

Course Content

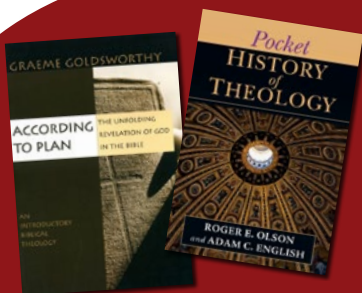
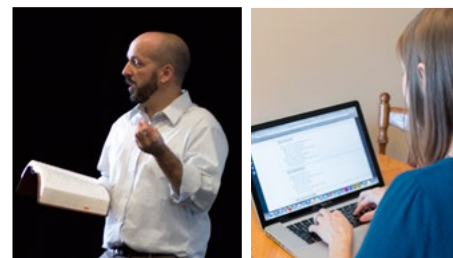
As the title suggests, this course is an introduction to Christian theology. Theology is basically talk about God, and Christians talk about God in light of Scripture and their sense of His ongoing involvement in the world. Christian theology, then, is a lively conversation spanning roughly two millennia.

In order to prepare students to contribute to this conversation, this course introduces participants to the biblical, historical and systematic aspects of theology. One reason for this sort of study is simply to get to know what a variety of Christians believe. Another more personal reason is to reflect carefully and consciously on our own lives in light of our beliefs about God and the character of the world.

Objectives and Outcomes

Through participation in this course, students will gain a better understanding of Christian thought, learn the basic features of central Christian doctrines, and be prepared for further studying in this field. They will also learn the chronology of key moments in the history of Christian theology.

Beyond these outcomes directly related to the content of the course, students will improve their ability to recognize theological assumptions in both scholarly and popular material. They will also learn to engage sensitive issues through clear and honest discussion.



Required Course Texts

Graeme Goldsworthy, According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

Roger Olson and Adam English, Pocket History of Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

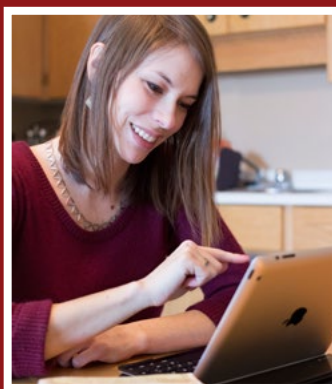
Course Components and Requirements

1) Reading, Lectures and Quizzes – Students are expected to read each of the required texts as specified on the course webpage. Each lesson (except for the first) will include a multiple-choice quiz designed to assess students' grasp of assigned readings and lectures.

2) Theological Question Assignment – To help students improve their ability to engage theological questions carefully, participants are required to complete a theological question assignment in two stages: 1) preparing a thesis statement and annotated bibliography (one-credit students), 2) writing and submitting the essay itself (three-credit students).

3) Discussion Forum – As a part of each lesson students are expected to respond in an online forum by answering several questions related to the course lectures. Students will post their own reflections and comment on those of others.

4) Exam – This course includes exams, which are completed entirely online. The first is after lesson ten and the final will be after lesson twenty-five (for three-credit students only). Exams will cover material from lectures and assigned reading.



Grading Scheme

Quizzes	25%
Theological Question Assignment	25%
Discussion Forum Participation	25%
Exam	25%

See '**Assignment Description Appendix**' on course home page for detailed descriptions and instructions for each assignment.

Important Notes

- *Like any course of study, this one encourages rigorous thinking which includes challenging and mutually profitable interchange between participants. Irrelevant or disrespectful comments, as judged by the course facilitator, will be deleted from the reflection forums. Participants responsible for such comments will receive a warning note for the first infraction. If the problem occurs again, the offending participant will not be allowed to continue.*
- *Communication about this course will occur on the Moodle site and through e-mail. It is the responsibility of students to ensure their e-mail accounts are functioning and accessed regularly.*
- *From the time a student enrolls in the first part of the course he or she will have two months to complete Part I. An additional four months will be given for completing Part II. Extensions may be granted in certain cases, but a continuation fee will be charged.*
- *Plagiarism in any form may result in a failing grade. Consult Prairie's policy in the academic guide at www.prairie.edu/registrar for more information.*

TH100 Assignment Descriptions

An Appendix to the Course Syllabus

*The assignments for this course are outlined below. Students enrolled for one credit will complete all assignments except those marked with double asterisks (**).*

1. Quizzes

The material in this course is presented in both textbooks and lecture videos. You will be expected to read each of the assigned texts as specified in the course outline and watch the lectures for each lesson. Every lesson will include a quiz designed to assess your comprehension of reading and lectures. Each will consist of 10 multiple-choice questions. You are welcome to consult your notes or the textbooks themselves while you take each quiz. However, there is a ten-minute time limit.

To prepare for these quizzes pay careful attention as you read and watch the lectures. Try to figure out the main ideas in each section and look up any terms that are new to you. Theological vocabulary is important, though maybe a bit frustrating, since understanding the theological conversation sometimes requires specialized terminology. Though clumsy at first, these key terms allow us to discuss ideas across generations and name complex concepts with a single word.

2. Theological Question Assignment

The study of theology involves learning to ask and answer important questions. This requires us to learn to use resources effectively. The Theological Question Assignment will help you meet this goal. Students enrolled for one credit are required to submit Part I. Those enrolled for three credits are required to submit Part I and II.

