

REGENT COLLEGE  
Distance Education

THEO 500: SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY OVERVIEW

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Main source for guidelines, resources, extra handouts;  
[www.regent-college.edu/classesonline](http://www.regent-college.edu/classesonline)  
3 graduate credit hours

**Your due date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(See the last page of your Student Handbook for setting your due date)

**A course may be dropped within two weeks of the course start date for a 100% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between two and four weeks of the course start date for a 75% refund (less \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between four and eight weeks of the course start date for no refund; after this time the student is committed to receiving a grade for the course. All course materials must be returned in original condition before a drop or refund will be approved.**

**Course Description**

This course surveys the whole range of Christian doctrine as set forth in the Bible, grappled with and fought over in history, and debated in our day. The aim throughout is to give resources for deciding at each point what theological assertions and 'moves' in discussion express a truly biblical faith. The course is a natural follow-up to Biblical Theology, inasmuch as Systematic Theology represents a re-thinking of biblical material so as to exhibit it as wisdom answering the folly of our time; but Biblical Theology is not a prerequisite.

**Academic Requirements and Time Investment**

<b>Online Discussion Participation</b>	<b>8 hrs</b>
<b>Lectures</b>	<b>36 hrs</b>
<b>Reading</b> (800 pp.)	<b>40 hrs</b>
<b>Short written report</b> (on some major theological writing -- 800 wds; 3 pp)	<b>8 hrs</b>
<b>Research paper</b> (dealing with a theological topic in depth -- 2750 wds.; 10-12 pp)	<b>28 hrs</b>
<b>Final examination</b> (2 hrs; 4 questions out of 8-9) --including preparation	<b>15 hrs</b>
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<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>135 hrs</b>

**Assignment Descriptions**

**All assignments are due (submitted or postmarked) by your due date. Questions about the content of the assignments and exams can be directed to your Course Grader/Tutor, who can be found on the online discussions forum website.**

### 1. Online Discussion Forums:

For this requirement, refer to the questions found in *Appendix A* in your lecture notes. The questions there correspond to the material in many of the lectures, and will be discussed in these online forums. To meet this requirement, you will be expected to thoughtfully contribute to 3 online discussions (instructions for participation are found at the website above when you register online).

*Registration:* Go to [www.regent-college.edu/classesonline](http://www.regent-college.edu/classesonline) and click on Distance Education, then THEO 500. This will be your main source of information, updates, theology discussion with fellow students, and contact with the course facilitator. Not only will these questions contribute to your studies for your exam and term paper, but hopefully, will also help you reflect and apply this course to your life. All evaluations will be based on both the quality and frequency (at least 3 posted responses) of your discussion participation.

***NB: DO NOT UN-ENROLL FROM MOODLE UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR FINAL GRADE. IF YOU DO UN-ENROLL EARLY YOU WILL RECEIVE ZERO FOR THIS PORTION AS WE WILL NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR DISCUSSION CONTRIBUTION.***

### 2. Short Written Report:

On page 3 of your lecture notes is a list of readings (right-hand column) entitled “Reading Options for Short Paper.” You may pick any single reading option from this list, or from the list of additional options on page 4. The goal for this report is simply to summarize the main argument of your reading. No critique or personal reflection is required. 800 words (1,000 words maximum).

### 3. Research Paper\* (2,750 wds):

#### **Content:**

This is a major research paper, and should reflect a solid amount of scholarly exploration of any theological topic of your choice. A list of suggested topics is found on page 8 of your lecture notes. Your reference points should be what Scripture says, on the one hand, and what is being affirmed today, on the other. Plenty of critical engagement with theologians on your topic is expected. Though you may choose to focus *mainly* on 1-2 thinkers (or 1-2 significant books), be sure to bring in plenty of other scholarly voices to supplement and enrich the discussion.

