Monday January 15	MLK Day: NO CLASS Today we honor the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. Most white evangelical Christians in the 1960s opposed or ignored the Civil Rights Movement. I’d like you read MLK’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” On the IBS website I’ve posted a five-minute video providing some context as well as a PDF file containing both a letter from Birmingham clergy to MLK calling his nonviolent resistance “unwise” and “untimely” as well as King’s response “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” [8pp]	
Tuesday January 16	The Fall: Corruption of Humanity	Attributes Project Due*** RFG c10 [16pp] CC c8 [28pp] “Leading in a Complex Moral Environment” [13pp, pp. 75-87 in the lecture notes] Watch “Dear Church: I’m Gay” (20 min)
	Who is Jesus Christ?	

Course Schedule and Assignments (continued)

Date	Topic	Reading Due
Wednesday January 17	What did Jesus do to save us?	RFG c12 [15pp] CC c2 [34pp]
	Who is the Holy Spirit?	
Thursday January 18	Baptism and Filling with the Holy Spirit	ST c39 [21pp] RFG c11 [12pp] CC c7 [28pp]
	Election: God Chose Us	
Friday January 19	Salvation: Calling, Regeneration, Conversion	“Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?” [11pp, online] ST c36 [14pp]
	Salvation: Justification and the Gospel	
Monday January 22	Salvation: Assurance, Growth, Preservation	ST c45 [14pp] ST c48 [16pp] “Being an Arm of the Church” Murray [17pp, online]
	What is the Church?	
Tuesday January 23	How does Cru relate to the Church?	“Like Families and Soccer Teams” [9pp, online] “Missionary Rights and Responsibilities” [4pp, lecture notes] “Guidelines on Alcohol Use” [3pp, lecture notes] ST c41 [17pp]
	How Will God’s Story End?	
Wednesday January 24	Final Exam 9:00-11:00am	Reading Report Due TOTAL READING = 434pp

Reading Report

Name _____

Of the required reading, how many pages did you complete? _____ (You will find the number of pages for each chapter on the previous page.)

To determine the percentage of reading you completed, divide the number of pages you completed by the total number of required pages and convert to a percentage

- Divide the number of pages you completed by 434
- Example: Joe staff completed 300 pages of required reading. $300 \div 434 = 0.69 \times 100 = 69\%$.

I completed _____% of the required reading.

NOTE: *You will submit your reading report electronically. You will be given instructions in class.*