

**The Journey; a Graduate Centre for Christian Leadership  
Syllabus for the Course  
THS 540 An Introduction to Christian Theology**

Ed Stuckey, D.Min.  
Fall, 2010  
2 credit hours

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Dates: October 21-23

Class Times: Thursday 5:30 – 9:30; Friday 8:30-4:30;

Sat. 8:30-4:30

Location: Ellerslie Road Baptist Church

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### **I. Course Description**

The basis, purpose and essential language of theology will be presented through an overview of the major theological themes. This will include a brief survey of historical developments within the church as doctrine developed. The place and importance of theology within the life of the church will be emphasized. THS 540 is required of those who have not studied Systematic Theology in their undergraduate program.

### **II. Aims**

This course assumes the complete participation of the student in all communications, readings, and assignments with the desire to grow deeper in their faith. If this is carried through faithfully the following aims should be met:

- a comprehensive understanding of the broad landscape of theology
- the development of some foundational skills enabling students to become independent theological thinkers, able to discern the significance of theology for their life in the church
- an appreciation for the orthodox, evangelical tradition of the church as it comes to expression in the various theologians and theological epochs of the church's history
- an appreciation of the relevance of theological issues to both ministry and to everyday life
- some insights into the current theological milieu both within and outside evangelical boundaries
- a clear understanding of the significance of the Bible as the sole authority and primary source for theology; its inspiration and authority will be seen as central to the theological task
- the development of a rapport with the instructor and fellow students that fosters prayerful and joyful theological discovery

### **III. Denominational Distinctives**

Because *The Journey* is a co-operative effort among different denominational groups, each student is encouraged to possess a copy of his own denomination statement of faith and use it as a guide in thinking about and developing their own approach to Christian doctrine.

### **IV. Texts**

A reliable English translation of the Bible (not a paraphrase) is an indispensable text in any theology course. NIV, TNIV, NLT, ESV, NASV are all acceptable.

**Primary Texts:**

Erickson, Millard *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 2nd ed. A. Hustad, ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

McGrath, Alister *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, 4th ed. Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

**Recommended text:**

McGrath, Alister, ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*, 3rd ed. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 2007.

- A note about *The Christian Theology Reader* [hereafter TCTR]: While not required for this course, this book is an anthology that introduces you to key writings by notable theologians, in their own words. The purchase of this resource is recommended for those anticipating further study in Theology.

**V. Course Requirements**

**A. Readings Value 30%**

Students are to provide evidence of personal interaction with the readings by completing the *study questions* which appear at the beginning of each chapter in Erickson’s, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. These questions are to be answered briefly, capturing the essence of what the text is saying, yet clear enough to be understandable apart from the text. It is quite acceptable to add your own comments to your answers.

Due: Please post to the website no later than 11:59 pm on the following schedule:

Section 1 of Readings .....	Friday, Sept 24
Section 2 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 1
Section 3 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 8
Section 4 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 15
Section 5 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 22

Assigned readings should be completed prior to our first day in class ***Because of the length of the readings, and the need for some “reflection time,” student should complete MOST of the readings prior to the commencement of the course.***

- The textbooks are to be read following the outline of *readings* listed in the *Course Outline and Readings* [see below].

**B. Personal Journal: Value 20%**

Due: Please email to the instructor no later than 11:59 pm on the following schedule:

Section 1 of Readings .....	Friday, Sept 24
Section 2 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 1
Section 3 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 8
Section 4 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 15
Section 5 of Readings.....	Friday, Oct 22

Below is a series of 5 personal journal questions assigned for your personal reflections on each section of readings.

**Each student will prepare 5 journal entries of approximately 2 pages for each section of readings. A total of 10 pages.**

- Your journal reflections on EACH of the questions below should be about 1/2 page, typed double-spaced.
- Students are encouraged to engage in this assignment prayerfully; the hope is you will not only engage your own mind, but encounter God's as well!

