

**Grace Institute**  
**Foundations in Theology**  
*Instructor: Gregory A. Ryerson, D.Min*

## **Introduction to the Course**

### **What is Theology?**

Theology = *theos* + *logos* = “the word about God” or “the study of God.” In its most technical sense, theology is the study of God and of the divine attributes (“Theology Proper”). But since the Middle Ages (especially in the writings of Peter Abelard) it has come to include the whole range of Christian doctrine. Theology, therefore, is the study not only of God himself, but of the relationship between God and the universe.<sup>1</sup> It embraces related doctrines including:

- Bibliology, the study of the Bible as God’s written Word
- Christology, the study of Jesus Christ
- Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit
- Anthropology, the study of man
- Hamartiology, the study of sin
- Soteriology, the study of salvation
- Basileiology, the study of the kingdom of God
- Ecclesiology, the study of the church
- Eschatology, the study of Bible prophecy and future things

### **Theology, the “Queen of the Sciences”**

In the late Middle Ages, schools of higher education developed the two areas we now refer to as the “liberal arts”: The trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (mathematics, geometry, music, and astronomy). It was believed that the Bible, as the source of all truth, provided the overarching standard for each of these disciplines. The scholars of the day rightly saw that one’s view of God and the Bible affects every other area of life. A scholar’s theology is the foundation of his world-view and shapes his study of philosophy and other fields. Theology, therefore, is the “Queen of the Sciences,” – that is, God’s Word is the majestic source of knowledge that informs all other knowledge. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Gotquestions.org, “How Is Theology the Queen of the Sciences?”

### **Purposes of the Course**

1. To survey what the Bible teaches on major matters of Christian faith
2. To examine the Statement of Faith – along with other beliefs and practices – of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches
3. To equip ourselves for more effective leadership in the home and in the church
4. To prepare ourselves to share and to defend the Gospel
5. To develop a thoroughly biblical world-view
6. To deepen our personal knowledge, worship, and love of God

### **Outline of the Course**

1. The course will consist of 22 three-hour sessions, one session per month (except December). Sessions are scheduled for the first Saturday of every month, 8:00am-11:00am.
2. The textbook for the course is *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
3. To prepare for each class session, the student will be expected to:
  - Complete a reading assignment
  - Answer one or more study questions
  - Submit a reading report and answers to the study question(s)
4. At each session, the student will be provided with lecture notes, including a list of recommended resources for further study.
5. At the end of the course, a Certificate of Completion will be awarded to those who have:
  - Attended all 22 sessions
  - Completed all reading assignments
  - Answered all study questions
6. Those who choose to audit the course may attend sessions selectively, and are not required to complete reading assignments or study questions.

## **Class Schedule**

3/5/16	Introduction to the Course; Biblical Interpretation	Grudem, ch. 1
4/2/16	The Doctrine of God's Word	Grudem, chs. 2-8
5/7/16	Theology Proper, Part 1	Grudem, chs. 9-11
6/4/16	Theology Proper, Part 2	Grudem, chs. 12-14
7/2/16	The Doctrine of Christ	Grudem, chs. 26-29
8/6/16	The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	Grudem, ch. 30, 39, 52-53
9/3/16	God's Decrees	Grudem, chs. 15-17
10/1/16	The Doctrine of Man	Grudem, chs. 21-23
11/5/16	God's Covenants with Man	Grudem, ch. 25
12/3/16	(Winter Break)	
1/7/17	The Doctrine of Angels, Demons, and Satan	Grudem, chs. 19-20
2/4/17	The Doctrine of Sin	Grudem, ch. 24
3/4/17	The Doctrine of Salvation, Part 1	Grudem, chs. 31-35
4/1/17	The Doctrine of Salvation, Part 2	Grudem, chs. 36-38, 40-43
5/6/17	The Christian Life	Grudem, ch. 18
6/3/17	The Doctrine of the Kingdom	Ryerson notes
7/1/17	The Doctrine of the Church, Part 1	Grudem, chs. 44-48
8/5/17	The Doctrine of the Church, Part 2	Grudem, chs. 49-51
9/2/17	The Doctrine of the Future, Part 1	Grudem, ch. 54
10/7/17	The Doctrine of the Future, Part 2	Grudem, chs. 55-57
11/4/17	The FGBC Statement of Faith	Ryerson notes
12/2/17	(Winter Break)	
1/6/18	Other Brethren Beliefs and Practices	Ryerson notes
2/3/18	(Sunday) Graduation Ceremony	

*Note: This class schedule is subject to change. The instructor will work with the CG elders and students to ensure that all subject matter is available in a timely manner.*