Part I (Question & Annotated Bibliography)

This project begins with a question—something related to Christian theology that you would like to consider more deeply. Your question should be one that is addressed in both the Old and New Testaments as well as throughout the history of Christian thought. *Before beginning your research, submit your question in the location provided in lesson five.* Your instructor will help you craft it in a helpful way. Part of our ability to think theologically is learning what sorts of questions can actually be answered clearly.

After approval, you can begin preparing an annotated bibliography. Consult at least eight sources. Ideal sources for this sort of introductory work are

theological encyclopedias, theological dictionaries and sections of introductory systematic theology textbooks. These are good places to start because they are written for a general audience and have been vetted by scholars.

Organize each entry in your bibliography according to the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. Below each bibliographic entry include a five-sentence description (annotation) of the source. Annotations should describe the key relevant insight each source contributes to your research, as well as the sources' strengths and weaknesses. At the top of the assignment write your guiding question and, based on your initial research, the answer in the form of a thesis statement. This thesis is what your essay will explain and defend. The first part of the assignment (annotated bibliography and thesis statement) will be evaluated for (1) organization, (2) clarity of annotations and (3) quality of your resulting thesis.

****Part II (Essay)****

For Three-Credit Learners Only

The second part of the Major Theology Assignment is an essay of 1,500-1,600 words. It will be submitted closer to the end of the course in two stages. The first stage, a part of lesson 18, requires you to submit your rough draft. A separate forum has been created for this assignment. Other students will offer feedback on your draft and you can do the same to theirs. Consider the criteria below as you comment on the work of others and as you prepare to revise your own essay. You are free to read other students' essays at this point and peruse the related comments. Any comments giving feedback on other posts will count toward the total for your discussion forum grade.

Posting an essay in a forum like this where others can read is a bit intimidating. Most other course participants will be nervous as well. It's important to have peers evaluate our work because it improves our thinking and communication skills. Another reason for this part of the assignment relates to the public character of Christian claims. What Christians believe to be true isn't something hidden or secret. Remember that the course facilitator will try to monitor comments. Send an email if anything seems inappropriate.

The final draft of your theological essay should be submitted under the 'Major Assignments for Part II' heading after lesson twenty-five. It should be written according to the specifics of the most recent Chicago Manual of Style. Sources should be cited with short-form footnotes that include the author's last name, a shortened form of the book title and the page number (e.g. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 12). The essay should have a clear introduction, conclusion, and sections treating relevant issues from the OT, NT, and the history of Christian

theology. A bibliography should be included as well. The essay will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *Thesis*: Is the point of the essay obvious and realistic for the scope of the project?
- *Clarity*: Is the essay written and organized in a clear, logical way?
- *Biblical Content*: Does the essay treat the relevant parts of the OT and NT?
- *Historical Content*: Does the essay discuss key historical persons and opinions?
- *Sources*: Does the essay use appropriate sources and correct citations?

3. Discussion Forums

Another important theological skill is being able to reflect on and discuss important, but often debated, ideas. To help you develop this ability, each lesson includes a discussion forum where you can respond to discussion questions and interact with other students.

Good posts will be at least several sentences long. They will engage the topic directly and demonstrate careful reflection. Posts that are disrespectful or off-topic will be deleted at the discretion of the course facilitator. Keep in mind that other participants may already have completed this part of the course and may not respond directly to your comments. This part of the course grade will be evaluated for both the number and quality of responses posted.

Part I (lessons 1-10)

22+ posts	A range
19-21 posts	B range
15-18 posts	C range
10-14 posts	D range

****Part II (all lessons)****

(For Three Credit Learners Only)

55-60 posts	A range
49-54 posts	B range
43-48 posts	C range
37-42 posts	D range

No more than four posts per lesson will be counted toward your total. Please make an effort to engage your classmates in a cordial and respectful way using standard English (no texting shorthand).

If this is a new experience for you, remember that no one is expecting you to have profound comments and fully-formed opinions. This is just a place to see

what others are thinking and to begin developing your views on theological issues.

4. Exams

This course requires you to complete exams based on the readings and lectures. They will include multiple-choice as well as two essay questions. To prepare for these exams go over vocabulary terms from the lecture outlines and study the general time-line of historical theology. If you had difficulty with any of the quizzes earlier in the course, pay special attention to the material covered in those lessons.

Mid-Term Exam (after lesson 10)

On the mid-term, the essay questions will be related to theological method (ideas we covered in the first four lessons or so) and creation and fall (lesson six). On the final, the essay questions will be related to the big picture of the biblical theology material. You will have one hour to complete each exam. Once begun, exams must be completed and cannot be re-taken.

****Final Exam****

(For Three-Credit Learners Only)

The final exam, but not the mid-term, must be completed in the presence of a proctor, i.e. an exam supervisor. The proctor must be a responsible adult with a position such as a pastor, chaplain, church leader, administrator, school teacher, or college professor. The proctor cannot be another student, the spouse of a student or related to you. Send the name, position, and email address of your proposed proctor to the Distance Education office (elarning@prairie.edu) **one week** before you wish to write your exam. After your proctor is approved, he or she will be sent instructions and the exam password.

Graded exams are not available for review; only exam grades will be available to students. If you have specific questions about this grade you are welcome to contact the course facilitator or the Distance Education office.