- Evaluation will be based on the extent of your thoughtful interaction with the material, whether or not you actually answer the questions, **and especially your original insights in relation to the issues raised by it.**

### **Personal Journal Questions**

1. *What have I learned from my reading that has clarified my faith for me?*
2. *What have I learned from my reading that has confused me somewhat?*
3. *What have I learned from my reading that has implications for ministry?*
4. *What have I learned from my reading that has implications for the cause of Christ in the world?*
5. *What have I read which annoyed or distressed me, or with which I disagreed? (explain how and why)*

### **C. Personal Mentorship and Report: Value 20%**

Each student is required to have a personal mentor who is actively engaged in a pastoral-type of ministry (or recently retired). Select someone whom you respect and whose insights you find helpful and perceptive. Plan to meet with your mentor at least four times during the duration of the course. While you are free to discuss whatever issues related to the course you choose, a primary focus of your interaction should be on the pastoral implications of the theological issues raised by the readings.

Write an approximately four page report describing the issues you discussed as well as the learnings and insights from the mentoring sessions. Evaluation will be based on the clarity and breadth of your insights, and evidence of thoughtful interaction with your mentor.

### **D. Essay: Value 30%**

**Due: Please post to the dropbox on the website before Friday, December 3, 2010.**

The student will write a 12-15 page essay on a topic of interest relating to the material covered in class or in the texts. Possible topics will be discussed during the class and **should be confirmed via e-mail with the instructor before proceeding**. The paper should show some ability to grasp and discuss a major theological theme in light of the class lectures, the texts and some further research into contemporary literature on the subject. Topics can include a theological theme, movement, theologian or theological tradition, but must be narrow enough to provide sufficient focus in developing one's theological acumen. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writer's*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. All versions of Microsoft Word 97-03 use this as a template for theses and term papers.

## **VI. Course Outline and Readings**

This course will meet at Ellerslie Road Baptist Church over a 3 day period: Thursday, Oct 21 (5:30-9:30 PM), Friday, Oct 22 (8:30-4:30), and Saturday (8:30-4:30). It will be assumed that students have completed their readings and are prepared to interact with the lectures.

*Thurs, Oct 21, 5:30 – 6:30: Welcome and introductions*

### **Section 1: Theology and Revelation**

*6:00 – 8:00 The Definition and Task of Theology*

*8:00-9:30 Revelation, Natural Theology, and the Bible*

### **Section 2 Person and Work of God**

*Fri Oct 22, 8:30 – 10:00 Person of God*

*10:00 -12:00 Work of God*

### **Section 3 Person and Work of Christ**

*1:00 - 2:30 The Person of Christ*

*2:30 – 4:30 The Work of Christ*

### **Section 4 Humanity and Salvation**

*Sat. 8:30 – 10:00 Humanity: creation and image of God + Humanity: the fall (sin)*

*10:30 – 12:00 Salvation Applied*

**Section 5 The Holy Spirit, Church, and Last Things**

1:00 – 2:00 *The Holy Spirit: His person & work*

2:00 – 3:00 *The Church: its nature, governance, life*

3:00 – 4:30 *The Last Things*

**Summary of REQUIRED Reading Assignments:**

Erickson, Millard, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*

McGrath, Alister *Christian Theology: An Introduction*

Due Date	Subject	Erickson	McGrath
Sept 24	Theology & Revelation	Chapters 1-8	Chapters 1-8
Oct 1	Person & Work of God	Chapters 9-17	Chapters 9-10
Oct 8	Person & Work of Christ	Chapters 24-28	Chapters 11-12
Oct 15	Humanity & Salvation	Chapters 18-23, 31-35	Chapters 13, 14, 17
Oct 22	The Holy Spirit, Church & Eschatology	Chapters 29-30, 36-42	Chapters 15-16, 18

