



Knowing the Living God
THS 501 – 4 Credit Hours
Western Seminary – Portland Campus

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Syllabus –Fall 2014

COURSE SCHEDULE

Monday, 6:00 – 10:00 (September 8 through December 8)

REQUIRED TEXTS

M. Erickson, [*Christian Theology*](#), 3rd Ed. ISBN: 0-8010-3643-7; Retail Price: \$49.99, (optional alternative B. Demarest & G. Lewis, *Integrative Theology* ISBN: 0-310-20915-3; Retail Price: 69.99)

W. Elwell, [*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*](#) ISBN: 0-8010-3413-2; Retail Price \$59.99

T. Tennent, [*Theology in the Context of World Christianity*](#), ISBN: 9780310275114; Retail Price: \$24.99

COURSE DESCRIPTION

You will begin to cultivate your ability to think theologically by exploring how theology is done in various approaches in order to develop a practical theological method. Then you will probe God's progressive revelation focusing on the nature and authority of Scripture before pondering God's triune nature and work. Your passion for carrying out God's mission in His world will expand as you begin to understand how the Father's revelation has impacted the world He created. 2 hours.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. You will develop a gospel-centered understanding of revelation, God and Jesus and the major historical and evangelical perspectives on these topics.
- B. You will be able to articulate clearly and defend biblically your own position on these doctrines.
- C. You will be able to assess contrary theological perspectives on these issues fairly and biblically.
- D. You will apply these theological truths to contemporary issues in life, ministry, and culture.
- E. You will develop a deeper spiritual life as you come to know God, his plans, and his purposes better.

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME:

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Appointments: Shanita Gills: (503) 517-1976; sgills@Westernseminary.edu

RESPONSIBILITIES**Online Orientation (15 min.)**

Before the end of the first Friday of the semester, you need to log onto the learning center, download the syllabus for the course, and complete the report indicating that you have read and understand the course requirements. By federal law, we now need to ensure that students participate in classes for the full length of the class. So failure to complete the online orientation on time will result in a grade penalty and may impact your financial aid eligibility.

A. Reading Assignments

The assigned reading is listed in the course outline. Erickson is the preferred systematic theology because of its readability and coverage of mainstream evangelical theology. Lewis/Demarest is a fine alternative because of its sections on biblical exposition, church history, apologetic and application. You may choose which one you read. Read the three articles from *EDT* in each week's listing which will be most beneficial to you. Assignments marked [A] are required for students who desire an A grade and optional for others. Most of the required readings beyond the text and *EDT* are in the course materials folder at the bottom of the web classroom folder.

Each assignment after the first one should be completed before the class session so that you will be able to participate in and benefit from the class discussions. Each assignment completed on time will earn 5 points. Assignments completed late will earn 3 points each. (1000 pages = 50 hours).

B. Class Materials

The latest editions of the class readings, theology outlines, and doctrinal statement materials are in the class materials folder in the web classroom. The class readings, theology outlines, and doctrinal statement materials for all three semesters in a DropBox folder I can share with you if you request. I can also email the files to you in virtually any word processor format.

C. Scripture Meditation

We will spend time meditating on biblical passages relevant to the various topics we will cover in the class. We will read thoughtfully, prayerfully and theologically the week's passage for about 15 minutes, once a day, two days per week to be completed by the beginning of the first class of the week. To preserve the impact of the meditation, journal your personal reflections on the passages. Rather than summaries of the passages, focus on how our lives and ministries have been (or should be) impacted by the truths we have meditated on. I would like for you to share these with me as a point of accountability and as a way to let me get to know you better. Be sure to include your name, box, the passage and your journaling on each assignment. Turn these by the beginning of class each week. (12 hours)

