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INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY SELF-PACED COURSE GUIDE



“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
” 2 Timothy 2:15

Welcome to this course! The completion of this course will prove to be a significant blessing to you both academically and spiritually. We recommend that you thoroughly read the entire study guide before you actually begin working on the Course Projects. If you are uncertain or unclear on any matter, contact IFCA Bible College for clarification (1-216-261-4214 or ifcabccleveland@gmail.com). Above all other things, we encourage you to pray for God's guidance before you begin this course, and each time you work on it.

The instructions in this study guide are related to course formatting and submission. You may also refer to your original Student Orientation Page. **IMPORTANT:** The instructions on the study guide always supersede any other instructions. If there seems to be a conflict between this study guide and other instructions, always follow the instruction of the study guide.

We strongly recommend that you use reliable word processing software and make frequent use of the spell checker and grammar suggestion aspects. Be sure to save your work frequently, and backup copies of course work you have submitted.

If you need to contact the professor for this course (or the academic office), we recommend that you do so first by email. If the professor's email address is not listed on this study guide you may request it by email: ifcabccleveland@gmail.com

The total length of time required to complete this course is different for each person. This is because already acquired knowledge of the subject, previous education, and personal situations all influence study habits and ability.

The time between the submission of your coursework, until it is returned to you (graded) will vary, but generally courses sent by postal mail may require as much as two weeks in transit (to and from), and another two weeks to get through the recording and grading process. Email submissions (preferred) generally require about two weeks. These are only averages. Be absolutely certain that you keep IFCA Bible College immediately informed if you change your email, postal mailing address or telephone numbers.

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IFCA Bible College Writing Guidelines

The standard for academic papers (to be used in all your courses at IFCA-BC) should reflect the following:

Formatting

1. Use the following guidelines to format all research papers and writing assignments
 - a. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced throughout (see “Hot Tips” below for permissible exception for footnotes)
 - b. Set margins 1” top and bottom, and 1.25” right and left
 - c. The use of subtitles or subheadings is encouraged: (set subheadings in bold on the left margin)
 - d. Do not use a cover page. Rather, enter the following in the upper left corner of the first page of the paper:
 - Your name
 - Course Number, assignment number
 - Date submitted
 - Word count
 - e. Insert page numbers at the bottom center of all pages, including the first page.
 - f. Foreign terms (terms not listed in a common English dictionary) should be italicized the first time they are used, and thereafter should not be italicized.
2. Use of ellipsis dots:
 - a. Leave a space before and after three ellipsis dots.
EXAMPLE: “For God so loved ... that he gave his only begotten son” (John 3:16a).
 - b. Do not use ellipsis dots at the beginning or ending of a quote.
INCORRECT EXAMPLE: The scriptural phrase “... God so loved ...” has become an extremely influential formative dynamic for the church.
CORRECT EXAMPLE: The scriptural phrase “God so loved” has become an extremely influential formative dynamic for the church.

Citing Sources

1. Direct quotes must be footnoted, as should sources used in paraphrased form and major ideas drawn from other authors.
2. Avoid overusing direct quotes. Reword the idea to express your understanding (paraphrase).
3. Use block quotes sparingly.
 - a. Block quotes should be single-spaced, having no quotation marks
4. When adding citations, use the following guidelines:
 - a. A superscript number is used in the text, following the footnote or citation. The footnote is numbered at the beginning, either as a number followed by a period or as a superscript number. Either footnotes or endnotes may be used; ask your professor which they prefer.

- b. The first line of the endnote or footnote is indented 5 spaces.
5. Biblical references may be placed in the text (rather than in the footnotes), following the quote and in parentheses; unless more than three Scripture texts are cited. Use the standard abbreviations (found below) when referencing biblical texts by chapter and verse (e.g., Dan 3:20-21)
- In narrative, spell out the name of the Bible book: e.g., “in Daniel 3:20-22, we read...”
 - However, never write out the chapter and verse references: e.g., “in the third chapter of Daniel, verses twenty to twenty-two, we read...”

