

COURSE CODE: Course Name

Table of Contents

Course Welcome	2
Instructor Contact Information	2
Instructor Email Response Policy	2
Course Description and Credit Hours	2
Course Objectives	2
Program Core Competencies	3
Required Textbook / Materials	3
Course Requirements	3
Final Grade Calculation	3
Grade Distribution	3
Grading Scale	4
Netiquette Policy	4
Learning Activities and Tests	4
Online Discussion	4
Weekly Assignments	5
Major Assignments	6
Other Assignments	6
Course Schedule	6
Bethel University Policies and Resources	11
Online Attendance	11
Late or Make Up Work	11
Class Cancellation / Weather Policy for Online Courses	12
Plagiarism	12
Disability Services	12
Information Technology Help Desk	12
Library	12
Syllabus Acknowledgment	13

THES531 (X*): Systematic Theology

Course Welcome

Welcome to *Systematic Theology*! I am looking forward to engaging with you about such important theological matters as the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the nature of heaven, and the roles of faith, the Sacraments, and the Church. These topics are fundamental to Christian faith and practice.

Instructor Contact Information

Dr. Chad Meister

Phone: (574) 807-7398

Email: chad.meister@betheluniversity.edu

Preferred contact method: email

Best time to contact / Office hours: N/A

Instructor Email Response Policy

Any course related email sent to the instructor will have a response either by email, phone, or through the LMS within 48 hours.

Course Description and Credit Hours

(3 credit hours) A study of the nature of religion from a philosophical perspective. Topics explored may include: faith and reason, religious language, miracles, religious experience, the nature of God, religious diversity, and life after death.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify, articulate, and evaluate a number of the main ideas, arguments, and counter-arguments in the contemporary theological literature with regard to the seven core areas in the field that are covered in this course.
- Grow in your ability to think critically and reflectively about core topics in the theology, including (but not limited to) the nature of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, sin and salvation, and the afterlife.
- Expand your understanding of what theology is, why it's important, and how to engage in reflective, charitable, theological discourse.
- Write clear, concise, cogent, and charitable reflections on significant theological matters.

Program Core Competencies

At the completion of the program, the student should:

- Have a graduate-level understanding of the practice of interpreting the Bible in its literary-rhetorical, social-cultural, and canonical-theological contexts.
- Understand what theology is, why it's important, and how to engage in reflective, charitable, biblical and theological discourse.
- Be able to identify, articulate, and evaluate the main ideas, arguments, and counter-arguments in the contemporary biblical and theological literature.
- Have developed an ability to think critically and reflectively about core topics in biblical studies and theology.
- Be able to write clear, concise, cogent, and charitable papers on core biblical and theological ideas.
- Develop leadership skills for effectively serving in the local church as a pastor, teacher, or ministry team leader.
- Be prepared for vocational leadership and ministry.

Required Textbook / Materials

Christian Theology: An Introduction by Alister McGrath. 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-118-86957-4

Practicing Christian Doctrine by Beth Felker Jones. Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN: 978-0801049330

Textbooks and other required course materials can be purchased from the [online campus bookstore](#).

Course Requirements

Any online course activities assigned to the course are performed within Canvas.

Additional web sites and related web-based activities, if assigned, will be accessed through the course or through web links provided for web sites located outside the course.

Final Grade Calculation

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Point Value
Online Discussions	35%
Weekly Quizzes	35%
Final Project	30%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percent
A	100% - 94%
A-	< 94% - 90%
B+	< 90% - 87%
B	< 87% - 84%
B-	< 84% - 80%
C+	< 80% - 77%
C	< 77% - 74%
C-	< 74% - 70%
D+	< 70% - 67%
D	< 67% - 64%
D-	< 64% - 60%
F	< 60% and below

Netiquette Policy

In an online course, almost all your interactions with other people will be through the internet. This netiquette policy applies to all your interactions with the instructor and your fellow students, and you are expected to follow the guidelines outlined below.

Respect other people and be willing to share your ideas and thoughts in a respectful way. Simply, respect others' views. You may disagree with someone, but do so graciously and constructively. Pause before writing emails or posts when you are angry, and reread what you wrote carefully before clicking 'send.' Treat others the way you wish to be treated—with respect.

