



TH 514 Systematic Theology: A Socratic Approach  
Fall 2022

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Office Hours: By appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course prepares students to articulate their views on the major topics of Christian theology in preparation for the MDiv oral exam. The course involves both a review of these major topics and an interactive format that acclimates the student to the environment of the MDiv oral exam. Students will refine and communicate their own views on theological topics while operating within the broad scope of the Seminary's statement of faith.

### COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Articulate and defend the major doctrinal commitments of the Christian faith.
2. Explain how such doctrinal commitments emerge principally from the teaching of Scripture and have been developed and refined in the context of the church's theological tradition.
3. Articulate his/her own convictions on sub-topics in Christian doctrine that allow for diverse conclusions within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy.
4. Apply Christian doctrine to Christian life and ministry.

### REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Kapic, Kelly M., and Bruce L. McCormack, eds. *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.

Treier, Daniel J. *Introducing Evangelical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.

Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Creeks, Confessions, and Catechisms: A Reader's Edition*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<p><b>1. Reading and Attendance Report (50% of grade)</b> <i>Outcome(s) 1-4</i></p>	<p>This report must be submitted to the professor by email before the end of the class period in the final week of the semester. In that email, you will simply tell the professor how many weeks you completed the assigned reading <u>on time</u> and attended class. In this case, "on time" means that you completed the reading for that week of class prior to the beginning of the class period. There are 13 weeks in which there is required reading. Note that if you miss one class period, your grade will drop one letter grade. If you miss</p>
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	two class periods, your grade will drop two letter grades. If you miss three classes, you will fail the class. If you do not submit this reading and attendance report, the professor will not seek to email you about it but will consider the grade to be a zero.
<b>2. Doctrinal Paper (50% of grade)</b> <i>Outcome(s) 1-4</i>	The student will prepare a paper articulating the student's view of the doctrinal topics covered in class. The paper must be submitted to the professor by email before the end of the class period in the final week of the semester. Please attach this document to the email in which you provide your Reading and Attendance Report. Further instructions are provided below.

### GRADING INFORMATION

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Description
A+	100–97	4.0	
A	96–93	4.0	Excellent; superior achievement.
A-	92–90	3.7	
B+	89–87	3.3	
B	86–83	3.0	Good; commendable achievement.
B-	82–80	2.7	
C+	79–77	2.3	
C	76–73	2.0	Satisfactory; acceptable achievement.
C-	72–70	1.7	
D+	69–67	1.3	
D	66–63	1.0	Poor; marginal achievement.
D-	62–60	0.7	
F	59–0	0.0	Failure to advance in the course. No credit earned. Computed in GPA.

### SEMINARY ACADEMIC POLICIES

All Seminary policies affecting student work, appeals, and grievances, as outlined in the Academic Catalog or Student Handbook will apply, unless otherwise indicated in this syllabus.

### Assignment Policies

Assignments must be formatted and submitted according to the instructions provided in the syllabus and according to any supplemental instructions provided in class. Late assignments are subject to a grade reduction. If the student has a true emergency (e.g., severe health issue or death in the family) that will affect the student's ability to submit an assignment on time, the student should email the professor as soon as possible.

**Courteous Use of Technology in the Classroom (phone, tablet, laptop)**

Students are expected to silence phones in class (airplane mode or turned off). If a student has an emergency situation (e.g., health issue in the family or imminent birth of a child), the student should step out of class to handle the situation. Students will be expected not to have laptops and similar devices out during the lectures and interaction in class. This is due to the fact that even the godly among us can succumb to the distractions that such devices provide. The aim here is to foster an environment characterized by attentiveness to God, Holy Scripture, and one another.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
8/17	Intro to TH 514, Prolegomena	
8/24	Revelation	Treier, chaps 1, 13; Kopic chap. 4
8/31	Divine Attributes	Treier, pp. 101-13; Kopic, chap. 3
9/7	Trinity	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 13-23; Treier, chap. 4; Kopic, chap. 2
9/14	Divine Decree, Creation, Providence, Angels	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 412-13 (qq. 7-11); Treier, chaps 5-6 and pp. 233-5; Kopic, chaps 5, 9
9/21	Humanity and Sin	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 413-15 (qq. 12-19); Treier, chap. 7 and pp. 221-31; Kopic, chap. 6
9/28	History of Salvation; Person and Work of Christ I	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 25-7; Treier, chap. 8 and pp. 349-54
10/5	Person and Work of Christ II	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 148-54; Treier, chap. 9; Kopic, chap. 8

10/12	Salvation I	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 417-18 (qq. 30-4); Treier, pp. 231-43; Kopic, chap. 11
10/19	Salvation II	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 418-19 (qq. 35-8); Treier, chaps 11-12
10/26	Church I	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 224-7, 278-83; Treier, chap. 14
11/2	Church II	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 125-31 (aa. 25-36), 227-32, 283-6, 309-17 (qq. 66-85); Kopic, chap. 14
11/9	Last Things	Treier, chap. 15; Kopic, chap. 15
	NO CLASS 11/16, 11/23	
11/30	Ethics	Van Dixhoorn, pp. 364-89 (qq. 91-148); Treier, chaps 2-3
12/7	Doctrinal Paper Submission	

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOCTRINAL PAPER

## *I. Overview*

This paper will provide an opportunity for you to articulate your position on the doctrinal topics that are covered in this class and in your oral exam. The paper should be **12 pages double-spaced**. Be clear and concise and use this space wisely.