**Summary of RECOMMENDED Reading Assignments (not required):**

McGrath, Alister, *The Christian Theology Reader*

Due Date	Subject	McGrath – Reader
Sept 24	Theology & Revelation	xx-xxxiii; 1.1-8; 1.24; 1.26; 1:28 2.7; 2.9-10; 2.16-18
Oct 1	Person & Work of God	3.13; 3.28
Oct 8	Person & Work of Christ	4.1; 4.6-7; 4.9; 4.17; 4.34; 4.41; 5.1; 5.5; 5.7-8; 5.23; 5.28; 5.33
Oct 15	Man, Sin & Salvation	6.2; 6.12-15; 6.32-34; 6.36; 6.38-39; 6.51-52; 9.6-9; 9.12
Oct 22	The Holy Spirit, Church & Eschatology	3.17; 7.1-3; 7.5; 7.7; 7.24; 8.17-18; 8.26; 10.13; 10.15; 10.17; 10.19; 10.21; 10.23-24

**Quick Summary of REQUIRED reading (Table 1 above):**

**ALL OF ERICKSON'S** *Introducing Christian Theology*

**ALL OF MCGRATH'S** *Christian Theology: An Introduction*

**RECOMMENDED reading:**

All of McGrath's *The Christian Theology Reader*

**VII. Grading of Course**

The grading will be based on the marking and grade interpretation guide for written assignments found below.

**Note, for those entering a program at ACTS, this course will be recorded on a Pass-Fail basis**

Letter Grade	Quality Characteristics
<b>A</b> 90-100%	<b>Outstanding, excellent work:</b> gives evidence of an extensive and detailed knowledge base; exceptional performance with strong evidence of original thinking, good organization, meticulous concern for documented evidence, and obvious capacity to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, discern, justify, and elaborate; frequent evidence of both verbal eloquence and perceptive insight in written expression; a clear authorial voice demonstrated by a strong introduction, a well-defined thesis, an effective body, and a summative conclusion; effective variety in sentence type, length, and structure; demonstrated masterful grasp of subject matter and its implications; is in compliance with Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (6 <sup>th</sup> ed).
<b>B</b> 75-89%	<b>Good, competent work:</b> laudable performance with evidence of some original thinking; careful organization, with well-developed writing plan; satisfactory critical and analytical capacity; reasonably error-free expository written expression, with clear, focused thesis and well-supported, documented, relevant arguments; good problem-solving ability; reasonably good grasp of subject matter, but an occasional lack of depth of discernment; evidence of reasonable familiarity with course subject matter, including both concepts and key issues; exhibits a serious, responsible engagement with the course content; presence of minor errors which do not detract significantly from the clarity of communication.
<b>C</b> 60-74%	<b>Minimally acceptable work:</b> relatively weak performance with infrequent evidence of original thinking or ability to analyze or synthesize course material; nominal or weak problem-solving ability; uninspiring written expression with problems in mechanics, syntax and format; written expression frequently exhibits difficulty in articulating an outline, central thesis, or sustaining a coherent argument; sentence fragments, limited or inaccurate word choice; paragraphs inadequately developed; little evidence that work has been proofread; ideas are sometimes trite or juvenile; weak in provision of documented, illustrative, or descriptive evidence; shows inadequate grasp of some basic elements of the course; presence of many grammatical and stylistic errors which detract significantly from the clarity of communication.
<b>F</b>	<b>Inadequate work:</b> poor performance that indicates a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of essential subject matter; seems easily distracted by irrelevant tangents; written expression is poorly organized, often incoherent, and rife with syntax and diction errors; serious patterns of faults in writing; shows little evidence of even basic competency in the course content or skills; evidence of plagiarism.

### VIII. Contacting the Instructor

You can reach the instructor in the following ways:

Dr. Ed Stuckey 780-463-2161 or

[estuckey@journeycentre.ca](mailto:estuckey@journeycentre.ca)

I will also be available following each day's sessions.

**NOTE:** This course assumes that **all** students have access to a computer. All written assignments should be submitted in Microsoft Word.

## **Important Academic Notes –**

### **Paper Formatting**

Papers may be completed in either Turabian or APA formatting.

### **Academic Honesty**

An essential discipline in the academic process is that of academic honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with the requirements of academic honesty and to adhere to the principles of academic honesty.

### **Equity of Access**

Any student with a learning disability or other special needs (including mobility) should inform the instructor prior to the beginning of the class time.