



## THEO 601 Christian Theology Overview Winter 2026

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Phone: 306-801-6457  
Course Dates: April 13-17, 2026  
Course Delivery Method: Online Modular

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 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.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

Beliefs about "ultimate reality" shape and guide our decisions in life: from simple, mundane choices to life-altering decisions, our ideas about God, the universe, and human existence are essential! THEO 601 presents an opportunity to think about these "big questions with the Christian tradition." Instead of rote repetition of doctrine, students are encouraged to think critically, read widely, and develop a theology that is at once orthodox, generous, and life-giving. Special attention is given in this class to how Christian theology applies to any number of vocations in life, not simply the career of the academic or the pastor.

### COURSE TEXTS

Kapic, Kelly M. *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*.  
Downer's Grove: IVP Academic, 2001. (126 pages).

Strahan, Joshua. *The Basics of Christian Belief: The Bible, Theology, and Life's Big Questions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020. (230 pages).

Course Reader. Weekly readings comprised of short excerpts of primary sources.  
These readings will be made available via 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.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 PROGRAM 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

Upon successful completion of this course:

1. **Students will articulate a personal approach to the study of theology**, reflecting on both the methods and motivations that shape their engagement with the discipline. This includes developing a spirituality of scholarship that integrates academic learning with personal formation (Seminary Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 2, 3).
2. **Students will demonstrate understanding of the basic tenets of the orthodox Christian faith**, particularly as expressed in the Apostles' Creed, and will be able to describe how these beliefs inform their evangelical identity and theological reflection (Seminary Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Program Outcome 1).
3. **Students will analyze and describe the basic nature and tasks of systematic theology as a discipline**, situating it within the broader context of theological scholarship and ecclesial life (Seminary Outcome 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 2).
4. **Students will engage a diversity of voices within the Christian tradition**, gaining familiarity with theological perspectives from different historical, cultural, and ecclesial contexts. This engagement will cultivate a posture of openness and receptivity to the global and historical breadth of Christian thought (Seminary Outcomes 2, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 3).
5. **Students will reflect critically on the vocational significance of theology**, articulating how theological study informs and sustains their sense of calling and preparedness to serve in various ministry and teaching contexts (Seminary Outcomes 2, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 2, 3).

**COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT****Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>****Session 1 (9:00am – 12:00pm)***Topics:* Course Introduction, Faith, God (Part 1)*Key Questions:*

- What does it mean to "believe" in modern and ancient contexts?
- How does McGrath distinguish faith from mere opinion?

**Session 2 (1:00pm – 4:00pm)***Topics:* God (Part 2), Creation*Key Questions:*

- What does it mean to call God 'Father Almighty'?
  - How does creation relate to human dignity and responsibility?
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**Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>****Session 3 (9:00am – 12:00pm)***Topics:* Creation (continued), Jesus (Part 1)*Key Questions:*

- How do the titles of Jesus shape our theology?
- Why does Jesus resist certain messianic expectations?

**Session 4 (1:00pm – 4:00pm)***Topics:* Jesus (Part 2), Salvation (Part 1)*Key Questions:*

- How do Paul's metaphors for salvation inform our theology and ethics?
  - What are the risks of pushing any single model too far?
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**Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>****Session 5 (9:00am – 12:00pm)***Topics:* Salvation (Part 2), Spirit (Part 1)*Key Questions:*

- What does it mean to describe the Spirit as 'wind,' 'breath,' or 'power'?
- How has the Spirit been forgotten or recovered in modern theology?

**Session 6 (1:00pm – 4:00pm)**

*Topics:* Spirit (Part 2), Trinity

*Key Questions:*

- Why does the Trinity matter for Christian faith and life?
  - How do the persons of the Trinity shape your own theology of God?
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**Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Session 7 (9:00am – 12:00pm)**

*Topics:* Trinity (continued), Church

*Key Questions:*

- How do we navigate the tension between the universal and local church?
- What models of the Church are most theologically compelling today?

**Session 8 (1:00pm – 4:00pm)**

*Topics:* Sacraments

*Key Questions:*

- What makes a sign sacramental?
  - How do different traditions understand Christ's presence in the Eucharist?
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**Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Session 9 (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)**

*Topics:* Heaven / Last Things, Review & Reflections, Closing Discussion

*Key Questions:*

- What do our eschatological beliefs say about how we live now?
- How do McGrath's treatments of 'last things' encourage hope and responsibility?

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

***Pre-Course Assignments:***

Students will read Kelly M. Kapic's *A Little Book for New Theologians* in its entirety and write a 2,000-word (~6 pages) reflection paper addressing three key questions:

1. **What is theology?**
2. **Why should we study theology?**

3. **How should we study theology?** What are the defining characteristics of faithful theological study?