D. Doctrinal Statements

You will write a succinct statement of your own personal doctrinal commitment for each section of the course. A statement covering revelation and inspiration less than two double spaced pages long will be due with the first examination, a statement covering person and work of God about double spaced two pages long will be due with the second exam. One covering the person of Christ about one double spaced page long will be due with the final examination. Submit your papers in the appropriate section of the web classroom. You should review the handout "Doctrinal Statement Guidelines" for issues to be covered. That handout along with example statements are in the class materials folder in the web classroom and on the Western web site. (15 hours)

E. Examinations

Three examinations will be given. The first, distributed October 6, due back October 13, will cover the prolegomena and bibliology section of the course. The second, distributed November 11, due back November 18, will cover doctrine of God. The third, distributed December 8, due back December 12, will cover the person of Christ. The first section of each exam will be specific multiple choice and short answer questions covering the content of both readings and class discussions in that section of the course (60 points). The second section will be a state, support and defend question (20 points). Several possible questions are listed on the study sheet. On state and defend questions you will be expected to state your own position on a specific question carefully, to support it with Scripture and relevant arguments, and to answer significant objections. Write all answers at a level "Chris" can understand. Chris is a college graduate who believes the Bible is God's Word, knows little about it and knows nothing about theology or theological terms. So you in your state, support, and defend, you will explain all theological terms you use, support your answer by showing specifically how Bible passages support your view. Submit your papers in the appropriate section of the web classroom. (24 hours)

Final Course Evaluation (15 min.)

Before the end of the last Friday of the semester, you need to log onto the learning center and complete the final course evaluation. By federal law, we now need to ensure that students participate in classes for the full length of the class. So failure to complete the final course evaluation on time will result in a grade penalty and may impact your financial aid eligibility.

FINAL GRADE

The final grade will be determined on the following basis:

Doctrinal statements	90 points
Examinations	240 points
Meditations	42 points
Reading report	<u>70 points</u>
Total	442 points

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
99-	95-	93-	91-	88-	86-	84-	81-	79-	77-	74-	70-

100%	98%	94%	92%	90%	87%	85%	83%	80%	78%	76%	73%
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COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Late Assignments: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who miss class are responsible for missed work. Absences and tardiness may impact a student's grade. Students who anticipate an absence should discuss it in advance with the instructor. Students who miss more than 20% of the seat time for the class will not pass the course, without a request for and the completion of additional assignments. Assignments submitted after the due date and time will result in a reduction of the student's letter grade for that assignment.

Copyright Violation and Plagiarism: Research in secondary sources for the written project is permitted and welcomed. However, any appropriation of either ideas or wording taken from other sources, whether print or electronic, must be properly footnoted. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism which can result in substantial grade reduction or failure. Any unauthorized copying or use of copyrighted materials, including downloaded files of various kinds, can result in criminal charges and fines. For a fuller explanation of these issues or WS's copyright policy, see the Copyright Issues and Cheating" section of the Student Handbook: <http://www.westernseminary.edu/academic/handbook-copyright>.

Incompletes/Extensions: The final deadline for submitting all course work is the last day of the semester as noted in the Academic Calendar and in the class schedule. In the case of serious illness, family emergency, or similar extenuating circumstances, the student may request an extension. A 1-3 week extension is typical in all except the most extreme cases, and some penalty for late work may apply. Under no circumstances will the student be given more than 5 weeks to complete all required coursework except by petition and approval of the Administrative Committee. (Extensions longer than 5 weeks are rare and should only be requested under extreme circumstances.)

If students face a personal emergency that requires requesting an extension going beyond the end of the semester, it may affect their ability to receive financial aid in the next semester, and they may face the possibility that their next semester's course registrations will be cancelled. Please contact the Financial Aid Office for assistance.

Audit/Enrichment Students: Enrichment students are encouraged, but not obligated, to participate in assignments and class discussions. Professors are not obligated to grade participation for these students, but may opt to do so depending on class size.