Old Testament

Genesis	Gen.	Proverbs	Prov.
Exodus	Exod.	Ecclesiastes	Eccles.
Leviticus	Lev.	Song of Solomon	Song of Sol.
Numbers	Num.	Isaiah	Isa.
Deuteronomy	Deut.	Jeremiah	Jer.
Joshua	Josh.	Lamentations	Lam.
Judges	Judg.	Ezekiel	Ezek.
Ruth	Ruth	Daniel	Dan.
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	Hosea	Hos.
2 Samuel	2 Sam.	Joel	Joel
1 Kings	1 Kings	Amos	Amos
2 Kings	2 Kings	Obadiah	Obad.
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.	Jonah	Jon.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.	Micah	Micah
Ezra	Ezra	Nahum	Nah.
Nehemiah	Neh.	Habakkuk	Hab.
Esther	Esther	Zephaniah	Zeph.
Job	Job	Haggai	Hag.
Psalms	Ps. (<i>pl.</i> Pss.)	Zechariah	Zech.
Malachi	Mal		

New Testament

Matthew	Matt.	1 Timothy	1 Tim.
Mark	Mark	2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philemon	Philem.
Acts	Acts	Hebrews	Heb.
Romans	Rom.	James	James
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.	1 Peter	1 Pet.
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.	2 Peter	2 Pet.
Galatians	Gal.	1 John	1 John
Ephesians	Eph.	2 John	2 John
Philippians	Phil.	3 John	3 John
Colossians	Col.	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.	Revelation	Rev.
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.	<i>or</i>	Apoc.
		Apocalypse	

The following are examples of proper citation formatting:

Book/One Author

¹Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 27.

²Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. 1 of *The Story of Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1984), 91.

Book/Two Authors

¹Paul R. House and Eric Mitchell, *Old Testament Survey* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 27.

Anthology: Emphasizing the editor's comments

¹Alister E. McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 27.

Anthology: Emphasizing the author of a work included in the anthology

¹Cyril of Jerusalem, "Cyril of Jerusalem on the Role of Creeds," in *The Christian Theology Reader*, 2nd ed. Ed. Alister E. McGrath (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 27.

Article in reference dictionary, encyclopedia, or the like

²*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), s.v. "Septuagint."

Commentaries

²Raymond Brown and Sandra Schneiders, "Hermeneutics: The Literal Sense of Scripture," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1990), 1148-1149.

Electronic media, not including information found on a website (for example, CD media).

³Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 17 in the *Works of Josephus*, 1451; available from the *AGES Digital Library* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1999).

Lecture

⁴David Belles, "Historical Overview: Part One" (lecture, T101, Session 1 Lecture 2, IFCA Bible College, 30 March 2016).

Website

⁵Gerald Wilson, "The Poetry of the Psalms," available from <http://home.apu.edu/~geraldwilson/HebrewPoetry.html> (Note: omitting the period at the end helps avoid confusion)

Introduction to Theology (T101) Course Syllabus

2019

Purpose

This core course will expose students to the basic study of theology. This course lays the foundation for further doctrinal study by introducing students to the discipline of deliberative theological reflection. The course will focus on the sources of theological study and reflection. It will also introduce students to the great tradition of theological consensus.

Objectives

1. Introduce students to the concept of deliberative theological reflection, how it differs from embedded theology and why it is necessary.
2. Examine the sources of theological inquiry.
3. Introduce students to the “Great Tradition” of consensual teaching as a source for orthodox theological inquiry.
4. Develop critical thinking skills regarding theological matters.
5. Develop improved writing skills.

Texts

Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, Third Edition, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013.

Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2002.

Assignments

Each student will be required to complete all the student activity assignments for each session. Answer the questions as best as you can. Use the information in the lecture and from your reading to help you answer the questions.

Scheduling

Session One: We all do theology

An historical overview

Session Two: What is theology?

Definition and discussion of theological methods

- Reading assignments
 - Read chapters 1-4 of Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*.

Sessions Three and Four: Sources for theological inquiry

Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as sources for theology

- Reading assignments
 - For session three, read chapters 1 and 2 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.
 - For session four, read chapters 3 and 4 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Sessions Five and Six: The nature of God

A discussion on the nature of God and the Trinity.

- Reading assignments
 - For session five, read chapters 5 and 6 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.
 - For session six, read chapter 7 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Sessions Seven and Eight: Who is Jesus Christ?

A discussion on the nature and person of Jesus Christ

- Reading assignments
 - For session seven, chapter 10 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.
 - For session eight, read chapter 5 of Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*.

How to Use this Guide?

Before you proceed with this course make sure you read the course syllabus in the previous section and the information below.

The following pages in this Self-Paced study guide provide the summaries, readings, and assignments for each session. You are free to work through the lectures and assignments at your own pace. We do recommend that you do not work too quickly; otherwise you will not have sufficient time to properly reflect on the course material.

Each session contains two 45-minute lectures. After each lecture, there is a reflection question and short writing assignment. These short assignments must be submitted to your professor.

After most of the sessions there are post-lecture reading.

Submit all assignments to the college at the completion of the course.

