

# BRIERCREST

## THEO 601 Theology Overview Fall 2019

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Course Dates: September 4 – November 20, 2019

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A basic overview of the central doctrines of the Christian faith, designed for those who have no previous, formal training in Christian theology, or for those who need a refresher. Students develop a basic understanding of the method and content of systematic theology as presented in the Apostles' Creed and the classical evangelical tradition. For MATS and MABLE students, this course may be used in the core by permission of the program coordinator.

### A Note about the Course Format:

This is an online course that is focused on in-person interaction and discussion. We will meet “live” via Zoom on Wednesdays from 7pm-10pm SK time. See course assignments below for more information. Instructions for how to log into Zoom will be posted to Canvas.

### COURSE TEXTS

Jones, Beth Felker. *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014.

Bird, Michael F. *What Christians Ought to Believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Through the Apostles' Creed*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

Barth, Karl. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*. Translated by Grover Foley. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963.

Johnson, Keith L. *Theology as Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.

All other readings will be provided in Canvas.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Understand and define major theological concepts and terms
- Do research using theological resources
- Identify the diversity and similarity of ideas across various streams of the Christian tradition
- Articulate and defend their own statement of faith and understand how it relates to the broader Christian tradition
- Have the tools and resources to begin putting together the doctrinal component of their graduation portfolio
- Appreciate the relationship between theological doctrine and Christian practice
- Charitably read and critically examine theological primary source texts

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Week and Topic	Preparatory Textbook Readings (Read these chapters before each week's class to help orient you to that week's lecture)	Panel Discussions and Assignments (The readings for each panel will be posted in Canvas one month before the start of class)
September 4 <sup>th</sup> Introduction: Why Theology and Sources of Theology	Jones chapters 1 & 2 Bird chapters 1-3	No panel discussions this week. Be sure to sign up for the presentation readings and discussions using the Google Doc in Canvas
September 11 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of God: Revelation	Jones: N/A Bird: N/A	Panel Discussion #1
September 18 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of God: Trinity	Jones: chapter 3 Bird: chapter 4	<b>Research Skills Assignment: Assessing Resources due Friday</b> Panel Discussion #2
September 25 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of Creation	Jones: chapter 4 Bird: N/A	<b>Research Skills Assignment: Fix the Format due Friday</b> Panel Discussion #3
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> Doctrine of Humanity	Jones: chapter 5 Bird: N/A	<b>"Why Theology?" Assignment due Friday</b> Panel Discussion #4
October 9 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of Christ: Person of Christ	Jones: chapter 6 Bird: chapters 5-7	<b>Research Skills Assignment: Library Tutorial due Friday</b> Panel Discussion #5
October 16 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of Christ: Work of Christ	Jones: chapter 7 Bird: chapter 8-11	Panel Discussion #6
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	Jones: chapter 8 Bird: chapter 12	<b>Research Skills Assignment: Database Tutorial due Friday</b> Panel Discussion #7

October 30 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of Scripture	Jones: N/A (or re-read chapter 2) Bird: N/A	Panel Discussion #8
November 6 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of the Church	Jones: chapter 9 Bird: chapter 13	Panel Discussion #9
November 13 <sup>th</sup> Doctrine of Last Things	Jones: chapter 10 Bird: chapter 14	Panel Discussion #10
November 20 <sup>th</sup>		<b>Major Assignment Due</b>

## ASSIGNMENTS

### ***Participation 5%:***

We will meet weekly via Zoom from 7pm-10pm SK time. Students are expected to attend all lectures. Understanding that there may be extenuating circumstances, students are permitted no more than 2 absences from the live lecture periods. Students are expected to participate and demonstrate that they have read the textbook readings (from Jones and Bird), as well as the panel discussion readings for that week. For any weeks missed, students are required to watch the recorded session, and post a minimum 500 word summary and response essay to the discussion forums.

### ***Research Skills 15%:***

In the various live lectures, there will be 4 research skills homework tasks. Students must complete these by the dates posted in Canvas. These tasks should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

### ***Panel Discussions 30% (2x15%):***

Primary source readings related to each week's topic will be assigned for panel presentations and discussion. Each student will sign up (on the Google Doc posted in Canvas) to present on 2 discussion panels (depending on enrolment numbers this may change). The panel participants will have to participate live. Each panel participant will summarize his/her article, and, having read the other assigned articles, be prepared to dialogue with the co-panelists, and facilitate discussion with the rest of the class. *The rubric for this assignment will be posted to Canvas in advance to assist students in the preparation of this assignment.* **The list of primary source readings and how to access them will be posted one month before the start of class.**

Key questions that you may want to engage during the discussion:

- Why does this doctrine matter?
- Why is it complicated?
- What does it change?
- Where can it go wrong?

