

BRIERCREST

THEO 650 Theology of God and Creation Fall 2021

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Course Dates: December 13-17, 2021

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This foundational course introduces the task and importance of systematic theology for Christian teaching and ministry. Special focus is given to outlining, biblically and historically, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of God as creator and Lord of Creation, and the doctrine of humanity.



COURSE INTEGRATION

Often, when we consider what it means to be human, our eyes turn heavenward. This is not to say that there are no answers as we look within ourselves, yet mightier questions compel us. Why are we here? What is our meaning and purpose? And so we discover that in order to truly learn about ourselves, we must look to God. As we do this, we learn about ourselves as created beings, but more importantly, we learn about our Creator. And so, as Lewis Carroll remarked, we must “begin at the beginning...”. THEO 650 explores the ground and foundation of all Christian Theology, God and His works. This course is therefore both a class in theology proper (the doctrine of God), theological anthropology (included in the works of God), creation care, and, the beginning of *systematic theology*—the discipline of constructing a framework of Christian doctrine and teaching, seeking coherence, understanding, and even beauty.

COURSE TEXTS

Barrett, Matthew. *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God*. Ada: Baker Books, 2019.

Moo, Douglas and Moo, Jonathan. *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World (Biblical Theology for Life)*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

All assignments must conform to the Chicago Style Guide, available as a PDF document 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

- 1) Students will be familiar with the historical-theological antecedents that underwrite the evangelical doctrines of God and Creation.
- 2) Students will be able to articulate salient aspects of both the character and attributes of God (communicable and incommunicable).
- 3) Students will know, understand, and articulate the historic language concerning the trinity, including “person”, “hypostases”, “perichoresis”, “immanent and economic”, etc.
- 4) Students will develop and expound a theology of creation that demonstrates an integrated understanding of the relationship(s) between God, his people, and creation more generally speaking.
- 5) Students will develop a basic approach to theological anthropology in the tradition of covenantal hermeneutics.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

A full course outline, including modules, assignments, extra-curricular reading and discussions will be posted to Canvas in advance of the course. Students are encouraged to become familiar with the Canvas page for this course early on, and check it often.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

Text Reading and Critical Review – 25%

Students will read both Moo & Moo and Barrett in their entirety, making notes and highlighting as needed/appropriate. After completing both readings students will submit a critical review of **either** Moo & Moo, or Barrett, and a statement of reading completion-percentage for the other text. Critical reviews are to be 1000 words in length (~3 pages) and should demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the contents of the work. This paper is not to be a simple summary of the book chosen, but rather, a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the text. A short reflection regarding personal applicability (or lack thereof) at the conclusion of the reviews is welcome. For the reading completion-percentage, students may simply include a statement at the end of their review indicating how much of the second text they read.

Assignment Weight:

Text Critical Review: 15%

Reading Completion: 10%

Due: December 13, 2021 before the start of class

Mid-Course Assignments:***Forum Participation, Reading, and Engagement – 25%***

As this course is an entirely online, synchronous modular class, student engagement is an essential aspect of the educational experience. Students will be evaluated on their daily participation in both the in-class, synchronous sessions, as well as the assignments, readings, and contributions expected in the daily modules section of the Canvas course.

In-Class Contributions:

Students are expected to respond to questions and offer their insights in class. Furthermore, students are expected to interact with other students' comments and points of view (respectfully!). Regular, thoughtful, and *vocal* contributions are expected.

Pre-Class Readings:

Students are expected to read the primary source readings posted to Canvas *before* class that day. These readings will be posted well in advance. Furthermore, students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings with their insights, questions, or comments.

Forum Contributions:

Questions, writing prompts, and additional curricular activities will be posted to Canvas in the daily modular sections. Students are required to respond to these prompts and interact with other students as required.

Students will receive daily grades on their class participation, along with feedback about where to improve if necessary. This is to ensure that students have an accurate understanding of what is required and may seek to satisfactorily meet those requirements.

Assignment Weight*In-Class Contributions: 10%**Pre-Class Readings: 5%**Forum Contributions: 10%****Forum Participation, Reading and Engagement Due Date: Daily Throughout Course******Post-Course Assignments:******Theological Synthesis Paper – 50%***

THEO 650 deals primarily with three distinct heads of doctrine: God (Theology Proper), Creation (the works of God), and Humanity (Theological Anthropology). Students will write a 3000-word (~10 pages) paper that seeks to synthesize and present what they believe are the most salient or important aspects of these doctrines, and how they might be understood to “work together” (i.e., what does our understanding about the person and nature of God mean for humans created in community and charged to care for creation?). The boundaries for this paper are quite wide, so creativity is encouraged, but students are encouraged to consult the instructor of record to refine their argument and accumulate appropriate resources. Students must consult a minimum of 5 resources and demonstrate a robust understanding of the doctrines discussed. Excellent papers will show a command of theological language, deep and wide reading, and creative presentation.

Assignment Weights and Due Dates:*Preliminary Topic and Hypotheses (10%): 7 January 2022**Tentative Thesis and Bibliography (minimum five sources) (10%): 21 January 2022**Completed Paper (30%): 11 February 2022*

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

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

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 health condition 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 (egordon@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. 13 volumes. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975-1969.
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- Erickson, Millard J. *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
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The Doctrine of God

- Bloesch, Donald. *Almighty God: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Bray, Gerald L. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

- Cooper, John W. *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006.
- Gunton, Colin. *Act and Being. Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes*. London: SCM Press, 2002.
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The Doctrine of the Trinity

- Coppedge, Allan. *The God Who is Triune*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007.
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Creation

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Providence

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Humanity (including *Imago Dei*)

- Barth, Karl. "Man and Woman" 116-239. Section in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III/4. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961.
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