Session One

Lecture One: Historical Overview, Part 1

- I. Listen to the lecture, Historical Overview, Part 1. This lecture will show that “doing theology” is not a modern phenomenon and is, practically speaking, unavoidable. Israel’s history, its relationship to Yahweh, and its failure to live up to its covenant obligations, all these combined to force them to think theologically about their circumstances. They struggled with how God’s word, specifically his covenant promises, was to be interpreted in light of their situation, and what they should be their proper response.
- II. Student Activity: In the historical examples we have examined above, theological development occurred during a times of crisis and conflict. Take a few moments to think about a recent crisis or conflict faced by the church. What theological issues arose out of the situation you have in mind.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs on the crisis or conflict you came up with and the issue you identified as relevant to that situation.

Lecture Two: Historical Overview, Part 2

- I. Listen to the lecture, Historical Overview, Part 2. This lecture will continue to show that “doing theology” is not a modern phenomenon and is, practically speaking, unavoidable. As the newly formed Church grew it encountered competing systems of thought and belief. Some of these competing systems attempted to infiltrate and co-opt Christianity, which made it imperative that the infant church clarify and define what it meant to have “true belief.” Conflict created the need to engage theologically. During the Protestant Reformation conflict between Catholic and various Protestant factions made it necessary for each group to carve out theologically why its particular response was faithful to the biblical witness and Christian tradition.
- II. Student Activity: Think about what it means to be “saved.” Assume you are talking to someone who has no previous knowledge about the meaning of that term. How would you explain it to them? Do not confuse the question with offering them an opportunity to be saved. You are simply defining the term.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs where you define what it means “to be saved.”

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapters 1-4 of Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*.

Session Two

Lecture One: What is Theology

- I. Listen to the lecture, What is Theology. In this lecture, we will begin to define our subject matter for this course. We will attempt to answer the question “What is theology?” as we refine our definition, we will differentiate the active pursuit of theological inquiry from embedded theologies that functionally exist within the Church.
- II. Student Activity: Reflect on one of the embedded theologies that you and your church believe. Think about whether a deliberative theological analysis of that embedded theology might be helpful.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing the embedded theology. Describe whether you think a deliberative analysis would be beneficial or not.

Lecture Two: Theological Method

- I. Listen to the lecture, Theological Method. This lecture will focus on the kinds of processes that are engaged in by theologians. We will look at different approaches to theological inquiry, their advantages and disadvantages. We will also examine how theology and the theologian serve the Church by clarifying and assessing various theological options.
- II. Student Activity: Reflect on whether you might prefer a top down or bottom up approach to theological reflection. Why might you prefer the one over the other?
 - a. Write a few paragraphs on why you prefer the one theological approach over the other.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapters 1 and 2 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Session Three

Lecture One: Sources for theological inquiry, Part 1

- I. Listen to the lecture, Sources for Theological Inquiry, Part 1. In several of the following lectures we will examine four sources for theological inquiry: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. In this first lecture we will focus on scripture and the historical roots of its authority for the Church.
- II. Student Activity: As we have discussed the unique characteristics of “scripture,” think about how you might go about explaining to a congregation the differences between a word of prophecy and its authority, versus the authority of scripture.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing the difference between scriptural authority and post-scriptural prophetic authority.

Lecture Two: Sources for theological inquiry, Part 2

- I. Listen to the lecture, Sources for Theological Inquiry, Part 2. Our discussion of scripture as a source for theological inquiry continues as we turn our attention to scripture as a unique revelation of God, and from God. We will define revelation and briefly discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in its process.
- II. Student Activity: Think about the way God’s revelation is understood in your church. Do you have a nuanced understanding of revelation that differentiates the written revelation from “the Revelation” (Jesus Christ)?
 - a. Write a few paragraphs comparing how you understood revelation before and after this lecture.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapters 3 and 4 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Session Four

Lecture One: Sources for theological inquiry, Part 3

- I. Listen to the lecture, Sources for Theological Inquiry, Part 3. This lecture is a continuation of our examination of the sources for theology. We will conclude our discussion of scripture as a source and define the nature of scriptural inspiration. We will conclude with a brief discussion of the integrity of scripture as a reliable source for theology.
- II. Student Activity: What form of scriptural inspiration makes the most sense to you: verbal or dynamic?
 - a. In a few paragraphs, state why you prefer the one form over the other.