Do not post or communicate offensive or hateful content. Bethel University does not permit discussions that are obscene, harassing, sexually explicit, or derogatory toward individuals or groups. These will be deleted, and repeat offenders may be barred from future participation.

Do not post or share personal information. Do not post or share information such as addresses, telephone numbers, etc., and do not post or share someone else's personal information.

Learning Activities and Tests

- **Readings** – All readings are to be completed according to the schedule.
- **Meditations/Devotionals** – Please read the weekly devotional meditations as they are related to the material covered in the module for that week.
- **Discussion Forums** – This course is seminar-like in nature, and as such careful, reflective discussion is a key component. 35%
- **Quizzes** – Every week there will be an objective quiz over the reading material. 35%
- **Final Project/Major Paper** – This final project is a theological research paper. A detailed overview of the requirements can be found on the online syllabus page. 30%

Online Discussion

Class Participation

In the event of classroom meeting cancelation due to a campus scheduled holiday or severe weather, the scheduled class session will continue online. The following requirements are for online discussions:

The student will submit an initial discussion post per discussion topic. This initial discussion is a minimum of 250 words. This initial discussion post must include a level of detail, analysis and reflection related to the discussion topic. The student is expected to cite references to support their opinion. Any use of references must be properly cited using APA format.

Each student is required to reply to a minimum of two student initial posts. The reply post is a minimum of 100 to 150 words. This post must include a level of detail, analysis and reflection.

To receive the minimum points possible for a weekly discussion requires each student to post their initial discussion response on the regular night of the class session and two student reply posts by day four of the session – unless otherwise directed by the professor.

Post / Response Guidelines

In an online classroom the majority of discussion among class members will take place in the discussion forum. Online discussion forums are designed to allow the class to engage in a healthy dialog on the lesson topic or question being presented. However, for the dialog to remain productive Bethel University requires each person to conduct themselves in a responsible manner by following the simple guidelines below. These help to maintain a collaborative and congenial environment by reminding us all that, when we communicate online, we are still engaging real people.

Stay on the discussion topic. Be respectful of participants and their time by staying on-topic and not commandeering a discussion with vague or unrelated comments. Contribute productive information when participating in a discussion by stating a complete and logical idea or concept. The goal in the discussion is to delve into a topic and “learn,” so when you post a comment stay on topic and explain your point of view.

Access the discussions several times in the weekly sessions to remain current and active in the discussion.

Do not post copyrighted material without the expressed, documented permission of the copyright holder or following proper source citation of the information, just as you would when writing an essay or term paper. Cite a source if you use it.

Contact your instructor if you have any questions.

Weekly Assignments

Your weekly assignments include your online posts and quizzes.

Major Assignments

For the final project for this semester, please write a philosophical research paper, 2,000 – 2,200 words (excluding footnotes), 12-point font, on one of the topics listed below. In your paper you should have the following elements:

- An introduction (one or two paragraphs) in which you state the thesis of the paper
- The body of the paper should present your position on the topic that you are covering as well as some responses to it from an opposing position(s) (see the grading rubric for philosophy papers)
- A conclusion in which you briefly state what you've done in the paper (two paragraphs or so)
- A title page
- Reference to all quotes
- Include a bibliography page
- The style can be APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, or another standard style. Be consistent.

Due by Saturday 11:59 p.m. EST of **Week 7**.

As you craft the paper, refer to the attached grading rubric.

Topic Options

1. **The Trinity** – Define and defend the doctrine of the Trinity. What are some major issues to be resolved? Why? Respond to challenges.
2. **The Nature and Attributes of God** – Reflect on one of the issues having to do with the nature and attributes of God (e.g., omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, Incarnation). Focus on a few difficult elements involved in the discussion of this issue. What's your position? Why?
3. **The Atonement** –Which theory (or theories) of the Atonement of Jesus Christ do you find most compelling? Explain and defend your position. Respond to counter viewpoints.
4. **The Afterlife**– Define, explain, and defend what you see as the most plausible view of heaven or hell. Regarding heaven, for example, you might consider the view of N. T. Wright that God will bring heaven and earth together in a new creation. Or perhaps you find the "Beatific Vision" a more plausible view. Regarding hell, perhaps you find eternal conscious punishment the most plausible view, or perhaps annihilationism most plausible. Defend the view you find most plausible against counter-viewpoints.
5. **The Church** – What kind of body is the Church? What role does it play in the Christian life? Defend your position against other viewpoints.
6. **Some Other Topic** - You can choose another topic in theology, but it will need to be approved by the professor.

