

INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

GOD, BIBLE, HOLY SPIRIT

Gregg R. Allison, course instructor
Professor of Christian Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

SYLLABUS

Course Description

In his classic book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer explains, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God himself, and the portentous fact about any man is not what he may at a given time say or do but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.” This course offers an opportunity to broaden and deepen our understanding of the God whom we love and worship.

To this end, we will explore Christian teaching regarding the nature and attributes of God, the persons of the Trinity, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We will better understand how one God has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We will gain greater confidence in Scripture as the inspired, truthful, authoritative, sufficient and powerful Word of God. We will discover how the Holy Spirit enables us to grow in conformity to the image of Christ and empowers God’s people to bear witness about Christ to the ends of the earth. We will examine these doctrines as they are taught in Scripture and confessed by the church so that we may better live to the glory of the triune God. (2 IBS credits—Theology and Apologetics)

Learning Outcomes

Affective (attitudes, motivation, character)

1. Deepen your motivation to know, love and worship the triune God and reflect God’s character as image-bearers.
2. Gain greater confidence in Scripture as the inspired, truthful, authoritative, sufficient and powerful Word of God.
3. Grow as a disciple of Jesus who joyfully submits to the authority of God’s Word and who builds movements of disciples who “truly follow Jesus” by embracing his Word in their lives.

Cognitive (knowledge and thinking skills)

1. Deepen your understanding of the nature and attributes of God, the persons of the Trinity, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, and the person and work of the Holy Spirit as these doctrines are taught in Scripture and confessed by the church.
2. Become more familiar with viewpoints, differences, and conflicts which exist among Christians regarding these doctrines as well as the way culture shapes our theologies.
3. Develop a deeper understanding of and commitment to the Cru Statement of Faith.

Behavioral (personal and ministry skills)

1. Grow in your capacity to read Scripture “theologically.”
2. Grow in your capacity to teach these foundational doctrines from Scripture and relate them to evangelism, discipleship, movement-launching, ethics, and cross-cultural mission.
3. 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 and calling while pointing people to a compelling center (i.e., Christ, the gospel and our mission).

Note: Since this course was originally created, we have updated the design of all our IBS theology courses so that we consider not only what we “believe” about key doctrines but also how we live them out (our ethics). The reading in this course have been adjusted to reflect that new design.

Required Texts

Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). ISBN-13: 978-0310275114. Also available in Kindle format. In this book, Timothy Tennent relates each of the major categories of Christian doctrine to developments in global Christianity.

Jason Hood, *Imitating God in Christ: Recapturing a Biblical Pattern* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013). ISBN-13: 978-0830827107. Also available in Kindle format. This book explores the biblical theme of imitation. We are exploring the doctrine of God. One way we respond ethically to this doctrine is imitating God’s character.

Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012). ISBN-13: 978-0830839834. Also available in Kindle format. This book has more of a devotional focus and will help you reflect on the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Additional Required Readings (Posted Online)

Craig Blomberg and Julie N. Dykes, "Jesus's View of the Old Testament" The Gospel Coalition (ND).

Carl Ellis, Jr., "Biblical Righteousness Is a Four-Paned Window," The Gospel Coalition (August 22, 2018).

James H. Evans Jr., *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), chapter 3.

Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), chapter 1.

Keith E. Johnson, "Imitatio Trinitatis: How Should We Imitate the Trinity?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 75 (2013): 317-34.

Learning Tasks

1. Reading (20%)

Reading should be done thoroughly and thoughtfully, with a sincere attempt to learn all one can from this reading. You will report your reading at the end of the class.

2. Reading Reflection (10%)

You will pick two readings (a chapter or article) that impacted you during the class and write about your experience with them. What were the ideas from the chapter or article that connected with you? Why did you find them helpful? How did they challenge or encourage you? How do you want to apply them? Write 250 per reading (500 total).

3. Discussion Forums (30%)

At the end of each module you will post a thoughtful response to a theological question related to material covered in the lecture and/or reading for that session. You will also comment on two other posts from classmates.

4. Theology project (40%)

You will write a paper in which you present Scriptural teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The goal is to be as comprehensive as you can be, exposing the richness of the Bible's own teaching on the Holy Spirit. In order to write this paper, you will need to take the following steps:

- a) *Choose*: Pick one of the following options:
 - the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Luke
 - the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Acts
 - the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of 1 Corinthians
 - the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught in the book of Galatians

- b) *Explore*: Read through the whole book noting every reference to the Holy Spirit. For each reference to the Holy Spirit, record your observations. Here are some questions you might consider: What do you learn from this passage about the person of the Holy Spirit (deity, personally)? What do you learn about the work the Holy Spirit (in the life of Christ, the church, unbelievers, believers)? Does the passage say anything about the how the Holy Spirit relates to the Father and/or Son? You may find it helpful to see what commentators say about your passage (e.g., ESV Study Bible notes).