Statement on WiFi Services: Our community at Western Seminary is defined by our membership in the body of Christ. As we share common resources, we wish to do so with respect and consideration for others. Our IT department has created a strong and secure wireless internet network at each of our campus locations to enhance the student learning environment. Some of the considerations in developing our wifi networks have included providing excellent security (better than you'll find at the local coffeeshop) and doing so within a budget that does not significantly impact tuition costs. Keeping costs low means that we don't have an endless supply of bandwidth. We ask that you use the wifi network for academic purposes and avoid downloading large files or streaming video. Please be mindful that your internet use (both in class and on campus) can distract others or prevent them from accessing resources they need for their studies. We appreciate your participation in promoting thoughtful, considerate internet use on campus.

The Availability of Disability Services at Western Seminary: Western Seminary is committed to

responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined in both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Western students are assisted individually as their needs dictate. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to identify themselves and the nature of the disability. Any student who has a disability should contact the seminary's Disability (Section 504) Coordinator, Ashley Mitchell, at 503-517-1819/1-877-517-1800, ext. 1819. Her office is at the Portland campus. Students at the northern California campuses may contact Director of Student Services – San Jose or Director of Student Services – Sacramento, or they may contact Ms Mitchell directly. Appropriate forms will be provided and must be submitted to the Disability Coordinator's office.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK BEGINNING	ASSIGNMENT
Sept. 2	Online Orientation – Before the end of the first Friday of the semester, you need to log onto the learning center, download the syllabus for the course, and complete the report indicating that you have read and understand the course requirements. By federal law, we now need to ensure that students participate in classes for the full length of the class. So failure to complete the online orientation on time will result in a grade penalty and may impact your financial aid eligibility.
Sept. 8	Introduction; Nature of Theology; Method in Theology; Erickson, 3-67 [Second Edition: 17-84] Lewis & Demarest, 7-58 (required for all students) Erickson, 45-67 [Second Edition: 62-84] (required for those who reading Lewis/Demarest) <i>EDT</i> , Dogmatics; Systematic Theology [A] Stott, "Theology: A Multidimensional Discipline," in <i>Doing Theology for the People of God</i> , 3-18 [A] Kantzer, "Systematic Theology as a Practical Discipline," in <i>Doing Theology for the People of God</i> , 21-38
Sept. 15	World Views; Theological Systems: Dispensationalism; Gal. 3:16-4:6 Breshears, "What is Wicca?" "Are Atheists The New Campus Crusaders?" <i>Religion Dispatches</i> , February 7, 2013, http://tinyurl.com/mcm7ute "Bible and World Religions" <i>ESV Study Bible</i> 2623-2630 Kirk, "'A Secular Age' In A Mission Perspective" <i>Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies</i> July 2011 vol. 28 no. 3 172-181 N. T. Wright, "God" in <i>Simply Christian</i> , 55-69 Saucy, "Contemporary Dispensational Thought," <i>TSF Bulletin</i> , March-April, 1984, pp. 10-11 and "Dispensationalism and The Salvation of the Kingdom", <i>TSF Bulletin</i> , May-June, 1984, pp. 6-7 [A] Stott, <i>Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today</i> , 29-60 <i>EDT</i> , Barth; Bultmann; Civil Religion; Demythologization; Dispensation, Dispensationalism; Existentialism; Fundamentalism; Liberation Theology; Liberalism; Myth; Naturalism; Neo-Orthodoxy; Nihilism; Process Theology Secularism [Note: you are only required to read 3 of these. See Reading Assignments, above]
Sept. 22	Theological Systems: Reformed, Wesleyan, Lutheran; Evangelicalism; Deuteronomy 7:1-11 Erickson, 68-117 [Second Edition: 115-173] Tennent, <i>Theology in the Context of World Christianity</i> , 1-22, 249-272 Kinlaw, "The Unclaimed Heritage" Keith Drury, "The Triumph of Arminianism (and its dangers)," http://www.cresourcei.org/arminianism.html Brian Abasciano and Martin Glynn, The FACTS of Arminianism vs. The TULIP of