Panel participants will each type up a 2-page summary of their assigned article (point form is fine) and, at the bottom, include 2 substantive discussion questions. Participants will use this summary to make their presentations, and then, after the discussion, will submit the summary to the professor in Canvas.

The panel discussions will be approximately 60 minutes in total length:

- 10 minutes for each panel participant to present (30 minutes total)
- 25-30 minutes for class discussion

Students who are not leading that week's panel discussion will read the assigned articles and participate in the live discussion.

***"Why Theology?" Essay 20%:***

Read Barth's *Evangelical Theology* and Johnson's *Theology as Discipleship*. Write an 8-page essay answering the question, "Why theology?" In other words: Why is theology important for the life and mission of the Christian and/or the Church?

The first 4 pages should be a substantive summary of the key ideas and arguments in the texts. The last 4 pages should be an attempt to integrate or apply what students have read to their current ministry, educational, or vocational context. Why does theology matter for you, the counselling student? the leadership student? Why does theology matter in your current career (especially if your career is in a secular field or discipline)? Students will be expected to show mature engagement with the textbooks in this reflective portion.

This assignment must be formatted according to the Chicago-style format guide and uploaded to the assignment tab on Canvas.

This assignment is due on Friday October 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm SK time.

***Major Assignment: Statement of Faith and Exposition 30%:***

All Briercrest students complete a graduation portfolio in the final year of their program. A significant component of this portfolio is the doctrinal statement. The assignment in this class is designed to give students the building blocks so that they can continue to refine and revise their statement of faith, resulting in a document that they can use, not only for the graduation portfolio but also for applications for jobs in various ministry fields (pastorate, missions, lay ministry, music, and Christian education).

Therefore, for this final assignment, students will write and defend a statement of faith.

Students are welcome to use and/or adapt an existing statement of faith provided that they properly cite the original statement of faith and provide a one paragraph reason for using that (or these) particular statement of faith(s). (e.g., "I am adapting (or adopting) the PAOC statement of faith because I am working towards ordination within the denomination.")

Your faith statement should include references (in brackets) to the relevant passages of Scripture for each articulation. E.g., I believe in God, the Father Almighty (cite verses that refer to God as Father; that refer to God as the Almighty), creator of heaven and earth (cite verses that demonstrate that God creates). Your statement of faith should not be one large paragraph, or essay. It should have clearly demarcated points/separations/paragraphs/sections.

Your statement of faith must include a statement on each of the following:

- God (who he is, e.g., Trinity; and what he does)
- The person and work of Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

- The human condition
- Salvation (justification and sanctification)
- The nature of the church
- The work of the church (including statements on baptism and the Lord's Supper)
- Scripture
- Last Things

Attached to the statement of faith, students will include a 2-page exposition/defense FOR EACH component/section of the doctrinal statement. Each exposition must cite a minimum of 3 scholarly, theological sources (and students must cite a minimum of 10 different scholarly, theological sources overall). Each 2-page exposition must also:

- Include an explanation of why you include each statement
- Include an exposition of key theological terms used (e.g., "inspired"; "justification"; "atonement"; "Trinity"; "persons", etc.)
- Include a brief discussion of particular distinctives in your tradition/denomination concerning the doctrinal point and how they relate to the broader Christian community. (e.g., if your church/denomination specifies a particular mode of baptism, unpack why that mode is theologically significant and how it relates to other modes of baptism. Is another mode a "deal-breaker" for you and/or your denomination, why or why not?)

If students have adapted a doctrinal statement from a pre-existing statement of faith, their exposition should also, briefly, address why/how they have adapted the statement on that particular doctrinal element.

This assignment must be formatted according to the Chicago-Style format guide, including footnotes and a bibliography, and must be uploaded to the assignment tab on Canvas.

**NOTE:** A tutorial on how to complete this assignment will be posted to Canvas.

This assignment is due on Wednesday November 20<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm SK time.

## SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

### ***Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

### ***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the

syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

### ***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

### ***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or illness who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of Student Success in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

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