



Advancing God's Kingdom by Preparing Competent Christian Leaders for
Spirit-Empowered Life and Ministry

T391 Current Issues in Theology

3 credits | Prerequisites: T320 Theology I and T321 Theology II

March 11 – 15, 2019

Module D

Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm

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Please note: This course includes reading before the module.

Course Content and Goals

Course Description

An introduction to and evaluation of trends in contextual theologies and other pressing issues in contemporary theology and church life. Students will be enabled to understand these issues from a biblical and evangelical Christian perspective and develop their own theologically-informed responses to these trends.

Relationship to Horizon's Mission

Pressing theological issues affect our lives and ministry in many contexts. As part of Horizon's mission to prepare competent Christian leaders, this course equips students to understand these issues and articulate a Christian response to them based on biblical and theological considerations. It thus aids them in the following [core competencies](#):

- *Biblical and Theological Literacy*: Apply God's Word carefully in order to uphold the Christian faith and discern flawed teachings.
- *Contextual Awareness*: Demonstrate contextual awareness through a healthy view of self, a Christian view of the world, and by engaging culture in appropriate ways.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes

To demonstrate competency in **Biblical and Theological Literacy**, students will:

1. Articulate what it means for theology to be "biblical," "evangelical," and "spiritual," and to practice such a theology.
 - *Assessment*: Pre-Module Reading, Position Paper.
2. Assess the use of the Bible and theological presuppositions in theological texts and Christian media.
 - *Assessment*: Comparison Tests, Book Review.
3. Develop and articulate one's own biblical-theological position on a pressing topic in contemporary theology and/or the life of the Church.

- *Assessment*: Position Paper.

To demonstrate competency in **Contextual Awareness**, students will:

4. Accurately describe and evaluate issues in evangelical theology, and Christian theology more broadly, of significant concern to the Church both within Canada and globally.
- *Assessment*: Comparison Tests, Book Review.

Course Work

Textbook

Course Pack. Available on Populi or for purchase at the Administration Office (see Cathy Litzgus).

Course Assignments and Activities

Portfolio Components. *Position Paper.* This assignment must be edited and submitted for the Biblical and Theological Literacy competency page or Appendix page in your Portfolio (See the Portfolio Guide for a further description).

1. *Pre-Module Reading*: “Doing Theology that is Biblical, Evangelical, Spiritual.”

At the beginning of this course, we will review and discuss what theology is and what kind of theology we ought to be doing. This can be described as biblical, evangelical, spiritual theology. To aid our discussion, students must come to the first day of the module having read the following three short pieces, all found at the start of the Course Pack: John Wesley, “Preface to the Sermons”; Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology* (selection); and Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology* (selection). Please fill out and submit the Reading Report on Populi.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1.
- **Due date**: Monday, Mar 11 at 9AM.

2. *Comparison Tests on the Readings.*

For each of the issues discussed in the course, there are four readings to be completed. These are all found in the Course Pack. The topics with their readings are as follows:

Sexual orientation and gender identity

- Mark A. Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian*, ch. 1
- Mary Ann Tolbert, “Marriage and Friendship in the NT: Ancient Resources for Contemporary Same-Sex Unions”
- Assemblies of God, “Transgenderism, Transsexuality, and Gender Identity”
- Cheng, *Radical Love*, ch. 4

Due date: Thursday, Mar 21.

Christianity and the environment/ecotheology

- Lynn White, Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”
- Howard A. Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed*, ch. 4
- Brunner, Butler and Swoboda, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology*, ch. 6
- Sallie McFague, *A New Climate for Theology*, ch. 9

Due date: Wednesday, Mar 27.

The Church and indigenous peoples

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report* (selection)
- Cheryl Bear-Barnetson, *Introduction to First Nations Ministry*, ch. 2
- George Tinker, “Spirituality, Native American Personhood, Sovereignty and Solidarity”
- Bishop Mark MacDonald, “The Surprising and Improbable Mission of God among the Indigenous Peoples of Canada”

Due date: Tuesday, Apr 2.

Christianity and Islam

- Colin Chapman, *Cross and Crescent*, chs. 25, 29
- Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan et al., “A Common Word Between Us and You”
- World Evangelical Alliance response to “A Common Word”
- Phil Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism*, ch. 7

Due date: Saturday, Apr 6.

For each set of readings, students will write a short comparison test on Populi. Each test will contain five (5) long answer questions related to understanding, evaluating, and comparing the four readings under each topic. Students will have two (2) hours to complete each test; therefore, they should have done the readings prior to writing the test, but may refer to them during the test (i.e., open book). These tests will evaluate students’ ability to accurately describe and evaluate the issue at hand (see Learning Outcome #4), as well as to assess the use of the Bible and theological presuppositions in the readings (see Learning Outcome #2).