- Calvinism <http://evangelicalarminians.org/an-outline-of-the-facts-of-arminianism-vs-the-tulip-of-calvinism/>
- [A] "One Lord, One Faith, but Many Expressions" and one other chapter you need to read in *Why We Belong* ed. Chute, Morgan, & Peterson. One is available [here](#).
EDT, Arminianism; Calvin; Calvinism; Covenant; Covenant Theology; Evangelicalism; Lutheran Tradition; Methodism; Orthodox Tradition; Reformed Tradition; Wesleyan Tradition
- Sept. 29 General and Special Revelation; Inspiration; Psalm 19
Erickson, 121-167 [Second Edition: 177-223]; {Demarest & Lewis 61-128}
Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 53-75
Grenz, "The Spirit and the Scriptures," Chapter 14 in *Theology for the Community of God*
David Lose, "Where Did The Bible Come From?"
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-lose/where-did-the-bible-come-b_893765.html
David Bowden "I Believe in Scripture"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZdzjf5uuv4>
[A] Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in Carson, *Scripture and Truth*, 19-59
EDT, Revelation, General and Special
- Oct. 6 Inerrancy; Characteristics of Scripture; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; 2 Peter 1:12-21 **EXAM DISTRIBUTED**
Erickson, 168-229 [Second Edition: 224-285]; {Demarest & Lewis 129-170}
Roger Nicole, "The Biblical Concept of Truth," in Carson, *Scripture and Truth*, 287-296
David Dockery, "Understanding Evangelicalism Biblically"
<http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/papers/ets/2002/Dockery/Dockery.pdf>
J. I. Packer, "Hermeneutics and Biblical Authority"
N.T. Wright, "How Can The Bible Be Authoritative?" at
http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Bible_Authoritative.htm
Ben Simpson, "The Lost Book" at <http://sbcvoices.com/the-lost-book-the-wesleyan-quadrilateral-conundrum>
[A] Paul Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy" in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 267-304
[Highly recommended] Tim Mackie, "Bible in the Making"
<http://www.timmackie.com/bible-in-the-making/> Handout is in the class materials folder.
EDT, Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of
- Oct. 13 Trinity; John 14:1-31
Erickson, 291-313 [Second Edition: 346-367] {Demarest & Lewis 251-289}
[A] Plantinga, "The Threeness/Oneness Problem of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 23:1 (1988): 37-53
EDT, Chalcedon, Council of; Eternal Generation; Filioque; Holy Spirit; Homoousian; Hypostasis; Monarchianism; Nicea, Council of; Only Begotten; Perichoresis; Preexistence of Christ; Subordinationism; Trinity
- Oct. 20 Knowability of God; Attributes of Greatness, Isaiah 40:1-31