While students may synthesize and reflect on Kopic's arguments, they are also expected to engage critically and personally, articulating their own insights, thoughts, and convictions. Strong papers will demonstrate:

- Careful and critical engagement with Kopic's text;
- Clarity of theological understanding;
- Evidence of personal and spiritual reflection on the task of theology;
- Emerging capacity to articulate a personal approach to theological study.

A signed attestation confirming that the student has read the text in its entirety must be included at the end of the paper.

(Seminary Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 3)

**Weight: 35% of final grade**

| Criteria                          | Weight | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Thoroughness of Content        | 40%    | The paper clearly addresses all three key questions: (1) What is theology? (2) Why should we study theology? (3) How should we study theology? Demonstrates deep engagement with <i>A Little Book for New Theologians</i> , showing comprehension of key themes and arguments. Reflects a well-developed synthesis of Kopic's ideas and the student's own theological reflections. |
| 2. Critical Thinking and Analysis | 30%    | Moves beyond summary to offer critical interaction with Kopic's arguments. Demonstrates thoughtful analysis and personal insight, showing how the text has shaped or challenged the student's understanding of theology. Includes meaningful self-reflection on personal and academic theological development.                                                                     |
| 3. Organization and Clarity       | 15%    | The paper is well organized with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Ideas flow logically, each question is addressed cohesively, and transitions are smooth. A strong central thesis or argument guides the paper throughout.                                                                                                                                             |
| 4. Quality of Writing and Grammar | 10%    | Demonstrates a high level of academic writing proficiency, including proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Writing is clear, concise, and appropriately formal in tone.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 5. Attestation of Completion      | 5%     | Includes a signed attestation confirming that the student has read <i>A Little Book for New Theologians</i> in full. This may be a simple statement at the end of the paper.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**Additional Notes:**

- The paper should meet the length requirement of approximately 2000 words (~6 pages), excluding the attestation.
- Proper citation of Kopic's work is required when referencing specific ideas or passages, even though this is a reflection-based paper.

***Assignment Weighting:****Completed Reading of Course Text: 10%**Reflection Paper: 25%****"Thinking About Theology" Reflection Paper Due: 13 April 2026*****Mid-Course Assignments:****Introductions, "Today's Take Aways", and Verses in the "Song of Faith"**

These mid-course assignments are designed to foster personal connection, theological reflection, and constructive articulation throughout the course. It consists of three interconnected components:

**1. Personal Introduction Post (5%)**

Early in the course, students will post a short personal introduction to the Canvas forum designated for this purpose. This introduction (approx. 200–300 words) should include:

- A brief description of your background and interests
- Why you are taking this course
- One theological question, theme, or issue you are particularly interested in exploring this semester

This exercise helps establish a learning community and allows the instructor and classmates to understand each student's theological starting point.

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**2. "Today's Takeaway" Reflections (10%)**

Throughout the course, students will submit five short reflections (25–300 words each), one for each class day indicated in the syllabus. Each reflection should identify:

- A new insight, thought-provoking question, or significant theme from that day's lecture, discussion, or readings.
- A book or scholarly source available through Archibald Library that could provide further exploration of the theme (include proper citation).

Each entry is worth 2% (5 entries × 2% = 10%). These reflections encourage regular theological engagement and strengthen research habits.

### 3. "Verse in the Song of Faith" Draft Statements (10%)

Students will write ten short "verses" (2–3 sentences each) over the course of the class. Each "verse" should represent a developing theological statement that could form part of their final Song of Faith assignment. Verses should connect to the major doctrinal themes covered in class (e.g., Trinity, Christology, creation, sin, salvation, Scripture, Church, mission, eschatology).

These statements do not need to be polished but should reflect meaningful engagement with course content and show the student's growing theological voice. Each verse is worth 1% (10 entries × 1% = 10%).

#### Rubric: Mid-Course Assignment

| Criteria                                         | Weight | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Personal Introduction Post                    | 5%     | Student posts a clear, thoughtful introduction (200–300 words) in the designated Canvas forum. Provides relevant background, explains interest in the course, and poses a meaningful theological question/theme. Submitted on time and demonstrates engagement with the learning community.   |
| 2. "Today's Takeaway" Reflections                | 10%    | Five short reflections (25–300 words each), each identifying a significant insight, question, or theme from class. Each entry includes a proper citation for a relevant book available in Archibald Library. Reflections are thoughtful, clear, and submitted on time. (5 entries × 2% each). |
| 3. "Verse in the Song of Faith" Draft Statements | 10%    | Ten 2–3 sentence theological statements reflecting engagement with course themes. Verses show developing theological articulation and connect meaningfully to doctrinal topics. Entries are thoughtful, relevant, and submitted on time. (10 entries × 1% each).                              |

**All mid-course assignments are to be posted to Canvas  
Assignments Due: Daily, April 13<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

#### *Post-Course Assignments:*

#### **Final Integrative Project: "A Song of Faith" – 40%**

This capstone assignment invites students to synthesize their learning from the course into a constructive theological work that reflects both the breadth of Christian theology and the depth of their own developing theological voice.

