I. Course Description

This course addresses the traditional topics of systematic theology as a narrative of salvation history. It is designed to equip students with a comprehensive and coherent theological framework for engaging in life and ministry in light of the present and future reign of God.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1-3 Not assessed
4a. Demonstrate understanding of basic theological concepts.
4b. Analyze theological claims in light of Scripture, tradition(s), and experience.
4c. Express from their own perspective how the story of God’s present and future reign should shape Christian life and ministry.
4d. Reflect theologically on a particular issue in a form appropriate to their own calling.
5-6 Not assessed

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks (in addition to the Bible):

B. Attendance

According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than six class hours (2 weeks) will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade, audit or withdraw from the class, or be penalized otherwise at the discretion of the professor.

Because this is an online course, attendance is measured by participation in weekly discussions and timely submission of assignments. Students are expected to participate every week unless an exception is granted by the professor for extraordinary circumstances.
C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

This class will be delivered entirely online in Angel. Because all work will be done via the internet, the student must have access to a computer with internet capabilities. To access Angel, go to https://angel.ashland.edu and click on the Angel logo. Log in using your username and your student ID number for your password. Please contact the professor immediately if on the first day of the semester you cannot access the course. You will need to log in several times each week to post and to read and respond to the postings of others. Accessing and posting often will enrich your experience and that of your classmates. All papers must be submitted in the appropriate drop box in the Angel course.

Assignments have been structured to guide you through increasingly complex thought processes as you build your theological skills. You will identify basic concepts (practice quizzes, discussion, exams), analyze theological models (discussion), reflect on the foundations of your own theology (diagnostic paper), and finally draw upon appropriate sources to think theologically about a particular question or problem in a form relevant to your own calling (final project).

Discussion postings will be graded on quantity, clarity, depth of insight, support for claims and arguments, meaningful interaction with other students, and integration of personal thought with course materials. Papers will be graded on clarity, coherence, depth of insight, and constructive engagement with course content. For all papers, any sources you use must be appropriately documented in the text. All such material must be quoted exactly, using quotation marks, or paraphrased completely. Any biblical references should be documented in parentheses in the text. Papers should use gender-inclusive language about people and should conform to Turabian style. You are responsible to follow the ATS Writing Handbook. For due dates see the course outline.

- **Online discussion.** Each week a discussion question will be posted in the folder for that week. You will discuss the question as a class or in small groups, depending on the number of students in the class. The instructor will moderate the discussion and will sometimes contribute to it. You must post at least once in response to the discussion prompt, including a substantive question for further discussion, and you must also respond to at least one post by another student. See “Discussion Posting Guidelines” in the Resources folder in the Content tab for further information. Each week’s discussion is worth 5 points. Your first post is due by Wednesday at 11:55 pm; failure to meet this deadline means a deduction of 3 points. Your first response is due by Friday at 11:55 pm; missing this deadline means a deduction of 2 points. The purpose of the assignment is to create a thoughtful theological conversation. Constructive disagreement is encouraged, but courtesy at all times is required. Any discourtesy will result in a deduction from your grade. **Length:** variable. **Due:** each week.

- **Exams.** You will take a midterm exam and a final exam on the terms and concepts for the course. A list of these can be found in the Resources folder in the Content tab in Angel. Exams will be objective (multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, short answer). The exams will be delivered by Angel, although the instructor will check any free-form answers individually. A practice quiz will be included in each week’s material.
• **Diagnostic paper.** Drawing upon class materials and the diagnostic exercises in Stone and Duke, you will reflect on the foundations of your own theology. In light of the present and future reign of God, address the following:

  o What are the sources and norm(s) of your theology?
  o What is the Gospel? How does the Gospel reach people? How do people receive the Gospel and its benefits?
  o What is the basic problem of the human condition? What is the resolution to that problem? How is the problem resolved?
  o What deeds are Christians called to do? What are the reasons for performing a service or action? Why (on what grounds) is one course of action the most fitting in a particular situation?