Lecture Two: Sources for theological inquiry, Part 4

- I. Listen to the lecture, Sources for Theological Inquiry, Part 4. In this final lecture on the sources for theology we will look at the role of the remaining three sources: tradition, reason, and experience. We will introduce students to the concept of the “Great Tradition” of the Church. The primary sources for those aspects of the Great Tradition that will concern us in this course are the first four ecumenical councils of the early Church. The foci of these councils will serve as the primary subject matter areas for the remainder of this course.
- II. Student Activity: Consider ways in which your church utilizes the remaining sources for theological inquiry (tradition, reason, and experience) in its worship and preaching. See if you can come up with two examples from different sources, where scripture and practice are interpreted through the lens of tradition, reason, or experience.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing these examples.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapters 5 and 6 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Session Five

Lecture One: The nature of God, Part 1

- I. Listen to the lecture, The Nature of God, Part 1. In this lecture, we will begin a discussion on the nature of God. We will summarize those divine attributes that are important for sound theological reasoning. The lecture will focus on God's incommunicable attributes: those that make God, God.
- II. Student Activity: From our discussion of God's attributes think about ways in which your embedded theology has been "lacking" by failing to properly incorporate a sound theological understanding of God's incommunicable character and nature.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing this deficiency and how it should be corrected.

Lecture Two: The nature of God, Part 2

- I. Listen to the lecture, The Nature of God, Part 2. This lecture will continue our discussion of God's divine, incommunicable attributes.
- II. Student Activity: From the attributes discussed so far, choose the one that you find most comforting or most encouraging.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing why you find this attribute to be a comfort or an encouragement.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapter 7 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Session Six

Lecture One: The nature of God, Part 3

- I. Listen to the lecture, The Nature of God, Part 3. This lecture will continue our discussion of the triune nature of God and his attributes and then segue to an examination of God's triune nature as it is affirmed by the Great Tradition.
- II. Student Activity: Consider the doctrine of the Trinity. What aspect of this doctrine do you find most troubling or hardest to grasp?
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing what you find most difficult and why.

Lecture Two: The nature of God, Part 4

- I. Listen to the lecture, The Nature of God, Part 4. In this lecture, we will conclude our discussion of God's three-in-oneness. We will look more closely at the statements that define the orthodox view of the trinity as they are found in the Great Tradition.
- II. Student Activity: Arius' mistake was due to a failure to interpret particular verses that describe Jesus as the "only-begotten" of God the Father? Reflect upon mistakes you or someone you know have made in interpretation.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing how this mistake in interpretation was corrected. Also write a few thoughts on why you believe it is important to always interpret scriptural passages with the totality of the biblical revelation in view.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapter 10 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.

Session Seven

Lecture One: Who is Jesus Christ, Part 1

- I. Listen to the lecture, Who is Jesus Christ, Part 1. This session we begin our study of the person of Jesus Christ. No other subject in Christian theology is as important. The very name of our faith, “Christian” means “follower of Christ.” We will address the subject by examining the scriptural titles that are applied to Jesus of Nazareth. We will trace the development of these titles through the Old Testament, the second Temple period (or intertestamental period) and the New Testament.
- II. Student Activity: Often times the disciples of Jesus Christ are viewed as somehow less than theologically or spiritually astute because they did not recognize who Jesus really was. From our discussion thus far of the titles applied to Jesus and their Old Testament and intertestamental backgrounds and development, do you think you would have done any better?
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing why you would or would not have been able to recognize Jesus’ identity.

Lecture Two: Who is Jesus Christ, Part 2

- I. Listen to the lecture, Who is Jesus Christ, Part 2. This lecture will continue our discussion of the scriptural titles applied to the person of Jesus Christ. We will note how the understanding of these titles developed in light of humanities encounter with the incarnate person of Jesus.
- II. Student Activity: As we have examined the development of the titles applied to Jesus, there is evidence for theological development of these titles over time. Think about how and if a progressive theological development component should be incorporated into how you do theology.
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing your understanding of whether a progressive theological development component is helpful or harmful to your theology.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. Read chapter 5 of Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*.

Session Eight

Lecture One: Who is Jesus Christ, Part 3

- I. Listen to the lecture, Who is Jesus Christ, Part 3. This lecture is a continuation of our discussion on the person of Jesus Christ. This session we will turn our attention to the nature of his incarnation. This first lecture will examine the evidences for his divinity and his humanity and attempt to come to a proper theological understanding of the word “incarnation.”
- II. Student Activity: Think about your church and the preaching and teaching you have heard about Jesus Christ. Do you find that there is greater emphasis on the divinity or the humanity of Jesus in those messages? Why do you think this is so?
 - a. Write a few paragraphs describing how the preaching and teaching you have heard is balanced and why you believe it tends toward one or the other.

Post-lecture Assignments

- I. **Read the following:**
 - a. Chapter 6 of Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*.
 - b. Chapters 8 and 9 of Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*.