

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

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| Course | SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING THEO 0531 1S |
| Date, Time, and Delivery Format | JANUARY 13 – APRIL 11, 2025 THURSDAYS, 11:15AM – 2:05PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE |
| Instructor | MICHAEL BRAIN, Ph.D. Email: mbrain@tyndale.ca |
| Class Information | The classes will be livestreamed on Thursdays from 11:15AM – 2:05PM. Office Hours: by appointment. Online learners may participate in virtual office hours, as posted on the webpage. |
| Course Material | Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. |

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Equips students to use the tools of systematic theology to understand, proclaim, and live the Christian faith today. We will address such questions as: How can we know God, and how do we adjudicate truth claims about God? How can God be both one and three? How can Jesus be both divine and human? Who is the Holy Spirit and how does the Spirit’s work relate to that of the Father and Son? How does theological knowledge impact our day-to-day lives in the church and in the world?

Prerequisites: HIST 0561 or HIST 0562

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the interconnection and cohesion of Christian doctrines and apply implications for Christian life, vocation, and mission.
2. Evaluate intelligently, graciously, and critically the theological ideas and writings of others, and articulate your own positions in a manner that is informed, coherent, winsome, and charitable.
3. Distinguish between the essentials and non-essentials of the Christian faith through deeper and broader exposure to the historic Christian Tradition.
4. Effectively identify, assess, and analyze theological sources through electronic library research tools.
5. Express their love for God and their worship of God through deeper and more integrated knowledge of God.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

McGrath, Alister E. [*Christian Theology: An Introduction*](#). Sixth edition. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. ISBN: 9781118869574 (hereafter *CT*). [*Note: the McGrath text is available as an eBook through Tyndale library.]

Basil of Caesarea. *On the Holy Spirit*. Popular Patristics. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011. ISBN 9780881418767.

Other assigned readings will be available via the course page, as per the schedule below.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web camera

- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using Ethernet cable over WiFi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

*exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Preliminary Research Assignment (10%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), February 14th) (Outcome #4).

This assignment will prepare students for the final research paper and provide an opportunity for the instructor to give students feedback and direction. Additional instructions will be posted on Moodle.

- Find two encyclopedia entries on a major theologian or a major theological issue (lists to be provided).
- If you choose a theologian, identify two or three major issues they addressed. If you choose an issue, identify two or three major thinkers who have addressed the issue.
- From the above, choose one issue you would like to address, and one thinker who you would like to read on that topic. Then state your topic in the form of a research question, and provide an answer in the form of a tentative thesis statement.
- Find eight or more good quality academic sources on the proposed topic. Sources must include at least three academic journal articles, at least one academic monograph, and relevant sources from the major thinker in question as per the proposed topic.

2. Discussion Leadership (20%; Due 11:55pm (Eastern Time) (Outcomes #2, 3).

Once during the term, students will help lead course discussions by presenting an analysis of both sides of a given theological issue related to that week’s material. Students will present opposing sides of a particular doctrine or theological topic by describing the historical or theological context of the debate, defining key concepts, and presenting the reasons for and against each position. Students will also develop three discussion questions to pose during

class discussion. Students will sign up for a topic by week three of the course, and will post discussion questions by 11:55pm on the day before the class period.

3. Theological Reflection Papers (6 pages, 30%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), Jan. 31, Mar. 28) (Outcomes #2, 3, 5).

Twice during the term, students will submit a theological reflection paper (6 pages) on the following topics. Papers should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the key concepts and figures pertinent to the topic by drawing on course notes and readings.

Paper #1 – What is Theology? For your first theological reflection, you will describe your own understanding of the discipline of theology and its relation to your vocation and ministry. Conversing with ideas presented in class, you will articulate the goals and methods of theology, as well as the potential ways that theology might inform your faith, ministry practice, or vocation. **Due week 3 (January 31 @ 11:55pm).**

Paper #2 – What is the gospel? Your second paper will reflect theologically on nature of the gospel by examining one of the soteriological themes presented in class (weeks 8-10). Your paper should describe the good news that is presented through the lens of this theme, along with its biblical and theological presuppositions. Papers should also respond to potential objections to the chosen theme. **Due week 10 (March 28 @ 11:55pm).**

4. Short Research Paper (9-10 pages, 40%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), April 11) (Outcomes #1, 2, 4, 5).

