



THEO 650 Theology of God and Creation Winter 2026

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Course Dates: February 16-20, 2026
Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular

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 to learn about ourselves truly, 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

Dolezal, James. *All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017.

McFarland, Ian A. *From Nothing: A Theology of Creation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.

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.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/bookstore>.

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

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

MATS SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. Demonstrate both depth and breadth of scholarship in chosen area of concentration.
2. Give evidence of their capacity to implement theological scholarship in a teaching and/or ministry context.
3. Articulate a spirituality of scholarship that describes their approach to integrating academic learning into personal formation.

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. **Historical-Theological Foundations:**
Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major historical and theological antecedents that underwrite evangelical doctrines of God and Creation, situating these within broader Christian theological traditions.
(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 3)
2. **Doctrine of God:**
Students will articulate key aspects of the character and attributes of God, distinguishing between communicable and incommunicable attributes, and demonstrating theological precision in their use of language.
(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2)
3. **Trinitarian Theology:**
Students will explain and critically engage the historic language of Trinitarian theology, including terms such as *person*, *hypostasis*, *perichoresis*, and the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity.
(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2)
4. **Theology of Creation:**
Students will develop and expound a theology of creation that integrates biblical, historical, and systematic perspectives, showing how the relationships between God, humanity, and the created order shape Christian theological reflection and practice.
(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 2, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2, 3)
5. **Theological Anthropology:**
Students will formulate a basic theological anthropology grounded in covenantal hermeneutics, articulating the human vocation and identity in relation to God and creation.
(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 2, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

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** Thomas Dolezal's and Ian McFarland's works in their entirety, making notes and highlighting as needed or appropriate. After completing both readings, students will submit:

1. **A critical review (1000 words / approx. 3 pages)** of either Dolezal or McFarland. This review should demonstrate thorough engagement with the text, moving beyond summary to offer a critical evaluation of its strengths, weaknesses, theological contributions, and implications. Students are expected to situate the work within the broader theological tradition, articulate key arguments, and assess its significance for theology and ministry.
2. **A reading completion statement** for the second text, indicating the percentage read. This may be included at the end of the review.

A brief personal reflection (one short paragraph) on the applicability of the text to the student's own theological development or ministry context is welcome but not required.

Alignment:

- This assignment cultivates depth and breadth of scholarship (MATS 1) through sustained reading and analysis of significant theological texts.
- It develops students' capacity to implement theological scholarship in teaching and ministry contexts (MATS 2) through critical evaluation.
- It encourages the integration of academic study with personal formation and vocational reflection (MATS 3; Seminary-Wide 1, 3).

(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

Rubric: Text Reading and Critical Review (25%)

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Inadequate (D/F)
Comprehension & Summary (25%)	Demonstrates clear, nuanced understanding of the text; identifies key themes and arguments.	Good grasp of content with minor omissions.	Adequate summary with some gaps or superficial engagement.	Misunderstands or neglects key content.

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Inadequate (D/F)
Critical Analysis (35%)	Offers insightful, well-supported critique; situates text theologically and engages charitably.	Sound analysis with some limited depth or missed opportunities.	Basic evaluation; lacks depth, nuance, or theological integration.	Little or no critical engagement.
Theological & Personal Integration (20%)	Reflects thoughtful integration of text with broader theology and/or personal formation.	Some integration present but uneven or underdeveloped.	Minimal attempt at integration.	No attempt at integration.
Clarity & Scholarly Writing (20%)	Exceptionally clear, well-structured, properly formatted, and free of major errors.	Generally clear and well-structured with minor issues.	Some clarity issues, structural weaknesses, or frequent errors.	Unclear, disorganized, or careless presentation.

Pre-Course Reading Assignment Due: 16 February 2026

Mid-Course Assignments:

Forum Participation, Reading, and Engagement – 25%

Active and thoughtful participation is essential to the success of this course. Students will be evaluated on their daily engagement in both the in-class sessions and the online components found in the daily modules on Canvas. This includes contributions to class discussions, completion of pre-class readings, and participation in online forums.

In-Class Contributions

Students are expected to participate actively in class sessions by responding thoughtfully to questions, offering insights, and engaging respectfully and substantively with their peers' perspectives. Regular, attentive, and vocal participation is required.

Pre-Class Readings

Students must complete all assigned primary source readings before class and come prepared to discuss them. This preparation should be evident through insightful comments, thoughtful questions, and textual engagement during class sessions.

Forum Contributions

Throughout the course, questions, writing prompts, and curricular activities will be posted on Canvas in the daily modular sections. Students must respond to these prompts with clarity and

theological thoughtfulness, and interact with other students as required. Forum posts should aim to deepen class conversation, not merely restate obvious points.

Ongoing Feedback

Students will receive daily participation grades and periodic feedback on their performance to help them understand expectations and improve their engagement throughout the course.

Alignment:

- This assignment cultivates formation of the mind and soul through communal theological engagement (Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 2, 3).
- It develops breadth and depth of theological scholarship (MATS 1) and the ability to implement theological insight in dialogical and pedagogical contexts (MATS 2).
- It encourages the development of a spirituality of scholarship (MATS 3) through attentive reading, reflective participation, and respectful interaction.