- Related learning outcome(s): #2 and #4.
- **Due dates:** Thursday, Mar 21; Wednesday, Mar 27; Tuesday, Apr 2; Saturday, Apr 6.

3. *Book Review.*

As a Christian leader, you will need to be able to carefully summarize and evaluate influential books related to burning issues in the Church and broader culture. For this assignment, you will *either* write a lengthy blog review of a book *or* record a YouTube-style video blog reviewing a book. Students may choose one of the following books to review:

Sexual orientation and gender identity

- Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*
- Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*
- Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*
- Austen Hartke, *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*

Christianity and the environment/ecotheology

- Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of The Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*
- Matthew Fox, *Creation Spirituality: Liberating Gifts for the Peoples of the Earth*

- Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril*

The Church and indigenous peoples

- Clare Sue Kidwell, ed., *A Native American Theology*
- Achiel Peelman, *Christ is a Native American*
- Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*
- Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*

Christianity and Islam

- Nabeel Qureshi, *No God But One: Allah or Jesus?*
- Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response*
- Nabeel Jabbour, *The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian*

Students are required to choose one of these books for review by the final day of class, in consultation with the professor. They are encouraged to choose a book related to the same issue on which they wish to develop a position paper! This will help their process as they move from description and evaluation toward articulating their own position on a topic.

If the student chooses to write a blog-style book review, it should be six (6) pages in length. If a video, it should be about eight (8) minutes in length. (The emphasis for the video option is not on the technology, but on the content of the review.) In either case, while less formal than a usual written book review, the student should still refer to specific chapters, pages, and statements of the author(s), and include the following elements. Whether a written blog or YouTube-style video, the book review should:

- a. identify the book's main argument(s) or position(s);
- b. summarize its contents;
- c. examine how the book makes use of, and/or fails to make use of, the Bible;
- d. identify the theological presuppositions present in the author's arguments, whether implicit or explicit; and,
- e. offer an appreciative and/or critical assessment based on (c) and (d)

As a Christian leader reviewing a book for the sake of their blog or YouTube audience, make sure to end with a recommendation for whether this book will help or hinder your audience's proper biblical evaluation of the topic.

This assignment focuses on the ability of students to assess the use of Scripture and theological judgments in a text at much greater length than the comparison tests (see Learning Outcome #2), and to accurately describe and evaluate issues of significant concern in church and academy (see Learning Outcome #4).

- Related learning outcome(s): #2 and #4.
- **Assignment Length:** 6 pages or 8 minutes. **Due date:** Friday, Apr 12.

4. Position Paper.

Denominations often develop position papers on various controversial or important topics to recommend their stance to their member churches. Students will draft and prepare a position paper on one of the issues covered in the course, as if for his or her denomination. This is not an

argumentative or research essay, but a statement of one’s theological position on a certain topic. Thus, it is not required that they will refer to sources other than the Bible, though reading other sources will, of course, help students in formulating their own thoughts. Where students merely summarize or quote other sources, however, they must be acknowledged; to do otherwise is plagiarism.

On the final day of class, students will have opportunity to meet one-on-one with the professor to discuss their position paper. Students will be expected to prepare a short draft of, or notes for, their paper for this meeting. There is no required length for the draft, but the more extensive the more helpful it will be to the student. In preparing, students should consider the following:

- a. What biblical texts are important for this issue?
- b. How do certain theological themes relate to this issue (e.g., creation, fall, redemption)?
- c. What is being said about this issue today?
- d. What do I want to say, based on the Bible?

Students will have time to revise and develop their draft into a full position paper after class. It will not be due until after their three guided annotations and book review, so students are encouraged to make use of these assignments to help with the final submission. The final paper will be about 4 pages (~1000 words) in length.

The position paper will be evaluated in two areas. First, on theological method: have students approached the issue in a biblical, evangelical, spiritual way (see Learning Outcome #1). Second, on the content of their statement: what biblical texts and theological themes do they make use of (see Learning Outcome #3).

- Related learning outcome(s): #1 and #3.
- **Assignment Length:** 4 pages. **Due date:** Friday, Apr 19.

Time Investment

	<i>Time (approx.)</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Pre-Module Reading	1.5 hours	Mar 11 (9AM)
Class Engagement	27.5 hours	n/a
Comparison Tests	32 hours	Mar 21, 27; Apr 2, 6
Book Review	30 hours	Apr 12
Position Paper	8 hours	Apr 19
Total	99 hours	

Assessment Rubrics

Rubrics for the assignments will be available on Populi under the Lesson called “T391 Assignment Rubrics.”