- Erickson, 233-253 [Second Edition: 289-308] { Demarest & Lewis 177-212}
 A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Chapter 9: "The Immutable God"
 Pinnock, *The Openness of God*, pp. 101-125
 Harris, "10 Myths about Atheism"
 [A] Bruce Ware, "An Evangelical Reformulation of the Doctrine of the Immutability of God" http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/29/29-4/29-4-pp431-446_JETS.pdf
EDT, Agnosticism; Atheism; Deism; Dualism; Essence; God, Argument for the Existence of; God (500-508; first edition, 451-468); Monotheism; Theism
- Oct. 27 Attributes of Goodness; Exodus 34:1-16
 Erickson, 254-290 [Second Edition: 309-345] { Demarest & Lewis 215-248}
 Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 25-49
 Boyd, *God of the Possible*, 89-112
 Matt Chandler, "Forgiveness Jam" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOAFjgExUUE>
EDT, Eternity; Glory; Good; Impassibility of God; Love; Natural Theology; Nominalism; Pantheism; Panentheism; Polytheism; Realism
- Nov. 3 Decree, Election; Psalm 33
 Erickson, 317-336 [Second Edition: 371-390] { Demarest & Lewis 293-335}
 Cottrell, "The Classical Arminian View Of Predestination." Introduction, Sections I and III, conclusion [pp. 1-19, 23-41, 49]
 Piper, "Are There Two Wills in God?" at <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/are-there-two-wills-in-god>
 McCall, "I Believe in Divine Sovereignty" <http://bit.ly/LgzeQs> (in class files too)
EDT, Cause, Causation; Decrees of God; Elect, Election; Foreknowledge; Freedom, Free Will, Determinism; Predestination; Sovereignty of God; Will of God
- Nov. 11 Creation, Providence, Relation to Work; **EXAM DISTRIBUTED**; Habakkuk
 Erickson, 337-402 [Second Edition: 391-456] {Demarest & Lewis Vol. 2, 17-120}
 Driscoll/Breshears, "Creation" *Doctrine*, chapter 3
 Brooks, "Art of Presence"
 Theology that Works
 Economic Wisdom Project Vision Document
 Rick and Kay Warren, "How to Get Through What You're Going Through" [First sermon after Matthew Warren's suicide]
<http://www.saddleback.com/mc/m/16056/>
 Aaron Keyes, "Sovereign Over Us"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPkMbhydU9I>
EDT, Creation; Day; Earth, Age of; Evil; Evil, Problem of; Evolution; Gap Theory; Origin of the Universe; Prayer; Providence; Theodicy
- Nov. 18 Introduction to Christology; Names of Christ; John 1:1-18
 Erickson, 603-658 [Second Edition: 677-738] {Demarest & Lewis 251-306}
 Metzger, "The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ" *Theology Today* April, 1953, pp. 65-85
 "Bono on Jesus" excerpt from *Bono on Bono: Conversations with Michka Assayas* (Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2004)
EDT, Jesus Christ; Logos; Lord; Messiah; Son of God; Son of Man

- Nov. 24 Natures of Christ; Incarnational Christology; Philippians 2:1-11
 Erickson, 659-673 [Second Edition: 739-755] {Demarest & Lewis 309-367}
EDT, Communication of Attributes; Hypostatic Union; Offices of Christ; States of
 Jesus Christ
- Dec. 1 Life of Christ: Incarnation, Birth, Sinless Life; Hebrews 2:1-18
 Erickson, 674-691 [Second Edition: 756-775]
EDT, Immaculate Conception; Incarnation; Kenosis; Obedience of Christ; Sinlessness
 of Christ; Virgin Birth of Jesus
- Dec. 8 Life of Christ: Death, Resurrection, Ascension; **EXAM DISTRIBUTED**, Luke 23:33-24:53
 Watch the debate between Tim Callahan and Gary Habermas on Youtube,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCsPpRp63Nc> and
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UewOU4CuiXo&NR=1> You can find more
 of Dr. Habermas' material beginning here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsrqFmEPUnw>
 Enjoy this video on the planning of the resurrection conspiracy:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGFzpvIA_hQ
- Köstenberger & Taylor, "Easter Sermon Errors"

EDT, Cross, Crucifixion; Descent into Hell; Resurrection of Christ
Mark D. Roberts has done a helpful summary of what is involved in the death of Jesus
at <http://www.patheos.com/community/markdroberts/series/why-did-jesus-have-to-die/>

Final Course Evaluation

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Name _____ Box _____

READING REPORT
THS 501 Theology I
Gerry Breshears, Instructor

DUE DATE	REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT		
Sept. 8	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Sept. 15	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Sept. 22	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Sept. 29	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Oct. 6	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Oct. 13	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Oct. 20	___ On Time ___	Late	
Oct. 27	___ On Time ___	Late	___ A
Nov. 3	___ On Time ___	Late	
Nov. 10	___ On Time ___	Late	
Nov. 17	___ On Time ___	Late	
Nov. 24	___ On Time ___	Late	
Dec. 1	___ On Time ___	Late	
Dec. 8	___ On Time ___	Late	

TOTALS ___ On Time ___ Late (14 Possible)