Students will write a 9-10 page research paper on the topic proposed in the preliminary research assignment, above. Students should consult **at least** 8 good quality academic sources beyond the course materials. A detailed marking rubric will be provided on the course page. The research paper should demonstrate thoughtful reflection, critical analysis, and should embody a conceptual argument (thesis) in which various angles of the topic are explored in fairness.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

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|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Preliminary Research Assignment | 10% |
| Discussion Leadership | 20% |
| Theological Reflection Papers | 30% |
| Short Research Paper | 40% |
| Total Grade | 100% |

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Assignments are to be uploaded to the assignment submission section of the course page in pdf or Microsoft Word format by 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) on the assigned due date. Papers submitted after 11:55 PM on the due date will receive a 1/3 grade deduction (i.e., B+ to B) for each day (or part thereof) following the due date. This late policy will apply to all assignments for which no extension has been granted. Extensions will be granted only for serious personal, family, or health situations.

Assignments should be double-spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font, with 1" or 1.25" margins. The standard citation method for theological papers is footnotes with a complete bibliography in the [Chicago style](#). For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, "Documenting Chicago Style"](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#). Also consult the [tip sheet, "Citing Sources in Theology"](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Jan. 16): Theology is Faith Seeking Understanding

The nature and task of theology; theology as a practice of the church; evangelical theology

CT chapter 1, "The Patristic Period," pp. 1-20.

CT chapter 5, "Getting Started: Preliminaries," pp. 83-103

Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 1-13 (on course page)

Barth, "Prayer," from *Evangelical Theology*, 159-170.

Week 2 (Jan. 23): Theology's Rule is the Bible, Interpreted through Tradition, Reason, and Experience

Sources of theology; Scripture as the un-normed norm of theology; the role of other sources.

CT chapter 2, "The Middle Ages and the Renaissance," pp. 21-37

CT chapter 6, "The Sources of Theology," pp. 104-134

C. S. Lewis, Preface to Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*

McGrath, 'Engaging the Great Tradition: Evangelical theology and the Role of Tradition,' in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, 139-158.

Week 3 (Jan. 30): God is Revealed in Creation and Redemption

Due: Theological Reflection Paper #1

The doctrine of revelation; the knowledge of God; the nature of theological language

CT chapter 3, "The Age of Reformation," pp. 38-56

CT chapter 7, "Knowledge of God: Natural and Revealed," pp. 135-151

CT chapter 8, "Philosophy and Theology: Dialogue and Debate," pp. 152-171

McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader*, 2.28 (Edwards), 2.29 (Paley), 2.37 (Barth), 2.38 (Brunner), 2.48 (Torrance), 2.51 (McGrath).

Week 4 (Feb. 27): God is Triune

Solidifying the Nicene consensus; Trinity as the 'grammar' of the Christian faith

CT chapter 4, "The Modern Period," pp. 57-80

CT, chapter 10, "The Person of Jesus Christ," pp. 207-220

CT, chapter 13, "The Trinity," pp. 299-326

Week 5 (Feb. 6): Jesus Christ is God and Human

Due: Preliminary Research Assignment

Who is Jesus? Scriptural foundations; patristic Christology

CT chapter 10, "The Person of Jesus Christ," pp.220-245

Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 1-8 (pp 27-52)

Victor Ezbigo, "Jesus as God's Communicative and Hermeneutical Act: African Christians on the Person and Significance of Jesus Christ," in *Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*, ed. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 37-58.

Week 6 (Feb. 13): The Holy Spirit is God

Who is the Holy Spirit? Scriptural foundations; patristic pneumatology

CT, chapter 12, "The Holy Spirit," pp. 280-298

Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 9-20 (pp. 52-89)

Thomas Oden, "The Person of the Holy Spirit," in *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009), 513-525.

Feb. 18-21: Reading Days (No Classes)

Week 7 (Mar. 6): God is One

The God of the Bible and classical theism; divine attributes; theodicy

CT chapter 9, "The Doctrine of God," pp. 175-206

Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 21-30 (89-122)

Aquinas, ch. 1 of *Shorter Summa*, 9-34.

Week 8 (Mar. 13): Jesus Christ Atoned for Our Sin

The work of Christ in salvation; atonement and justification

CT chapter 11, "The Nature and Basis of Salvation," pp. 246-279

McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader*, 5.2 (Irenaeus), 5.7 (Rufinus), 5.13 (Anselm), 5.14 (Abelard), 5.19 (Calvin), 5.28 (Aulén), 5.32 (Packer), 5.38 (Weaver), 6.23 (Luther), 6.25 (Melancthon), 6.27 (Calvin), 6.28 (Trent).

Sonderegger, "Anselm, *Defensor Fidei*" in *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 9 no. 3 (2007): 342-59.

Week 9 (Mar. 20): The Holy Spirit Regenerates Our Fallen Nature

The human person; sin and grace; creation and new creation

John Wesley, Sermons 44 and 45, "Original Sin" and "The New Birth," In *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2, edited by Albert Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985): 170-201.