Tentative Class Schedule

Prior to Module Week

“Doing Theology that is Biblical, Evangelical and Spiritual” Readings:

- John Wesley, “Preface to the Sermons”
- Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology* (selection)
- Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology* (selection)

Module Week

- Mon 11 Mar Introduction
* Enter assignments into study calendar
Trends in contemporary theology lecture
Pre-Module Reading discussion
Lecture on theological method
- Tues 12 Mar **Sexual orientation and gender identity** videos and discussion
Discussion of position papers on sexual orientation and gender identity
Interview with a transgender person and written responses
Christianity and the environment / ecotheology videos and discussion
- Wed 13 Mar Lecture on creation, anthropology and eschatology
Discussion of position papers on Christianity and the environment
* **The Church and indigenous peoples** field trip with Cort Dogniez
Central Urban Métis Federation (315 Avenue M S, Saskatoon)
Office of the Treaty Commissioner (2553 Grasswood Rd #215, Corman
Park No. 344)
Debrief and travel back to Horizon
- Thurs 14 Mar Ecclesiology, mission and culture lecture
* Chapel
Christianity and Islam lecture on God, Christ, salvation and religion(s)
Christianity and Islam videos and discussion
- Fri 15 Mar Comparison of passages from the Bible and Qur’an
* Library instruction (*Bring your electronic devices to use the internet.*)
Concluding instructions
One-on-one meetings with the professor

Assignment Schedule

- Thurs Mar 21 Comparison Test on sexual orientation and gender identity readings
Wed Mar 27 Comparison Test on Christianity and the environment / ecotheology readings
Tues Apr 2 Comparison Test on the Church and indigenous peoples readings
Sat Apr 6 Comparison Test on Christianity and Islam readings
Fri Apr 12 Book Review
Fri Apr 19 Position paper & course evaluation

➤ First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after Friday, April 19.

Revision Week (Apr 22-25)

- Mon Apr 22 Resubmission of Comparison Tests (as necessary)

Tues Apr 23 Resubmission of Book Review (as necessary)
 Wed Apr 24 Resubmission of Position Paper (as necessary)
 Thurs Apr 25 Final resubmissions (as necessary)

- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after Thursday, April 25.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the Horizon [Format Guide](#) for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. Students requesting extensions are expected to contact their professors before the due date. Professors may grant extensions in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or a family emergency. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester.

A late assignment will not be assessed until the student first meets with the professor or the Faculty Assistant to discuss whether the student's reasons for the late submission are acceptable. Unexcused late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. Multiple instances of unexcused late submissions will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation, failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation.

Resubmission of Assignments

Students have until the Friday of revision week to submit revisions, and students can only submit up to two revisions for each assignment.

Horizon College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop the stated competencies, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of those competencies. Consequently, students do not earn overall "grades" on individual assignments. Instead, assessment focuses on measuring students' competency as outlined in the syllabus and assignment rubric. For purposes of transferability to other institutions, the final competency designations will be translated to a comparable letter grade on a traditional transcript. The tables below explain Horizon's approach:

Horizon CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding	Student exceeded competency requirements for some learning outcomes and met requirements for all remaining learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting		B+	3.3	77-79

		Student met competency requirements for all learning outcomes and may have exceeded in one.	B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

Students pass a course only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all* competency requirements for a course. If the student chooses not to meet all course competency requirements, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below on a traditional transcript.

BTM	Beginning to meet	Student was beginning to meet competency requirements for any one or more learning outcomes, and met or exceeded competency requirements for all other outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting	Student was not yet meeting competency requirements for one or more learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

Academic Honesty

Horizon uses the University of Saskatchewan definition of plagiarism described as “the presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter. Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person have no doubt which words or research results are the student’s and which are drawn from other sources” (Office of the University Secretary, 2012). Students are expected to give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the [Student Handbook](#).

Disability Services Information

If you have pre-existing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities that require accommodations, please contact the Academic or Student Life departments at the beginning of the course so that your learning and/or physical needs can be met appropriately. If any conditions arise during the course that you wish to disclose, please contact us as soon as possible. In all cases you will need to provide current documentation of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, please contact Bob Williamson, Dean of Students, at bwilliamson@horizon.edu; or Heather Wood, Associate Dean of Students, at hwood@horizon.edu.

Class Attendance

In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss one day of a module course or three days of class in a term or semester course without academic penalty. A student

must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. Students who are absent for more than the number of classes stated above will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Use of Technology

Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the Horizon College and Seminary grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.