TH511 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I
Course Syllabus

BMATS Arkansas—Fall 2015

Dr. Andy Snider

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
An orderly study of Christian doctrines covering introduction to theology, revelation and Scripture, the existence, attributes, and triune nature of God, the creative and providential work of God, the nature of angels, and the origin and fall of humanity.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon our mutual, diligent completion of this course of study, you will be able to:

- Understand and explain the role of theology as a critical element of pastoral ministry.
- Define and biblically explain key doctrines of Scripture, theology proper, angels, humanity, and sin, and reason carefully through related contemporary issues when you encounter them.
- Formulate doctrinal themes, and show how they are integrated in the gospel metanarrative of Scripture.
- Continue developing skill in exploring the mysteries of God, such as the Trinity and divine providence.

III. COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 9/1</td>
<td>Nature of Theology</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 1; Bray ch. 1, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 9/8</td>
<td>Doctrine of Revelation; Inspiration of Scripture</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 4, 5; Bray ch. 2</td>
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<td>3 9/15</td>
<td>Inerrancy &amp; Clarity of Scripture</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 6</td>
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<td>4 9/22</td>
<td>Existence and Nature of God</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 14; Bray ch. 7 Book Review #1: James White</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 9/29</td>
<td>Attributes of God</td>
<td>Bray ch. 8</td>
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<td>6 10/6</td>
<td>Attributes of God</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 10/13</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 15; Bray ch. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 10/20</td>
<td>Providence of God</td>
<td>Doctrinal Formulation Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 10/27</td>
<td>Problem of Evil</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 16; Bray ch. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 11/3</td>
<td>Angels</td>
<td>Grudem ch. 19; Bray ch. 13</td>
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<td>11 11/10</td>
<td>Nature of Humanity</td>
<td>Bray ch. 15, 16 Book Review #2: student choice</td>
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IV. ASSIGNMENTS

A. Exams

One exam will be administered, based on the syllabus and class lectures. This will be a "semi-comprehensive" final exam covering selected material from the semester – a study guide will be provided.

B. Reading and Book Reviews

1. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, as assigned in Course Schedule above
2. Gerald Bray, *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology*, as assigned in Course Schedule above
   - Read the entire book and write a brief (3 pages, double spaced) review of the book. No title page, bibliography, or footnotes, please.
   - ONLY the 2nd edition will be allowed for this assignment – please do not ask if you can read the 1st edition instead.
4. Book Review #2: Student’s choice
   - Choose a book from the following list, read the book and write a brief (3 pages, double spaced) critical review of the book. No title page, bibliography, or footnotes, please. Please choose a book that you have not yet read.
     - Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* (2013)

NOTE: Remember that a good book review does three things: summarizes the content, evaluates the content (positive and negative), and closes with a recommendation.

C. Writing Projects

1. Doctrinal Formulation Paper
   a) You will write a short paper that presents a concise summary of a particular biblical theme (i.e., a sub-topic of bibliology, theology proper, angelology, anthropology, or hamartiology)
   b) The goals of this assignment are:
(1) To help you cultivate a deeper love for and understanding of God and his Word.
(2) To expand your exposure to major theological writings.
(3) To develop your ability to comprehend and summarize a biblical theme.
(4) To develop your sense of how doctrine affects the hearts of believers.

c) **Length** requirement is 6-8 pages, excluding front and back matter (title page and bibliography, both of which are required; table of contents is not required). No appendixes are allowed for this assignment.

d) **Format**: Turabian 8th edition

e) **Bibliography**: You must include at least 10 scholarly sources in your bibliography, including an appropriate balance of theology books and exegetical tools like dictionaries/lexicons and commentaries. This is a Works Consulted bibliography (see description of this under bibliography instructions for the Research Paper below)

f) **Grading Criteria**: see rubric below

g) **List of Topic ideas**:

This list is just to stimulate your thinking. You may choose another topic, or modify any of these ideas to create your own topic.