Other Assignments

Paper proposal. Please provide a paper proposal with the following information by 11:59 PM EST of Week 4:

- A ½ - 1-page proposal in which you describe what your paper will be about (preferably I'd like to see a clear thesis statement as well).

Include a bibliography of at least seven sources (4-5 books, 4-5 journal articles which can include two online journal articles).

Course Schedule

Week #	Required Reading	Assignment / Activity
1 Introduction, Frameworks, and Revelation	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: xxiii-xxv. • To the Student: xxvii-xxviii. • Introduction: 3-4. • Chapter 6: 104-134. • Chapter 7: 135-151. <p>William J. Abraham, "The Bible," in Chad Meister and James Beilby, eds., <i>The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought</i>. Routledge, 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 34: 392-402. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: 1-9. • Chapter 1: 11-30. • Chapter 2: 31-54. 	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 6 and 7.</p>
2 The Patristic Period and the Doctrine of the Trinity	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: 5-20. • Chapter 9: 175-206. • Chapter 13: 299-326. <p>Thomas H. McCall, "The Trinity," in Chad Meister and</p>	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 1, 9, and 13.</p>

	<p>James Beilby, eds., <i>The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought</i>. Routledge, 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 43: 493-502. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3: 55-76. 	
3 Christology and Pneumatology	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10: 207-245. • Chapter 12: 280-298. <p>Gerald O'Collins, "Christology," in Chad Meister and James Beilby, eds., <i>The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought</i>. Routledge, 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 36: 412-422. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6: 117-140. • Chapter 8: 167-192. 	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 10 and 12.</p>
4 Sin, Grace, and Atonement	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11: 246-279. • Chapter 14: 327-353. <p>Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor View," in <i>The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views</i>, in</p>	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 11 and 14.</p>

	<p>James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy. InterVarsity Press, 2006.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1: 23-49. <p>Gordon Graham, "Atonement," in Charles Taliaferro and Chad Meister, eds., <i>The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9: 124-135. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 5: 97-116. Chapter 7: 141-166. 	
<p>5 The Middle Ages, Reformation, Creation and Providence</p>	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2: 21-37. Chapter 3: 38-56. <p>Todd Wilson, "Mere Creation" in Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson. Eds., <i>Creation and Doxology: The Beginning and End of God's Good World</i>, IVP, 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3: 45-58. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4: 77-96. 	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 2 and 3.</p> <p>Watch the Emerging Scholars Network video and the John Walton video.</p>
<p>6 Church and Sacrament</p>	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p>	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 14, 15, and 16.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14: 327-353. • Chapter 15: 354-380. • Chapter 16: 381-404. <p>Scot McKnight, "Ecclesiology," in Chad Meister and James Beilby, eds., <i>The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought</i>. Routledge, 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 39: 445-456. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9: 193-216. 	
7 The Modern Period and Eschatology	<p>Alister McGrath, <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4: 57-80. • Chapter 18: 426-448. <p>Philip Tallon and Jerry L. Walls, "Eschatology," in Chad Meister and James Beilby, eds., <i>The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought</i>. Routledge, 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 38: 435-444. <p>Beth Felker Jones, <i>Practicing Christian Doctrine</i>, Baker Academic, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10: 217-238. 	<p>Watch Alister McGrath video series for <i>Christian Theology: An Introduction</i>, 6th edition: Introduction and Chapters 4 and 18.</p>

Bethel University Policies and Resources

To view all Bethel University policies and information, please review the [Student Handbook](#).

Online Attendance

Online attendance is recorded each time that you log into the learning management system. The academic week is seven days for an online session and is based on the night the class normally meets (i.e. if the class meets on Monday night then the online session will be from Monday night through Sunday night of the following week). To receive full credit for attending online, you must login AND one of the following items must be completed as directed by the instructor:

- Submit an academic assignment.
- Submit a quiz or exam.
- Participate in a posted online academic discussion.

