

Munster Bible College

**036: Systematic Theology I**

**Diploma Syllabus**

**June 2023**

# Professor

Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

# Course Description

A careful and systematic study of Christian doctrines, covering introduction to theology, revelation and Scripture, the existence, attributes, triune nature, and works of God in creation and providence, finishing with humanity and sin.

# Course Objectives

As a result of this course the student should be able better to:

1. Articulate and defend the essential theological doctrines of the historic Christian faith as covered in this course.
2. Articulate the importance of historical theology in the development of the doctrines of revelation, Scripture, theology proper, and theological anthropology.
3. Compare and contrast the Christian worldview with other views especially in relation to the doctrines of revelation, Scripture, theology proper, and theological anthropology.
4. Grasp with greater depth the interrelationships between various doctrines with the twin goal of beginning to formulate a Christian worldview, as well as bringing our life, language, and thought more in conformity to God’s Word.
5. Integrate theological doctrines with contemporary issues thus learning how to do theology by applying the Word to the contemporary world.
6. Minister in the local church with greater biblical-theological clarity as one who is deeply concerned to proclaim the whole counsel of God in all of its beauty, breadth, and depth.

 These course objectives will be achieved in the following ways:

* Readings in the course texts.
* Course lectures and discussion.
* Final exam and feedback to the student.
* Paper which allows the student to investigate a specific theological doctrine.

# Diploma Required Texts

1. Mark D. Thompson, *The Doctrine of Scripture: An Introduction* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022).
2. J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 20th Anniversary Edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993).
3. Scott R. Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020).
4. Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook for Christian Belief*, 3rd edition (InterVarsity Press, 2010). This book will be provided in class for all students.
5. PDF’s from Stephen J. Wellum on “Theological Method and Scripture” *and* “The Problem of Evil.”
6. Stephen J. Wellum, *Class Handouts for Systematic Theology 1*.

# Diploma Course Assignments

***Reading***

The reading material is a very important component of this course. It is expected that you will read all of the material very closely. There are approximately 760 pages of reading expected for this course. Unfinished reading will be penalized as follows: 1-50 pages unread = 5% reduction of the allotted 20%; 51-100 pages unread = 10% reduction of the allotted 20%; over 100 pages unread = 0% credit for reading. *In addition, attendance at each class is required. Any unexcused absences will lead to a dramatic reduction of your final grade at the discretion of the professor*. *Missing more than 20% of the classes will lead to an automatic failure for the course unless excused by the professor.*

* Mark Thompson, *The Doctrine of Scripture* (=entire book [pp. 17-185]; or Intro, chapters 1-6).
* J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (=pp. 17-279 or entire book).
* Scott Swain, *The Trinity* (=entire book [pp. 15-133]; or, Introduction, chapters 1-8).
* Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth* (=pp. 21-171 or chapters 1-12).
* Stephen Wellum, the two PDFs (entire documents). Available on Schoology

Due by 1 September 2023

***Theological Position Paper***

Theology is a very practical discipline. Most of the questions we wrestle with (if not all) are theological at heart and as such it is important to begin to know what we believe and why. With that in mind, each student is to write a 3,000-5,000 word paper that investigates an important theological question often asked by people which is related to one of the major doctrines covered in this course, i.e., revelation, Scripture, God, and humans and sin. Note these important points in writing your position paper. It must…

* Address a specific question. See below for some sample questions.
* Outline the basic viewpoints on the issue, both historical and contemporary.
* Give your viewpoint, argued both biblically and theologically.
* Include at least 8-10 sources, both in terms of articles and books.

Here are some *sample* questions:

1. Can a person who has never heard the gospel be saved on the basis of general revelation? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. “All truth is God’s truth.” Evaluate this slogan by investigating the relationship between general and special revelation.
3. Does revelation continue in an ongoing sense? If so, where? If not, why not?
4. Is the canon of Scripture closed? If so, how would you defend this to be the case?
5. Is it necessary to affirm that inerrancy pertains to the original manuscripts even though we do not have the original manuscripts? If not, why not? If so, why?
6. What is the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity and is it contradictory?
7. How should we understand Scripture when it says that God changes his mind?
8. If God is omnipotent and good, then why is there evil in the world?
9. Should we view God’s providential rule as risk-free or risk-taking?
10. What does it mean to affirm that human beings are made in the image of God?
11. Should we view human beings as body and soul or body, soul, and spirit or neither?
12. Are people born in sin? How is sin passed on to succeeding generations?

Due by 1 September 2023

## Assessment of learning

Meet with your pastor/mentor to talk through ways in which your learning applies to local church ministry and how it has helped them

## - reported by a series of questions (on Schoology) to assess the translation of your learning into ministry

Discuss these four questions with your pastor/mentor:

* + 1. How does this module impact your life?
		2. How does this module impact your ministry?
		3. How has your understanding of what Scripture is, led to a greater appreciation and application of Scripture to your life?
		4. How has your understanding of who our triune God is, led to a greater worship and obedience in your life?

Due by 1 September 2023

## Final Exam

The final exam will be a cumulative, objective, multiple-choice closed book exam testing the material of the course.

Due by 1 August 2023

# Diploma Grading Breakdown

Reading 20%

Theological Position Paper 40%

Assessment of learning 10%

Final Exam 30%

**TOTAL 100%**

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# Grading Scale

96% - 100% A 85% - 89% B 73% - 75% C 63% - 66% D

93% - 95% A- 80% - 84% B- 70% - 72% C- 60% - 62% D-

90% - 92% B+ 76% - 79% C+ 67% - 69% D+ 0% - 59% F

# Technology Requirements

A computer with basic internet access will be needed for this course

#  Course Policies

**Late Work:** Points received for any late assignment will be reduced by 25% for every two days late. Unless every assignment is completed, you will receive a failing grade for the course.

**Respect for Divergent Viewpoints:** Students and faculty are to show appropriate respect for each other even when divergent viewpoints are expressed through class assignments and discussion boards. Such respect does not require agreement with or acceptance of divergent viewpoints.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:** Students who pass off ideas or words of another person as their own without crediting the source are guilty of intellectual property theft or literary theft better known as plagiarism. Students who conduct any part of their participation in the course in a fraudulent or deceptive manner are guilty of cheating. Students caught in either of these acts of academic misconduct will be reported to the Board of MBC, resulting in disciplinary action up to and including failing the course and academic dismissal.

**Special Needs:** As an institution, we strive to work with students and any challenges they face to the full degree possible. If there are any physical or mental challenges that might need special accommodation, please contact the instructor prior to or on the first day of class.

**Grievances and Grade Disputes:** If a student has a concern about a grade that he or she received, the student is expected to request clarification from instructor via email. If the student still has significant concern, he or she may contact the Board of MBC.

**Course and Syllabus Modification (Disclaimer):** This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the leaning objectives, instructional format, readings, activities, evaluation criteria, policies and procedures, and other information necessary for students to complete this course. The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the learning experience as a result of events and circumstances that occur during the course.

# Contact Info

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