You should articulate your own convictions on these doctrinal topics. At the same time, it is expected that you will uphold the tenets of orthodox Christianity in keeping with the doctrinal statement you have signed as a student at Phoenix Seminary. By this point, you should be well-aware of the topics or sub-topics on which Phoenix Seminary students are permitted to have a range of different positions (e.g., baptism, Lord's Supper, church polity, certain eschatological details).

You should indicate the scriptural support for your statements by referencing scriptural texts in parentheses at the end of your sentences. There is no need to cite sources or include footnotes. Having said that, you should make use of and explain the technical terms you have learned in your theology classes. For example, when writing about the sufficiency of Scripture, you might state, "Scripture is sufficient in that it provides all the teaching we need for Christian faith and practice and does not have to be supplemented by further revelation."

## *II. Structure*

Your paper should be structured according to the following doctrinal topics:

- I. Revelation
- II. Theology Proper
- III. Creation and Providence
- IV. Angelology
- V. Anthropology
- VI. Hamartiology
- VII. History of Salvation
- VIII. Christology – Person of Christ
- IX. Christology – Work of Christ
- X. Soteriology
- XI. Ecclesiology
- XII. Eschatology

You will make each of these doctrinal topics into one section of your paper, spending roughly one page on each. In order to avoid doing the entire paper at the very end of the semester, you are encouraged to write one section per week after you have discussed the topic in class.

Within each of these topics, you will comment on the following sub-topics:

I. Revelation

- what the term “revelation” means
- the distinction and relationship between natural/general and supernatural/special revelation
- the modes or forms of natural/general revelation
- the modes or forms of supernatural/special revelation
- the inspiration, authority, inerrancy, necessity, sufficiency, clarity of Scripture
- the canon of Scripture

II. Theology Proper

- the incommunicable attributes of God
- the communicable attributes of God
- the unity of the divine persons in their essence, attributes, and outward works
- the distinctions among the divine persons in their relations to one another and in their economic offices
- the decree or plan of God for the world, including predestination (election and reprobation)

III. Creation and Providence

- creation *ex nihilo* and by the word of God
- the relationship between God and creation (stated over against, e.g., pantheism)
- the days of creation (e.g., “young-earth” or “old-earth” creationism)
- God’s sustaining and overseeing the world and human affairs
- the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom and agency (stated over against deism, determinism, open theism)

IV. Angelology (this can be roughly half a page)

- the nature of angels (neither equal to God nor material beings like humans)
- the distinction between good angels and demons
- the roles and activities of angels and demons within the plan of God

V. Anthropology

- the nature of humanity
- distinction and relationship between body and soul  
(a quick note on dichotomy vs. trichotomy and traducianism vs. creationism will suffice here)

- the image of God
- the nature of human freedom
- the purpose of human sexuality
- humanity's original relationship to God (i.e., in a covenant with God)
- biological origins (i.e., a special act creation or theistic evolution)

VI. Hamartiology

- the fall of humanity
- the nature of sin
- the distinction and relationship between original sin and guilt
- the distinction and relationship between original sin and actual sin
- total depravity
- human freedom under sin

VII. History of Salvation (this can be roughly half a page)

- the unity of the biblical covenants and two Testaments
- the distinctions among the biblical covenants and two Testaments

VIII. Christology – Person of Christ

- the divinity and humanity of Christ
- the meaning of the hypostatic union
- the two wills and operations of Christ
- the impeccability of Christ

IX. Christology – Work of Christ

- the virgin birth of Christ
- the obedience and temptation of Christ
- the suffering of Christ
- the meaning of Christ's atoning death (ransom, propitiation, penal substitution, etc.)
- the scope of Christ's atoning death (i.e., universal or particular redemption)
- resurrection
- ascension and intercession

X. Soteriology

- calling (external and internal, effectual or sufficient but resistible)
- regeneration and baptism of the Spirit
- faith

- repentance
- justification
- adoption
- sanctification
- the role of good works
- perseverance
- glorification

## XI. Ecclesiology

- the relationship between Old Testament Israel and the church
- the nature of the church (including invisible-visible distinction)
- the attributes of the church (unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity)
- the marks of the church (preaching, sacraments/ordinances, discipline)
- the mission of the church
- the government and officers of the church (esp. elders, pastors, deacons)
- gifts of the Spirit (including “miraculous” gifts like prophecy and tongues)
- baptism
- Lord’s Supper

## XII. Eschatology

- inaugurated eschatology
- tribulation
- death and intermediate state
- second coming of Christ (and its relationship to a “rapture”)
- bodily resurrection
- millennium
- final judgment (including judgment “according to works” and heavenly rewards)
- hell and eternal conscious punishment
- religious pluralism
- universalism
- inclusivism
- annihilationism
- new creation and beatific vision

In many cases, you will be able to spend only a sentence or two addressing a sub-topic, so make the space count! There is no need to write an introduction or conclusion or to include transitions from one section to the next. Just complete one section and move on to the next.

This assignment will be graded largely for completion as it is meant to prepare you for your MDiv oral exam. It is for your own future benefit. However, the professor may deduct points for inadequate coverage of topics or sub-topics or for problematic theological claims that need to be addressed because they lie outside the bounds of the Seminary’s doctrinal statement.