- c) *Synthesize*: What stands out to you regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit in this book? Do you see any recurring themes? What patterns do you observe about the working of the Holy Spirit? Are certain aspects of salvation associated with Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit relate to other divine persons? Consider how best to organize these teachings into a systematic and coherent whole.

- d) *Write*: Drawing your work together, write a paper (7-8 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font) summarizing what you learned. To the best of your ability, present all that your book says about the Holy Spirit. Endeavor to be faithful to the intended meanings of each individual teaching in its context, while displaying how they these contribute to a holistic understanding of this doctrine. Remember that this is not a verse by verse commentary but a carefully crafted synthesis of the doctrinal teaching of your book on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. You will need to think about how best to structure your presentation. In the last page of your paper, address the following questions for personal application: What was the most helpful thing you learned about the Holy Spirit from your study? What implications does your study have for Christian growth? What implications does this have for ministry?

Grading Template for Theology Project

Element	What to look for	Possible Points
Introduction	Intro orients readers to the purpose of the paper, why the topic matters and explains how the argument will unfold (outline)	10
Structure	Paper has a clear structure that is easy to follow in presenting both the person and work of the Holy Spirit.	15
Theological Analysis	<p>Paper offers theological synthesis of Scriptural teaching regarding the person and work of the Spirit. In the process, the paper answers the following questions clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this book teach about the person of the Holy Spirit (personhood/deity)? • What patterns do you observe about the work of the Holy Spirit? • What works are connected with the Holy Spirit? • How does the Holy Spirit relate to the Father and the Son? 	40
Proper Interpretation	Paper reflects proper interpretation of Luke, Acts, 1 Corinthians or Galatians.	10
Application	On the last page, the paper discusses the following questions: What was the most helpful thing you learned about the Holy Spirit from your study? What implications does your study have for Christian growth? What implications does this have for ministry?	20
Format, Spelling and Grammar	Paper is properly formatted (7-9 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font) and uses correct spelling and grammar.	10

Course Calendar

Note: If you are taking the ten-week version, you will complete one module per week. If you are taking the five-week (summer) version, you will complete two modules per week.

Module 1	Introduction to course and <i>Doctrine of Revelation</i>
	Tennent chap 1 (24pp) González, <i>Mañana</i> , 21-30 (10pp) Ellis, “Biblical Righteousness is a Four Paned Window” (5pp) Hood, Intro (10pp)
Module 2	<i>Doctrine of God (Incommunicable Attributes)</i>
	Reeves intro, chap 1 (30pp) Hood, chap 1-2 (22pp)
Module 3	<i>Doctrine of God (Communicable Attributes)</i>
	Tennent chap 2 (28pp) Hood, chap 3-4 (20pp)
Module 4	<i>Doctrine of God (Communicable Attributes / God as Trinity)</i>
	Reeves chap 2 (24pp) Hood chap 5-6 (22pp)
Module 5	<i>Doctrine of God (Doctrine of the Trinity)</i>
	Reeves chap 3 (22pp) Johnson, “Imitating the Trinity” (17pp) Hood, chap 7 (12pp)
Module 6	<i>Doctrine of Scripture (Canon and Inspiration)</i>
	Tennent chap 3 (24pp) Hood, chap 8-9 (22pp)
Module 7	<i>Doctrine of Scripture (Inerrancy, Sufficiency, Necessity and Authority)</i>
	Blomberg and Dykes, “Jesus’s View of the Old Testament” (10pp) Evans, <i>We Have Been Belivers</i> , 37-59 (22pp) Hood, chap 10-11 (38pp)
Module 8	<i>Doctrine of Holy Spirit (Personhood and Deity)</i>
	Hood, chap 12-13 (28pp) Reeves chap 4 (24pp)
Module 9	<i>Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Holy Spirit in the New Covenant)</i>
	Tennent chap 7 (30pp) Hood, chap 14-15 (26pp)
Module 10	<i>Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Work of the Spirit in the Christian Life)</i>
	Hood, conclusion (12pp) Reeves chap 5 (20pp) Theology Project/Paper due; Reading Reflection, Reading Report due

Calculating Your Reading

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

Total = 502 pages

- Example: Joe staff completed 400 pages of required reading. $400 \div 502 = 0.80 \times 100 = 80\%$.

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-
0-71	No credit

*You will need a grade of 72 or better to pass the course and obtain the required IBS credit.