

“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.”

Course	SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING THEO 0531 1A
Date, Time, and Delivery Format	SEPTEMBER 9 – DECEMBER 6, 2024 ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor	MICHAEL R. BRAIN, Ph.D. Email: mbrain@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The course is web-based asynchronous with no fixed class time. 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. 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.

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

NOTE: This course is not self-paced, but designed to take advantage of the group-interaction features of the online classroom software. Students are expected to contribute in a timely fashion to each group assignment. It is expected that students will read carefully all of the assigned reading by the end of Monday of the week in which it is assigned. Marking rubrics for all assignments will be posted on our course page.

1. Group Discussions (30% of Final Grade). Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in forums. During weeks 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11 students will be expected to participate in online group discussions. The purpose of the discussions is to engage the theological content of the course and explore the implications of the material covered for discipleship and ministry. The class will be assembled into groups of four or five at the end of the second week. These groups will remain fixed for the duration of the course. The instructor will post a question each week for group reflection. Students are expected to post their own response by 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) on Tuesday evening of the week in question, and then reply to the reflections of each of the other students in their group by 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) on Thursday of that same week. Your individual contributions to these discussions will be assessed on a weekly basis. This assignment is related to Outcomes #1, 2, 3 and 5.

Penalty for late posts: "Late posts" will be noted by the instructor, and the penalty is 1/3 of a grade per every 3 hours late (e.g. from A to A minus or B to B minus).

If there is "no post" after 11:59 pm for that day, the student will receive a "zero" for that forum. If there are specific reasons for late posts (as stated in "Late Papers and Extension Policy," Seminary Academic Calendar), the student is to email the instructor directly.

2. Preliminary Research Assignment (10%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), October 11th). This assignment will prepare students for the final research paper and provide an opportunity for the instructor to give students feedback and direction. This assignment is related to Outcome #4.

- 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 a tentative answer.

- 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.

3. Open-Book Examination (30%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), November 1st). A set of short-essay examination questions (with some choice) will be posted online on Monday, October 21st, and students will have until Friday, November 1st at 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) to complete the exam. Further instructions will be provided at that time. This assignment is related to Outcomes #1 and 2.

4. Short Research Paper (9-10 pages, 30%; Due 11:55 PM (Eastern Time), December 6th). Students will write a 9-10 page research paper on the topic proposed in assignment 2, 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. This assignment is related to Outcomes #1, 2, 4, and 5.

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:

Discussions	30 %
Preliminary Research Assignment	10 %
Exam	30 %
Short Research Paper	30 %
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](#), as explained in the [popular guidebook written by Kate L. Turabian](#). For proper citation format, consult check the "[Turabian Citation Quick Guide](#)" (follow style for notes ("N") and bibliography ("B")), or see the complete [Chicago Manual of Style online \(Tyndale e-resource\)](#), especially ch. 14. The bibliographic software Zotero is recommended as a helpful citation tool which will save time and help to ensure that proper formatting is followed (available free at www.zotero.org).

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](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference 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 (Sept 9–13): Theology is Faith Seeking Understanding

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

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

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

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

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

Week 2 (Sept 16–20): 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 6, "The Sources of Theology," pp. 104-134

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

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

C. S. Lewis, Preface to Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 9-15.

Week 3 (Sept 23–27): God Makes Himself Known in Creation and Redemption

Discussion Forum #1

Knowledge of God; revelation; the role of philosophy; the nature of theological language.

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

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

CT, chapter 3, "The Age of Reformation," pp. 38-56
Alister McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, fifth edition (Chichester, UK: Wiley, 2017), 2.28 (Edwards), 2.29 (Paley), 2.37 (Barth) 2.38 (Brunner) 2.47 (Packer on Revelation) 2.51 (McGrath).

Week 4 (Sept 30–Oct 4): God is One

Discussion Forum #2

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

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

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

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

Week 5 (Oct 7–11): Jesus Christ is God and Human

Preliminary Research Assignment Due October 11th

Who is Jesus? Scriptural foundations; Patristic Christology

CT chapter 10, "The Person of Jesus Christ," 207-245

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 (Oct 14–18): The Holy Spirit is God

Discussion Forum #3

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.

Reading Week: October 21–25

Week 7 (Oct 28–Nov 1): God is Triune

Discussion Forum #4

Solidifying the Nicene consensus

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

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

Week 8 (Nov 4–8): Christ Atoned for our Sin

Take Home Examination Due Nov 1st

The work of Christ as the ground of our 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).

Hans Boersma, "Penal Substitution and the Possibility of Unconditional Hospitality," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57, no. 1 (2004): 80-94.

Week 9 (Nov 11–15): The Spirit Regenerates our Fallen Nature

Discussion Forum #5

The work of the Spirit in regeneration; the problem of sin

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.

Christopher R. J. Holmes, "Regenerated Sight," in *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 167-180.

Week 10 (Nov 18–22): The Triune God Invites us to Participate in God's Love, Life, and Mission

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.

Week 11 (Nov 25–29): Christ Perfects the New Humanity

Discussion Forum #6

Christ as the Last Adam; sanctification; predestination

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

T. A. Noble, "Christian Holiness and the Incarnation," in *Holy Trinity, Holy People: The Theology of Christian Perfecting* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013), 158-179.

Clark Pinnock, "Spirit & Christology," in *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 79-111.

Week 12 (Dec 2–6): The Spirit is Poured Out on All Flesh

Short Research Paper Due December 6th

The Spirit as 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.

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.

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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.

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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.

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

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

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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.

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

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

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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