Note that the following actions will not count as attendance:

- Logging into class without active participation does not constitute attendance.
- Work done in a lab or other outside environment will not count toward online attendance.
- Assignments completed the week after the online assignment is due will not count toward attendance for the previous week.

Students are strongly encouraged to log into the course a minimum of three days during the week the course is “online” in order to understand the subject fully and to be successful in class.

An online absence is counted the same as an in-class absence.

Late or Make Up Work

It is important for students to submit work on time as scheduled in the class. This allows the instructor time to grade the material and provide feedback if necessary. Circumstances may interfere with the ability to submit an assignment on time. However, as a student you agree to take the class and therefore agree to submit work on time.

Students are encouraged to work ahead to avoid late assignments. Please communicate with your professor promptly if you have extenuating circumstances that may contribute to a late assignment.

Assignments (excluding discussion questions) will be accepted late, subject to a 10% deduction off the earned grade per day late (24-hour period), for up to 3 days. No assignments will be accepted after 3 days. Discussion posts and responses that are not posted by the due date will receive 0 points and are not accepted past the due date.

All work must be completed and submitted by the end of Week 7 of the course. No work will be accepted after the last day of the course.

Class Cancellation / Weather Policy for Online Courses

In the advent of in-classroom meeting cancellation due to a campus scheduled holiday or severe weather, the online course schedule will be maintained. Campus closures do not affect the online course schedule.

Plagiarism

Any act of deceit, falsehood or stealing by unethically copying or using someone else's work in an academic situation is prohibited. A student found guilty of plagiarism will receive an "F" for that paper, assignment or exam. The professor will have an interview with the student and submit a written report to the Program Director or Coordinator for the area in which the student is enrolled. If a second offense should occur, the student will be required to appear before the professor, the director and the vice president for adult and graduate studies. At this point the student's continuation in the course and academic career are in jeopardy. Students are encouraged to refer to the Bethel Library's [online help for proper citation](#).

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that provides civil rights protection for people with disabilities. Bethel University is compliant with equal access laws and requests students with disabilities The Center for Academic Success (CAS) is located in the lower level of the Miller/Moore Academic Center.

If you have a disability, or think you have a disability, please make an appointment by calling Disability Services at the Center for Academic Success at (574) 807-7460 or (574) 807-7462 or email academicsuccess@betheluniversity.edu.

Bethel's website offers more detailed information under CAS. Please check out the [Student Guide for Disability Services](#).

Information Technology Help Desk

The Help Desk is open Monday-Thursday from 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., during the fall and spring semesters, and 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. during the summer (starting May 1). Hours may vary on holidays and breaks.

Contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@betheluniversity.edu or by calling (574) 807-7777.

Library

Bethel's Bowen Library offers a range of resources and services, both online and physical, to all students enrolled at Bethel College. All online resources are available at the [library website](#).

Almost all periodicals and journals are available online, and there is a wide selection of e-books available as well. Off-campus access to these resources requires an active Bethel login account. For assistance in locating information, librarians are available to answer questions via email ([Ask a Librarian](#)), phone, or in person during regular business hours. For physical resources, students are able to use the [library catalog](#) to locate books and resources that are

held either by Bethel or any other library. Students may use the catalog to request books from another library and have them delivered to the Bowen Library.

Students may also go to any [PALNI](#) library or to Notre Dame or Holy Cross and check material out in person with a valid student ID. PALNI is a consortium of several academic libraries in Indiana of which Bethel is a member; some nearby member libraries include Saint Mary's, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Goshen, and Grace. In addition, physical books and journals, the Bowen Library provides study spaces, computers, and printers (included a web print station) to all students.

Syllabus Acknowledgment

Enrollment in this course is considered an acknowledgment that the student will review and follow the course syllabus and additional college policies as stated within the student handbook, college catalog and student information provided by the college through the campus website.

This syllabus is not a legal contract, but serves as a general outline for the semester. The professor reserves the right to make adjustments to the course as the need arises.