Ray Aldred, "An Indigenous Reinterpretation of Repentance: A Step on the Journey to Reconciliation," in *So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World*, ed. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 116-137.

Week 10 (Mar. 27): Christ Perfects the New Humanity

Due: Theological Reflection Paper #2

Christ as the Last Adam; sanctification; predestination

CT chapter 14, "Human Nature, Sin, and Grace," pp. 327-353.

McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader*, 6.8 (Augustine), 6.10-11 (Pelagius), 6.13 (Orange), 6.20 (Gregory of Remini), 6.26 (Calvin), 6.29 (Beza), 6.31 (Westminster), 6.35 (Barth).

McCormack, Bruce L. "Sanctification After Metaphysics: Karl Barth in Conversation with John Wesley's Conception of 'Christian Perfection,'" in *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014), 94-113.

Week 11 (Apr. 3): The Holy Spirit is Poured Out on All Flesh

The Spirit as a pledge of our inheritance; the consummation of God's work of redemption

CT, chapter 18, "The Last Things," 426-447

Amos Yong, "I Believe in the Holy Spirit: From the Ends of the Earth to the Ends of Time," in *The Spirit Over the Earth*, 13-33.

Week 12 (Apr. 10): The Triune God Invites Us to Participate in God's Love, Life, and Mission

Due: Short Research Paper

The Trinity and the mission of God; human participation in trinitarian mission

Thompson, "The Triune God and Mission," and "The Trinity, Society, and Politics," in

Modern Trinitarian Perspectives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 68-93, 106-123.

James B. Torrance, "Worship – Unitarian or Trinitarian?" in *Worship, Community & the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 19-41.

C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell, "Learning to See Jesus with the Eyes of the Spirit: The Unlikely Prophets of God's Reign," in *The Trinity Among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World*, ed. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 86-99.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tyndale Library supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

Anselm, and Gaunilo. *Proslogion: With the Replies of Gaunilo and Anselm*. Translated by Thomas Williams. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 2001.

Ayres, Lewis. *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. Translated by G. T. Thomson. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.

_____. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Bloesch, Donald. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Christian Foundations*. 7 vols. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Bloesch, Donald G. *The Holy Spirit: Works & Gifts*. Christian Foundations. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Boff, Leonardo. *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time*. Translated by Patrick Hughes. London: SPCK, 1981.

_____. *Trinity and Society*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Brunner, Emil, and Karl Barth. *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" By Karl Barth*. Edited by John Baillie. Translated by Peter Fraenkel. London: G. Bles, 1946.

Burgess, Stanley M. *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985.

_____. *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Traditions*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

_____. *The Holy Spirit: Medieval Roman Catholic and Reformation Traditions*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

Congar, Yves. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. New York: Crossroad, 1997.

Cross, F. L, and Elizabeth A Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Dorrien, Gary J. *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.

Elwell, Walter. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998.

Fackre, Gabriel J. *The Doctrine of Revelation: A Narrative Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Ford, David, ed. *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*. 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Gerrish, B. A. *Christian Faith: Dogmatics in Outline*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Green, Gene L, Stephen T Pardue, and Khiok-Khng Yeo, eds. *Jesus Without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

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_____, eds. *So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.

Grillmeier, Alois. *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.

Gunton, Colin E. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991.

_____, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

_____. *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

Halverson, Marvin, ed. *A Handbook of Christian Theology*. New York: Meridian Books, 1958.

Harvey, Van. *A Handbook of Theological Terms*. New York: Macmillan, 1964.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.

Jenson, Robert W. *Systematic Theology*. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Jenkins, Michael. *Invitation to Theology: A Guide to Study, Conversation & Practice*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Jones, Beth Felker. *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.

Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

_____. *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

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- Larsen, Timothy, and Daniel J. Treier. *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Leith, John H., ed. *Creeds of the Churches*. 2nd ed. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973.
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- Lohse, Bernhard. *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Long, D. Stephen. *Perfectly Simple Triune God: Aquinas and His Legacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016.
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- McDermott, Gerald. *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- McEnhill, Peter, and G. M. Newlands. *Fifty Key Christian Thinkers*. London: Routledge, 2004.
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- Quash, Ben, ed. *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007.
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Webster, J. B., Kathryn Tanner, and Iain R. Torrance, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

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Young, Frances M. *God's Presence: A Contemporary Recapitulation of Early Christianity*. Cambridge, 2013.

Zizioulas, Jean. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

For **detailed bibliographies** to support *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, a **glossary** of theological terms, and **details of theologians** from *The Christian Theology Reader*, cf. www.wiley.com/mcgrath