

REGENT COLLEGE  
Distance Education

THEO 605: SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY A:  
PROLEGOMENA, THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, REVELATION AND CREATION

Dr. J.I. Packer

Grader: Matt Mattoon

Course Tutor: Nathan Carson, [de-theo605@regent-college.edu](mailto:de-theo605@regent-college.edu)

Main source of guidelines, resources and 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)

600-level courses are usually more advanced and focused than 500-level courses and generally assume the completion of some theological studies.

**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 a \$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 seeks to:

- (a) explicate in the context of modern discussion the historic Christian belief that the sole source of reliable knowledge of God our Maker and Savior is Holy Scripture; and
- (b) explore the nature, character, and triunity of the God who reveals himself in Scripture in order to bring us into fellowship with himself.

The course as a whole will constitute a full-scale introduction to systematic theology.

Topics for treatment include:

- Revelation, general and special
- Inspiration, interpretation, canonicity and authority of Scripture
- Theological epistemology and methodology
- God's character
- God's triunity
- Fellowship with God

**Academic Requirements and Time Investment**

Discussion Forum Participation	3 hrs
Lectures	36 hrs
Reading (1,300 pp.) and Summary (1 pg.)	55 hrs
Research paper (dealing with a theological topic in depth – 15 pp.; 3,750 wds.)	30 hrs
Final examination (2 hours; 4 out of 9 questions) --including preparation	11 hrs
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>135 hrs</b>

### **Assignment Descriptions**

**All assignments are due (submitted or postmarked) by your due date. Questions on the content of your assignments can be directed to your Course Tutor. Questions about due dates, submissions, overall administration can be directed to the Continuing Studies office.**

#### **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 605. 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. Reading Summary:**

Write one-paragraph for each required text. Comment briefly on the author's general approach, but focus mainly on a single theological insight you found helpful or challenging and why. The header above each paragraph should include the name of the required text, and the total percentage of required pages read. Grade will be based *largely* on the percentage of required reading completed, but also on your engagement with the single theological issue you bring up. The total assignment should be no more than a single page in length, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, and at least .75" margins.

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

***Content:***

This is a major research paper, and should reflect a solid amount of scholarly exploration of any theological interest of your choice, within the Systematic A topics (theological method, nature of Scripture, faith/reason, God: character/attributes, triunity; providence and evil, etc...). 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/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*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (1996). 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 the Moodle site.**

#### 4. Final Exam\*:

You will have two hours to answer your choice of 4 out of 9 available essay questions. You may use a laptop to answer your exam questions and have them printed. The questions will draw from any of the major lecture topics (such as: theological method, Biblical authority, God: character, attributes, trinity, providence). 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* of what is 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: book, but not nec. chapter and verse cited),
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 the 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

Discussion Participation	10%
Reading Summary	10%
Research paper	40 %
Final exam	40 %

**NOTE: Assignments will only be graded once they are all handed in.**

***NB: The Course Evaluation Form must 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.

**Required Reading**

J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (Baker)  
Thomas C. Oden, *The Living God: Systematic Theology Vol 1 , 2001* (HarperOne)  
Gerald Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (IVP), 1997  
Thomas V. Morris, *Our Idea of God: An Introduction to Philosophical Theology* (Regent College Publishing)

**Additional Bibliography** (for a more full bibliography, see lecture notes)

***Language, History and Knowledge of God:***

Ian Ramsey, *Religious Language; Christian Discourse*  
F. Ferre, *Language, Logic and God*  
Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, Paradigms*  
Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time; Salvation in History*  
Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*

***Scripture: Nature, Authority, Revelation, Interpretation:***

C.F.H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible; God, Revelation and Authority*  
K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.i, ii; I.2  
C. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle; Biblical Revelation*  
G.C. Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*  
N. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy*  
J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (with Chicago declarations as appendices); “*Fundamentalism*” and the Word of God; *Beyond the Battle for the Bible*, 2  
J. Rogers and D. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the*  
J. Calvin, *Institutes*, I.i-ix, IV.viii.1-9  
A. Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology*  
P.T. Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority*  
J.D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture; The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church*  
I.H. Marshall, ed., *New Testament Interpretation*  
A.C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons; New Horizons in Hermeneutics*

***Character of God:***

L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 47-81  
E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God (Dogmatics I)*, chs 15, 17-21  
A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*  
J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*  
J. Baillie, *Our Knowledge of God*  
D. Bloesch, *God the Almighty*

***Creation:***

K. Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, pp. 50-64; *Church Dogmatics*, III (4 parts)  
Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*  
E.L. Mascall, *Christian Theology and Natural Science*, IV, pp.132-66  
H.N. Ridderbos, *Is there a conflict between Genesis 1 and Science?*  
H. Blocher, *In the Beginning*

***Providence and Evil:***

Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xvi-xviii

G.C. Berkouwer, *The Providence of God*

A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*

C.S. Lewis, *Miracles; The Problem of Pain*

P. Helm, *The Providence of God*

T. Thiessen, *Providence and Prayer*

***Trinity:***

J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*

A.W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the NT*

Calvin, *Inst.* I.13

L. Hodgson, *Doctrine of the Trinity*

E.J. Fortman, *The Triune God*

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, theses 8-12

**Course Outline**

CD 1, 2	iTunes #A	Introduction, Types of Theology
CD 3, 4	iTunes #B	Revelation
CD 5, 6	iTunes #C	Scripture
CD 7, 8	iTunes #D	Authority of Scripture
CD 9, 10	iTunes #E	Doctrine
CD 11, 12	iTunes #F	The Concept of God
CD 13	iTunes #F	The Concept of God (cont.)
CD 14	iTunes G	The Triunity of God
CD 15	iTunes #G	The Triunity of God (cont.)
CD 16	iTunes #H	The Creativity of God
CD 17	iTunes #I	Creation, Evolution & Problems Concerning Creation
CD 18	iTunes #I	The Purposes of God: Providence
CD 19	iTunes #J	Providence and Evil
CD 20	iTunes #J	Decisions of God