You need not do any additional research for this assignment. **Length:** 4-5 pages.

• **Final project.** In the final project, you will do constructive theology about a particular question or problem that interests you. You may choose to do a research paper, a doctrinal position paper, a sermon, or a case study. You will complete the project in three stages:

  o **Stage 1: Proposal.** This will include the following:
    - A general description of the topic area (not a thesis to defend)
    - Why you want to investigate it
    - The end product (research paper, position paper, sermon, case study)
    - An open-ended research question that you will attempt to answer
    - Identification of some resources that will help you answer the question:
      - Biblical resources
      - Theological resources
      - Resources from Christian tradition(s)
      - Resources from your own experience (including relevant preunderstandings)
  
  **Length:** 1 page. **Value:** 10% of final project.

  o **Stage 2: Theological reflection.** In this paper you will discuss the results of your investigation under the following headings:
    o Research question and thesis statement (answering the research question)
    o Significance of the research (why is it important and to whom)
    o Engagement with the resources:
      - Biblical resources
      - Theological resources
      - Resources from Christian tradition
      - Resources from experience
  
  o Conclusions
  o Applications

  For this stage of the final project you will be expected to do as much research as necessary to confidently answer your research question. You will summarize your
research as well as your own insights and conclusions. The paper should be clear and grammatical and should follow the outline above. It will not include all of your evidence or develop a sustained argument. **Length:** 8-10 pages. **Value:** 40% of final project.

- **Stage 3: The final product.** For this stage you will submit the completed research paper, position paper, sermon, or case study. This should be an integrated and polished work that draws upon the theological reflection paper, as well as the feedback you received, to develop a thoughtful and coherent work that persuasively addresses its intended audience. **Length:** 10-12 pages. **Value:** 50% of final project.

### D. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online discussion</td>
<td>4a, 4b, 4c</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic paper</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>4b, 4d</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Lecture/Topics</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 5-11</td>
<td>Introduction to Theology</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 1-10 Colijn, Introduction Woodley, Author’s Preface Stone/Duke, Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan. 26-Feb. 1</td>
<td>The God of the Kingdom</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 105-161 Woodley, chapter 1 Stone/Duke, chapters 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 2-8</td>
<td>Creation and Sovereignty</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 163-206 Woodley, chapter 3 Stone/Duke, chapters 7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb. 9-15</td>
<td>Human Beings: God’s Covenant Partners Who Turned Away</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 207-251 Colijn, chapters 2-3 Woodley, chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb. 16-22</td>
<td>Jesus Christ, Bringer of the Kingdom</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 253-285 Colijn, chapter 6 Woodley, chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb. 23-Mar. 1</td>
<td>Atonement: Jesus’ Work for the Kingdom</td>
<td>Stiver, p. 285-325 Colijn, chapters 3, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Mar. 2-8</td>
<td>Spring break — no class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

To learn more about the topics of this course, read some of the books listed in the preliminary bibliography or in the more extended bibliography posted in Angel. Some of the authors of the required reading also have videos or lectures available online. To integrate your learning with your own theological beliefs, it’s a helpful practice every five years or so to write your own credo, a statement of your beliefs in the areas covered by the course. You may find that your convictions develop or even change over time. Finally, it’s always a best practice to keep returning to Scripture to refresh and test your beliefs.

VI. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the Student Handbook.
B. Academic Support Services

If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Academic Support Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic support including writing, critical thinking, documentation, reading skills, study skills, test taking skills, time management. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Academic Support Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu.

C. Students with Disabilities

Ashland University makes every effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who have a specific physical, psychiatric or learning disability and require accommodations are encouraged to inform their instructors of their needs early in the semester so that learning needs can be appropriately met. It is the student’s responsibility to document the disability with Disability Services in The Center for Academic Support on the 7th floor of the Ashland University Library, 419-289-5904.

D. ATS Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65-67</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
VIII. Selected Bibliography