(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 2, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

Rubric: Forum Participation, Reading, and Engagement (25%)

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Inadequate (D/F)
In-Class Contributions (30%)	Consistently contributes thoughtfully; engages peers respectfully and insightfully; advances discussion meaningfully.	Regular contributions with occasional missed opportunities for deeper engagement.	Participates sporadically; contributions are surface-level or infrequent.	Rarely participates; disengaged or disrespectful.
Pre-Class Reading Preparedness (25%)	Clearly demonstrates careful reading and preparation through incisive questions and informed comments.	Evident preparation with generally good engagement.	Minimal engagement; comments suggest partial or superficial reading.	Lack of preparation; unengaged or uninformed in discussion.
Forum Contributions (30%)	Posts are timely, articulate, and theologically rich; interacts meaningfully with others, extending conversation.	Generally solid contributions with some interaction; minor depth or timeliness issues.	Basic responses; minimal interaction with peers; lacks depth.	Missing, perfunctory, or disrespectful engagement.
Consistency & Feedback Responsiveness (15%)	Maintains high engagement throughout; integrates instructor feedback effectively.	Generally consistent with minor lapses; some engagement with feedback.	Engagement is inconsistent; limited responsiveness to feedback.	Unreliable participation; disregards feedback.

Mid-Course Reading, Participation and Engagement Due: February 16th—20th, 2026

Post-Course Assignments:

Theological Synthesis Paper – 50%

Description:

This capstone assignment invites students to produce a 3000-word (~10 pages) theological synthesis paper engaging the three major doctrinal loci of THEO 650:

- **Theology Proper (God)**
- **The Works of God (Creation)**
- **Theological Anthropology (Humanity)**

Students will present and critically synthesize what they regard as the most salient or essential aspects of these doctrines and articulate how they interrelate:

What does our understanding of the person and nature of God mean for human beings, created in community and charged to care for creation?

The paper's boundaries are intentionally broad to encourage theological creativity and integration, but students are strongly encouraged to consult with the instructor to refine their argument and develop a focused thesis.

Requirements:

- Minimum 3000 words (~10 pages), double-spaced.
- At least 5 scholarly sources, in addition to course readings, demonstrating both breadth and depth of engagement.
- Robust engagement with primary and secondary theological texts.
- Clear theological language, logical structure, and sustained argumentation.
- Integrative reflection on how these doctrines “work together” within a coherent theological vision.
- Proper academic citation (e.g., Chicago Style)

Alignment:

This assignment serves as the culminating demonstration of the course, bringing together historical, systematic, and constructive theology. It aligns with:

- **Seminary-Wide Outcomes:** It cultivates the formation of the mind and soul (Outcome 3) through rigorous theological reflection; fosters vocational sensitivity by exploring implications for human community and creation (Outcome 2); and reflects evangelical theological commitments (Outcome 1).
- **MATS Outcomes:** It demonstrates depth and breadth of scholarship (Outcome 1), applies theological scholarship in teaching/ministry contexts through integrative construction (Outcome 2), and encourages the articulation of a spirituality of scholarship that connects academic theology with personal formation and vocation (Outcome 3).

(Seminary-Wide Outcomes 1, 2, 3 | MATS Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

Rubric: Theological Synthesis Paper (50%)

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Inadequate (D/F)
Theological Depth & Breadth (25%)	Demonstrates exceptional grasp of all three doctrinal loci; engages primary/secondary sources deeply and critically.	Strong engagement with most key doctrines; some unevenness in depth or breadth.	Adequate but limited engagement; some key areas underdeveloped.	Superficial treatment of doctrines; lacks theological rigour.
Integration & Synthesis (25%)	Integrates doctrines seamlessly into a coherent theological vision; argument is creative, compelling, and theologically rich.	Good synthesis with clear theological reasoning; some missed opportunities for integration.	Basic synthesis present but lacks depth, nuance, or clarity of interrelations.	Fragmented or disjointed; little synthesis between doctrinal loci.
Argumentation & Structure (20%)	Paper is well-organized with a clear thesis; argument is sustained logically and supported by evidence throughout.	Clear thesis and structure with minor weaknesses in flow or argument development.	Some structure present but argument is inconsistent or unclear.	Unclear, poorly structured, or lacking coherent argument.
Research & Sources (15%)	Uses 5+ quality sources effectively; integrates scholarship critically and appropriately.	Meets minimum source requirements with generally good integration.	Minimal engagement with scholarship; sources used superficially.	Insufficient or inappropriate sources; lacks scholarly engagement.
Language, Style & Citation (15%)	Exceptional clarity, theological precision, and adherence to academic style and citation guidelines.	Generally clear and accurate; minor stylistic or citation issues.	Language or formatting errors occasionally interfere with clarity.	Poorly written; significant citation/style issues.

Theological Synthesis Paper Due: April 17th, 2026**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](#).

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.

Modular Course Schedules

Modular 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

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of

academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The Doctrine of God

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- Bray, Gerald L. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
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Creation

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Providence

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