#### **Style:**

The paper must have a clear central argument (thesis statement), which you argue throughout the paper by presenting your evidence in a logical flow of thought. Use proper grammar, clear transitions, and *support* your assertions with evidence. For footnotes and bibliography follow the Turabian format, found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (2007). Papers should be double-spaced, 12 pt. font, and *at least* .75” margins. You may exceed the word-count limit by no more than 10%.

**\*For more thorough guidance on how to write a theology paper, refer to “Packing it in for Packer,” found on your course moodle site.**

### 4. Final Exam (Instructions on taking the exam is included in your student handbook):

You will have two hours to answer your choice of 4 out of 9 available essay questions. The questions will draw from any of the major lecture topics (such as creation, providence, sin, trinity, person or work of Christ, person or work of the Holy Spirit, sacraments, eschatology, etc...). Each essay should be a *thoughtful, integrative* response to the exam question (i.e. *not* regurgitated memorized data) that includes the following three elements:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the *central positive doctrinal content* found in the lectures and notes. You may want to bring pitfalls or theological “dead-ends” as a supplemental contrast to the central doctrinal content, though the latter is your main focus. This item is the bulk of your essay.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of applicable Scriptures (1-2 Scripture refs./reflections: only book citations needed, not chapter and verse).
3. Incorporate the required readings or outside readings (1-2 general refs. to theologians on the essay topic).

**\*For more thorough guidance on preparing for the exam, see the exam prep. handout found on your course moodle site.**

*Please refer to your student handbook for specific information on ordering your exam.*

<http://www.regent-college.edu/academics/cstudies/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf>

### **Evaluation**

Short written report	10 %
Discussion Participation	10 %
Research paper	40 %
Final exam	40 %

***NB: The Course Evaluation Form is to be returned by your due date***

### **Late Policy and Extensions (please read carefully!)**

For every week that your course requirements are submitted late, there will be a deduction of a third of a letter grade per assignment accordingly. Only under circumstances that are both *unavoidable and unforeseeable* are extensions considered (please refer to your student handbook for specific details <http://www.regent-college.edu/academics/cstudies/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf> ). Weddings and births do not count as *unavoidable and unforeseeable*. If you need to go beyond the six-month time limit, you must contact the Coordinator *first* for an extension. Contact information is provided in your **Student Handbook**. Please note that extensions are not automatically granted, and must be applied for before your original due date.

ACADEMIC HONOUR Regent College upholds the highest standards of academic responsibility as part of our commitment to Christ in all of life. Students are required to familiarize themselves especially with the discussion of “Academic Integrity” in the College Catalogue.

## **Bibliography**

### **Required Texts:**

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*, Baker

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Trans. Henry Beveridge. Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 1998. (any trans.; available online: [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org))

Westminster Confessions and Catechisms (also available online: [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org))

D. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, vols. 1-2. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978

\*Calvin and Berkhof are especially expensive to purchase. If you choose not to buy them, you must at least secure regular access to them during the course. For a list of the selected readings required from all three texts, see page 3 in your lecture notes.

### **Optional Pre-Course Reading:**

Milne, Bruce. *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*. Leicester: IVP, 1982.

### **Recommended Texts** (a more comprehensive list is in the course lecture notes):

Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*. [Ripe wisdom on being a theologian.]

Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Broadman and Holman)

A.A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Banner of Truth). [Brilliant question-and-answer exposition of classical Presbyterian teaching.]

A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*. [Outstanding on eschatology.]

A. McGrath, *Christian Theology* (Blackwell)

J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Tyndale House)

\_\_\_\_\_, *God Has Spoken* (Baker). [Revelation, inspiration, interpretation of Scripture.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *God's Words* (Baker). [Key concepts in biblical theology.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Growing in Christ* (Crossway). [A catechetical overview of faith and commitment.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Knowing God* (IVP). [On God.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (IVP). [On sin and grace.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Revell / IVP). [On the Holy Spirit.]

\_\_\_\_\_, *God's Plans For You* (Crossway). [On problems in the Christian Life.]

J.I. Packer and T. Howard, *Christianity and True Humanism* (Word) [On Man.]