STUDENT ACCESS TO INSTRUCTOR
Welcome! I want this semester to be as productive and edifying for you as possible, so please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. However, I do ask that you make complete use of the course resources, especially the syllabus, before contacting me with questions. You may find your question already answered in those materials.

- The best way to contact me with a question about the class is to send an email: andrew.snider@bmats.edu
- If some unusual circumstance requires immediate communication, you can call or text me at (661) 755-6696, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

TEXTBOOKS
Please note: some of the required reading assignments for this class will advocate opinions that are contrary to Scripture. These readings are required in order to facilitate genuine critical interaction with primary sources on the topic.

1. For the topic of homosexuality
2. For the topic of biblical inerrancy

3. For the topic of creation & evolution

4. For the topic of evangelical inclusivism

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*From BMATS catalog:* Specialized and advanced studies are made in various topics of systematic and/or biblical theology. The distinctive theological emphases of a particular writer or of a certain book of the Bible may be studied.

*For this semester:* Targeted study in four theological topics with current relevance for Christians: homosexuality, biblical inerrancy, evangelical inclusivism, and origins.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon our mutual, diligent completion of this course:

1. You will be informed about several key issues that Christians currently face, the spectrum of opinions within the church on these issues, and the status of the discussion.
2. You will have critically examined the arguments for multiple disagreeing viewpoints on several sensitive theological and cultural issues.
3. You will be able to articulate a biblically based, culturally informed position on the major theological issues analyzed in this class.
4. You will be equipped to recognize theological, cultural, and political issues as opportunities for gospel thinking and action rather than merely political, cultural, or moral activism.
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<th>UNIT OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT</th>
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| UNIT ONE | HOMOSEXUALITY (Jan. 19–Feb. 16) | - Vines, *God and the Gay Christian*
- Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay?* |

After completion of this section the student will be able to:
- Understand the spectrum of opinions on homosexuality and same-sex attraction
- Explain the biblical material that deals directly with homosexuality
- Formulate a biblically sound, culturally informed response to the issue of homosexuality
- Articulate this response in Christlike and redemptive love

| UNIT TWO | BIBLICAL INERRANCY (Feb. 17–Mar. 16) | - Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?*
- Mohler, et al., *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, Parts 1, 3, and 4 |

After completion of this section the student will be able to:
- Understand the spectrum of opinions on biblical inerrancy
- Explain the biblical material that deals directly and indirectly with the inerrancy of Scripture
- Formulate a biblically sound, culturally informed doctrine of biblical inerrancy
- Articulate this doctrine in Christlike and redemptive love

| UNIT THREE | CREATION & EVOLUTION (Mar. 17–Apr. 13) | - Mortenson and Ury, eds., *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, chapters 1-8, appendix 2 (pp. 453-57)
- Carter, ed., *Evolution's Achilles Heels*, any 5 chapters |

After completion of this section the student will be able to:
- Understand the spectrum of opinions on creation and evolution (i.e., origins)
- Explain the biblical material that deals directly with origins
- Formulate a biblically sound, culturally informed response to the origins debate
- Articulate this response in Christlike and redemptive love
UNIT FOUR  |  EVANGELICAL INCLUSIVISM (Apr. 14–May 11)  
---|---
| Morgan and Peterson, eds., *Faith Comes by Hearing*  
| Sanders, ed., *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?*  

After completion of this section the student will be able to:  
- Understand the spectrum of opinions on soteriological inclusivism  
- Explain the biblical material that deals directly and indirectly with the question of whether someone can be saved without hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ  
- Formulate a biblically sound, culturally informed doctrine of exclusivism  
- Articulate this doctrine in Christlike and redemptive love  

**CIVILITY**  
This class will deal with issues that are debated in society and within the church. You will be interacting with me and other students in class and written assignments, and in some cases you may find yourself with a differing opinion than another class participant. In all discussions, we will be committed, as followers of Jesus Christ, to embodying the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), remembering at all times to "be eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). Any forum interaction or written assignment that does not conform to this standard will result in grade reduction and/or a personal admonition from me. Remember, the defining mark of Christian living is Christlike love (John 13:34-35), even in our zeal for the defense of biblical truth.

**ASSIGNMENTS DUE**  
All assignments will be turned in on the date due or earlier. All assignments will be due on Monday night at 11:55 p.m. Central Time. Please contact me if you are experiencing a genuine emergency of some kind. If I agree that an extension is warranted, you will be permitted to turn in the assignment no more than one week late. If no such prior arrangements are made, you can expect a grade reduction of one letter grade up to one week late, and two letter grades after one week. Please *note*: all work must be turned in to receive a passing grade for the class.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**  
1. Classroom Symposia  
   a. Description  
      
      Each class meeting will consist of critical discussions of your ongoing reading and research. See the Assignment Schedule for the schedule of topics. In each session, you will be required to informally present to the class some aspect(s) of your reading and research (you will submit it in written form as a Reaction Paper—see below). You may present a difficult question that you are wrestling with, and summarize the state of your thinking on that question. The purpose is not to present your settled conclusions about anything (although you may do that), but rather to open up discussion for the common benefit of all students so that our ongoing research can advance through critical interaction.
b. Reaction Papers

As noted above, your weekly contribution to the class will be submitted in written form as a 1-2 page (double-spaced) Reaction Paper. This is not a research paper, but a concise report of what you are learning from your reading and research, with an emphasis on what you are discovering, and on pressing questions that you are working through. The paper must be written in good, complete sentences, but title page, footnotes, or bibliography are not required. The topic for the session will be specified in the Assignment Schedule below. **Please note: Your Reaction Papers must be submitted in PDF format on Moodle before the class session begins.**

c. Grading Criteria

Your grade will be a composite evaluation of your Reaction Paper, oral presentation, and participation in class discussion. You will receive a grade for each unit, for a total of four Classroom Symposium grades. You will do well on these assignments if you:

- arrive at class ready to hand in your reaction paper and present its contents to the class
- write Reaction Papers that show progress in learning and honest questioning of various viewpoints being examined, including your own preconceived ideas
- interact enthusiastically with other class participants in critical discussion that advances toward a faithful understanding of biblical truth
- embody the Christian virtues described in the "Civility" section above

2. Position Papers

a. Description

You will write a position paper on each of the four theological issues covered in this course. This paper will serve as a concise statement of your biblically grounded, culturally informed, and gospel motivated position on each issue in question.

b. Grading Criteria

The standard writing rubric for BMATS will be used. This rubric can be found in the "Course Syllabus" section of the Moodle course page.

c. Length Requirement

Each paper must be 6-8 pages of body text (not including title page and bibliography). Any papers less than 6 full pages of body text, and any papers over 9 pages will receive a grade penalty. Focus on your topic, and choose arguments that are the most weighty. Write clearly and concisely in order to stay within the allotted space.

d. Content Requirements

- These are research papers, so they must show evidence of scholarly activity. Sources, including required reading, should be used carefully and should be cited with properly formatted footnotes. **Please note:** plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are using another's material, you must cite it properly. Please review the plagiarism statement in the BMATS Student Handbook, page 6.
- Your paper must include three main elements: biblical argumentation, an understanding of the contrary position being addressed (i.e., you must show that you genuinely understand the opinion you are disagreeing with), and an explanation...
of how this issue impacts the church's gospel ministry. You may organize/structure your paper any way you like, but you must include these elements.

- More specific instructions for content will be included in the Moodle assignment. Be sure to note these instructions carefully.
- Your bibliography must include at least ten different sources. This is to be a "Works Consulted" bibliography, so you may include sources that were helpful to you in your research but not cited in the body of the paper.

e. Format Requirement

Turabian formatting is required. The paper must have a properly formatted title page and bibliography, must be double spaced, and footnotes must conform to Turabian style.

f. Submission Requirement

You must submit your paper in the appropriate place on Moodle, and the file **must be in PDF format**. If you submit a file in any other format (Word, Pages, etc.), you will be asked to resubmit in the proper format. If resubmission causes your paper to be late, you will be subject to late penalty. Your word processor will have a "Save As" or "Export" feature (usually in the "File" menu) that will let you save a copy of your file as a PDF. If you use Google Docs, use the "Download As" option on the "File" menu. If this is new for you, please practice ahead of time so that you don't have trouble submitting your file on the due date. If you still have trouble, please email me.

3. Reading Assignments

You will complete a reading report at the end of this course, certifying that you have completed the reading assignments. The reading for each unit must be completed by the due date of that unit's position paper. For example, your required reading on homosexuality must be completed by the due date for the position paper on homosexuality. On the reading report you will certify the amount of reading that you completed on time for each unit. For example, "I completed 100% of the reading on homosexuality by the due date."

**SEMESTER GRADE COMPUTATION**

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale, and each will have a differing weight in your final grade as noted above and in the Assignment Schedule below. To summarize:

- Class Discussions (4 x 6.25%) 25%
- Position Papers (4 x 15%) 60%
- Reading Report 15%
## ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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| 2   | 1/29  | Matthew Vines and biblical passages on homosexuality                  | **Read:** at least 2/3 of Vines book  
                               **Write:** Reaction Paper                                                   |
| 3   | 2/5   | Mohler, et al. and biblical passages on homosexuality                 | **Read:** all of Vines, all of Mohler et al.                                   |
| 4   | 2/12  | ETS program session on same-sex attraction                           | **Read:** listen to ETS presentation recordings on Moodle course page  
                               **Write:** Reaction Paper                                                    |
| 5   | 2/19  | "Caffeinated Theology" (at Blue Sail Coffee, Conway; no class for TX students) | Position Paper #1: Homosexuality                                             |
| 6   | 2/26  | Intro to biblical inerrancy, discussion of Blomberg                  | **Read:** at least 2/3 of Blomberg                                           |
| 7   | 3/5   | Comparing positions from Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy            | **Read:** Parts 1, 3, 4 of *Five Views* book  
                               **Write:** Reaction Paper                                                    |
| 8   | 3/12  | SPRING BREAK — NO CLASS                                              |                                                                               |
| 9   | 3/19  | Concluding discussion                                                | Position Paper #2: Biblical Inerrancy                                         |
| 10  | 3/26  | "BBQ'd Theology" (location TBD, Jacksonville; no class for AR students) |                                                                               |
| 11  | 4/2   | Creation in the biblical story                                       | **Read:** chaps 1-8 and appendix 2 (pp. 453-57) of *Coming to Grips with Genesis*  
                               **Write:** Reaction Paper                                                    |
| 12  | 4/9   | Evolutionary Creation                                                 | **Read:** at least 5 articles from [www.biologos.org](http://www.biologos.org) and/or [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org).  
                               Take notes and be prepared to present your findings.                        |
| 13  | 4/16  | Creation, gospel, and the church                                     | Position Paper #3: Creation & Evolution                                         |
| 14  | 4/23  | **BMAA MEETING — NO CLASS**                                           |                                                                               |
| 15  | 4/30  | Inclusivism: theology and exegesis                                    | **Read:** Sanders book, all  
                               **Write:** Reaction Paper                                                    |
| 16  | 5/7   | Responses to inclusivism                                              | **Read:** Morgan & Peterson, at least chaps 1-8                                |
| 17  | 5/14  | **FINALS WEEK — NO CLASS**                                            | Position Paper #4: Evangelical Inclusivism  
                               Complete Reading Report on Moodle                                               |