(1) The Inspiration of Scripture: why is the Bible different from every other book?
(2) The Clarity of Scripture: if the Bible is clear, why are there so many doctrinal disagreements?
(3) Holiness: What does it mean to be holy?
(4) Mercy: God’s Character on Display for Israel, in Christ, and through the Church (you can take this approach with any attribute of God you choose)
(5) Angels: What do they have to do with me?
(6) Image of God: Finding Purpose in Design
(7) Defining the Problem: What is Sin?
(8) Another topic, or narrower version of any on this list, is permitted. See me if you have questions about defining your topic
(9) **Note**: you may NOT write your doctrinal formulation paper on creationism/evolution, the problem of evil, original sin, or any other doctrine that is too controversial (or too broad) to cover in the limitations of this assignment. You may write your Research Paper on any of those topics.
2. Research Paper

a) One of the most significant learning opportunities in this class is your research project. A starter list of topic ideas appears below. If you have any doubts at all, please discuss your topic with me in order to ensure the topic is well-conceived for a successful project.

b) The goals of this assignment are:

(1) To help you cultivate a deeper love for and understanding of God and his Word.

(2) To make you aware of the major theological writings on a particular topic and give you the opportunity to evaluate them carefully.

(3) To develop your theological research skills so that when a question arises during study you are able to locate the needed resources to inform your understanding of the issue.

(4) To develop your ability to comprehend, evaluate, formulate, and present theological argumentation.

(5) To incorporate your exegetical skills into the process of systematic theological argumentation.

(6) To increase your knowledge of a chosen topic in order to enhance your future ministry.

c) **Length** requirement is 12-14 pages, excluding front and back matter (title page, table of contents, and bibliography, all of which are required for this assignment). Any appendixes are included in the page count.

d) **Format**: *Turabian 8th edition*

e) **Bibliography**: the credibility of your research will depend in part on your bibliography. This is a "Works Consulted" bibliography, meaning that an item is included if it contributed significantly to your understanding of the research topic. Thus, you may include a source even if it is not footnoted in the text of the paper. The bibliography must include a minimum of twenty scholarly sources, including an appropriate balance of systematic theologies, journal articles, monographs, reference works (including dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.), and commentaries.

f) **Grading Criteria**: see grading rubric below.

g) List of Topic Ideas
The following are only suggestions—you may choose another topic or do a narrowed-down version of a topic on this list.

- A Critique of The Authority of Scripture in Openness Theology (or Karl Barth, or Clark Pinnock, or G. C. Berkouwer, or Contemporary Roman Catholicism, etc.)
- Augustine’s Doctrine of Immutability (or Foreknowledge)
- Immutability: Does God Change?
- Immutability: Does God Change His Mind?
- Divine Foreknowledge: What Does God Know about the Future?
- The Relationship of God to Time
- Does the Decree of God Make God the Author of Sin?
- A Theological and Pastoral Response to the Problem of Evil
- Demons and the Christian Life
- The Image of God: What it is, and Why it Matters
- The Doctrine of Creation: The Maker’s Lordship
- Creation: Young Earth or Old Earth?
- How Total is Depravity?
- …or any topic of interest in bibliology, theology proper, angelology, anthropology, or hamartiology

V. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Attendance

More than one, 3-hour unexcused absence will result in grade reduction. If excused absences are needed, please contact me directly.

B. Grading

1. Exam – 25%
2. Reflection Paper – 20%
3. Research Paper – 25%
4. Book Reviews – 20%
5. Reading – 10%

C. Timeliness Policy

1. Please respect your classmates and professor by diligently observing due dates. Writing assignments must be uploaded correctly into Moodle by 11:55 p.m. on the due date. After that, a penalty of one letter-grade will be assessed if the paper is late.
2. If extreme circumstances prevent the timely submission of an assignment, please contact me by phone or email in advance if possible.
3. All assignments must be turned in by the last day of the semester in order to receive credit for the class, no matter how late the assignment may be.
D. Contact Information

Please feel free to contact me if you have a question or concern. If after class is not a convenient time, please email me: andrew.snider@bmats.edu