Rather than composing a rigid doctrinal statement, students will create a "Song of Faith": a personal, integrative theological articulation that draws together the core loci of Christian belief in a way that is both academically robust and spiritually resonant. The "Song" may take the form of a written confession, poetic creed, extended theological reflection, or other constructive form, but it

must engage the central themes of Christian theology with clarity, critical thought, and theological imagination.

### *Assignment Components*

#### 1. The “Song of Faith” (8-12 Doctrinal Tenets)

- This written piece should offer a coherent and integrative articulation of Christian faith, drawing on key doctrinal themes studied in the course (e.g., God, Christ, Spirit, creation, sin, salvation, Scripture, Church, sacraments, mission, eschatology).
- Students should aim for both theological accuracy and constructive creativity, echoing the genre of confessions, hymns, catechisms, or poetic creeds without merely reproducing them.
- The piece should reflect personal theological conviction while demonstrating awareness of the broader Christian tradition.

#### 2. Theological Commentary (8–10 pages total)

Accompanying the “Song of Faith,” students will write a series of short commentaries (approximately 1 page per major doctrinal theme addressed), providing academic grounding and critical reflection. Each commentary should:

- Identify and explain key theological concepts or terms used.
- Cite and engage at least 3 scholarly theological sources per section (minimum of 10 distinct sources overall).
- Situate personal articulations within the wider Christian theological tradition, noting denominational distinctives, interpretive nuances, and ecumenical considerations.
- Reflect briefly on how this theme shapes or informs the student’s sense of vocation and formation.

#### 3. Format & Citation

- All commentaries must follow Chicago Style, including footnotes and a bibliography.
- The “Song of Faith” itself may use more flexible language and structure (e.g., poetic, liturgical, narrative), but should be accompanied by clear citations where appropriate.

### *Assignment Rationale*

This final project aims to draw together the student’s learning over the course into a constructive, personal, and academically rigorous theological articulation. Like ancient hymns, creeds, and confessions, this project recognizes that theology is not merely a set of propositions but also a confession of faith, a form of worship, and a vocational act.

Students will demonstrate their ability to:

- **Integrate theological knowledge** across the breadth of Christian doctrine (Seminary Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 2).
- **Articulate a personal theological vision** rooted in Scripture, tradition, and critical reflection (Seminary Outcomes 1, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 3).
- **Engage scholarship with depth and breadth** while expressing their own developing theological voice (Seminary Outcome 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 2, 3).

- **Reflect on theology as formative for vocation and spiritual life** (Seminary Outcomes 2, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 2, 3).

*(Seminary Outcomes 1, 2, 3 | MATS Program Outcomes 1, 2, 3)*

### **Rubric: Final Integrative Project – “Song of Faith”**

**Weight: 40% of final grade**

| Criteria                                                          | Weight     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Theological Integration &amp; Constructive Articulation</b> | <b>40%</b> | Demonstrates robust theological synthesis across core doctrines (Triune God, Christ, Spirit, creation, sin, salvation, Scripture, Church, mission, eschatology). Articulations are accurate, coherent, and theologically imaginative. The “Song” reflects personal theological voice and integrates Scripture and tradition thoughtfully. Chosen form (poetic, confessional, liturgical, narrative, etc.) enhances theological vision and clarity. |
| <b>2. Theological Commentary &amp; Scholarly Engagement</b>       | <b>30%</b> | Commentary sections provide clear exposition of the “Song,” explaining theological reasoning and key terms. Engages a minimum of 3 scholarly sources per section (10 distinct sources overall). Situates personal articulations within broader Christian tradition and denominational distinctives. Includes brief vocational reflection for each theme.                                                                                           |
| <b>3. Organization &amp; Structure</b>                            | <b>15%</b> | The “Song” is coherent and well structured, with a clear thematic or theological flow. Commentary sections are organized and easy to follow, with clear links between the “Song” and exposition. Integration between components is evident through consistent headings, numbering, or cross-references.                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>4. Research &amp; Source Integration</b>                       | <b>10%</b> | Engages a range of reputable theological sources (minimum 10 distinct). Sources are well integrated into commentary. Footnotes and bibliography follow Chicago Style accurately.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>5. Quality of Writing &amp; Grammar</b>                        | <b>5%</b>  | Writing is clear, precise, and appropriate in tone. Commentary maintains academic rigor; the “Song” is rhetorically and theologically intelligible. Free of significant grammar, spelling, or formatting errors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### **Additional Notes**

- **Depth & Originality:** Strong projects show both theological depth and constructive creativity.
- **Integration of Head & Heart:** Excellent work integrates academic rigor with personal formation and vocational reflection.
- **Submission:** Both the “Song of Faith” and commentary must be submitted on time and in full to receive full credit.

**Final Integrative “Song of Faith” Assignment Due: 12 June 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](mailto: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).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY****Systematics and Methodology**

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### Doctrine of God and the Trinity

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