

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 Christians 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, inerrant, 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. Become persuaded that Christian theology is not just about right beliefs (orthodoxy) but also right living (orthopraxy). You will be invited to explore the ethical implications of every doctrine we study.
5. Grow in your capacity to teach these foundational doctrines from Scripture and relate them to personal growth, evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, cross-cultural mission.
6. Become more familiar with major viewpoints, differences, and conflicts which exist among Christians regarding key doctrines.
7. Grow in your awareness of the ways in which culture shapes our theologies as well as the importance of listening to believers in ethnic and cultural contexts different from our own.
8. 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).
9. Develop a deeper understanding of and greater confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Required Texts

Gregg R Allison, *50 Core Truths of the Christian Life: A Guide to Understanding and Teaching Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018). ISBN-13: 978-0310286707. Dr. Allison teaches at Southern Baptist Theology Seminary in Louisville. He served for many years with Cru, both in the U.S. and Western Europe. This book will introduce the key doctrines we'll be discussing in the class. [CTCL]

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 merely what we believe but also how we live (ethics). Every doctrine we are exploring in this class has ethical implications. David Platt relates the gospel to several contemporary issues (poverty, abortion, sex slavery, marriage, sexual morality and ethnicity). 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 several doctrines we are examining in the class. Tim Keller is the pastor Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. [RFG]

Learning Tasks

1. **Reading:** You will be reading selections from Allison's *50 Core Truths*, Keller's *Reason for God*, Platt's *Counter Culture* as well as several articles posted online. Given the compressed nature of this course, it will help if you can complete most the reading prior to the first session. Otherwise will be reading almost 50pp per night on top of work for your BSM course. 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, July 4**
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: Monday, June 25 at the beginning of class.**

3. **Final Exam, Wednesday, July 4, 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 the readings.) 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 discussed in class). The best thing you can do to prepare for the exam is to review the lecture notes. For each session, make sure you are familiar with (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
Side A and Side B of theology
Four windows of righteousness
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/racism
Imputation
Inherited guilt
Inherited corruption
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	82-83	B-	65-71	D
92-93	A-	80-81	C+	0-65	F
90-91	B+	74-79	C		
84-89	B	72-73	C-		

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

Students with Learning Issues

If you have a learning issue that affects your participation in the class, please talk with me or the lead TA, Mark Stewart, so we can help you as you engage with the learning tasks in the course.

Use of Laptops and Tablets in Lecture

One of the things I love about working with Cru is our strong commitment to development. We want to create the best learning environment we can for you in this class. As a result, we’re going to ask you not to bring laptops, iPads or tablets to class. There are three reasons for this. First, if you have your laptop or tablet open, it’s almost impossible not to check email, surf the web or engage social media. That’s distracting not only to you but also to other learners around you. Second, a growing body of research from cognitive science and neuroscience demonstrates that “multitasking” impairs learning. We not only remember less but have a hard time transferring that learning to new contexts. Third, handwritten notes help you better metabolize what you are learning. You might say, “But I can type way faster than I can write.” While it may be true that most people can type faster than they can write, this isn’t necessarily an asset in learning. A study published June 2014 showed that students who take hand-written notes have a higher level of comprehension than those who type. It appears that when you take notes on your laptop, you basically become a stenographer rather a learner who has to synthesize the material. We’re providing structured notes so you can listen and write more strategically without feeling overwhelmed to write everything down. If this is a problem for you, please come talk with me. (Note: In the Bible Study Methods course, you will need your laptop or tablet in some of the coaching sessions.)

Course Schedule and Assignments

Date	Topic	Reading Due
Wednesday June 20	What is Theology and Why does it Matter?	“Doctrinal Convictions and Persuasions” Scholes [13pp, online] CC intro, pp. xi-xv [5pp] CTCL, intro, pp. 1-5 [5pp]
	Convictions, Persuasions and Opinions	
Thursday June 21	God Speaks: Revelation, Inspiration and Canon	“The Bibliographical Test” [read p. 1, 11-12, 3pp, online] RFG c7 [17pp] CTCL, c2, c3, c7 [26pp]
	Authority and Truthfulness of God’s Word	
Friday June 22	What is God Like?	RFG c2 [17pp] CC c9 [20pp] CTCL, c9, c10, c11 [23pp]
	Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit	
Monday June 25	Creation: God Made All Things	Attributes Project Due*** RFG c6 [13pp] CTCL, c12, c15 [15pp] CC c8 [28pp] Watch “Biblical Theology of Race” by Jemar Tisby (15 min)
	Creation: Made in the Image of God	
Monday June 25	Ethnic Minority New Staff Lunch Bieberbach-Reed (just outside the cafeteria) With Darryl and Gwen Smith, 12:45-1:45pm “Understanding Cru's Heart for Racial Diversity and Social Justice” Special Seminar with Darryl and Gwen Smith 2:00-3:00pm Bush Auditorium	
Tuesday June 26	The Fall: Corruption of Humanity	RFG c10 [15pp] CTCL, c17, c18 [18pp] “Leading in a Complex Moral Environment” [13pp, staffweb.cru.org] Watch “Dear Church: I’m Gay” (20 min)
	Who is Jesus Christ?	
Tuesday June 26	“LGBT+ Questions and Cru” Special Seminar with Rachel Gilson 2:00-3:00pm Bush Auditorium	

Course Schedule and Assignments (continued)

Date	Topic	Reading Due
Wednesday June 27	What did Jesus do to save us?	CTCL, c20, c22, c23 [21pp] RFG c11 [12pp] CC c5 [24pp]
	Who is the Holy Spirit?	
Thursday June 28	Baptism and Filling with the Holy Spirit	CTCL c26, c32 [16p] CC c2 [34pp] “Preaching the Gospel Amidst Racism: Remembering Billy Graham” Ellis [2pp, online]
	Election: God Chose Us	
Friday June 29	Salvation: Calling, Regeneration, Conversion	“Gifts Flowing from the Grace of God,” <i>Plain Theology for Plain People</i> , Boothe [20pp, online] “Is Water Baptism Necessary for Salvation?” Johnson [11pp, online] “Talking about Faith in Non-Western Contexts” Georges [2pp, online] CTCL c27 [7pp]
	Salvation: Justification and the Gospel	
Monday July 2	Salvation: Assurance, Growth, Preservation	CTCL c35, c36, c40, c41 [15p] RFG c4 [17pp] CC c3 [22pp] “Men and Women in Ministry Together” [4pp, lecture notes)
	What is the Church?	
Tuesday July 3	How does Cru relate to the Church?	“Like Families and Soccer Teams” Straughn [9pp, online] “Missionary Rights and Responsibilities” [4pp, lecture notes] “Guidelines on Alcohol Use” [3pp, lecture notes] CTCL c44, c45, c50 [23pp]
	How Will God’s Story End?	
Wednesday July 4	Final Exam 9:00-11:00am	Reading Report Due TOTAL READING = 477pp

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 477
- Example: Joe staff completed 300 pages of required reading. $300 \div 477 = 0.64 \times 100 = 64\%$.

I completed _____% of the required reading.

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