



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

## **TS6209 Current Issues in Theology**

3 credits | Prerequisites: none.

March 8 - 12, 2021

Module

Monday – Friday, Times TBA

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### **Course 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 is demonstrated by skilled interpretation of scripture and evaluation of theological issues in order to articulate how to think, live, and minister in light of who God is, who God's people are, and God's purposes for the world.
- Contextual Awareness is demonstrated by a maturing orthodox Christian worldview, a healthy self-understanding, and engagement of people and cultures with wisdom and discernment.

#### **Course Competencies and Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Engage in theological reflection that is "biblical," "evangelical," and "spiritual."
  - *Assessment*: Content Test, Position Paper, Research Paper, Class Presentation
2. Assess the use of the Bible and theological presuppositions in theological texts.
  - *Assessment*: Research Paper, Class Presentation
3. Develop and articulate their 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:* Content Test, Research Paper, Class Presentation

## **Course Work**

### **Required Readings**

Course pack (available on Populi)

\*\*While students have the benefit of accessing their textbooks online through the Digital Theological Library, they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library. For your convenience, Horizon has partnered with Kennedy's Parable to provide textbooks.

### **Course Assignments and Activities**

#### **BEFORE THE MODULE**

##### 1. *Pre-Course Reading.*

Read the materials in the course pack in their entirety.

- **Due date:** Mar 8 at 9am.

#### **DURING THE MODULE**

##### 2. *Class Presentation (15%)*

This is a presentation (individual or small group) on a topic related to gender/sexuality (e.g., gender equality, homosexuality, transgenderism). Review the cultural issues and how they impact the church, then examine the relevant biblical passages that can inform a Christian response.

- Related learning outcomes: #1, #2, #4
- **Assignment Length:** 15 minutes. **Due date:** March 11 or 12, 2021.

#### **AFTER THE MODULE**

##### 3. *Content Test (25%)*

A short-answer, open book online test covering course content in lectures, videos, and required reading.

- Related learning outcome(s): # 1, # 4.
- **Assignment Length:** 15-20 questions with point form or brief paragraph length responses. **Due date:** Mar 19, 2021.

##### 4. *Position Paper on one of the course focus topics (20%)*

This essay, as if for one's denomination, is not an argumentative or research essay, but a statement of one's theological position. Introduce the issue and explain why a position paper is necessary. Consider what biblical texts are important for this issue and how evangelical

theological themes relate to it. Consider what contemporary culture and contemporary Christianity say about this issue and articulate what your position is. The paper may be written in point form, and it is helpful to engage with two to four sources, including other position papers. It will be evaluated on the basis of content - biblical texts and theological themes used to support the position, as well as contemporary culture, and approach – consideration of biblical, evangelical, and spiritual issues. There is a rubric under “Lessons” to guide you in this assignment.

- Related learning outcome(s): # 1, # 3
- **Assignment Length:** 1000 words. **Due date:** April 1, 2021.

#### 5. *Research Paper (40%)*

An academic paper on a topic of your choice related to any of the current issues discussed but must be different from the topic of the position paper. Consider a challenging question to address. Identify the primary issue(s), consider arguments on various sides of the problem, consider biblical, evangelical, and spiritual aspects of the problem, consider the context of Church and culture, and argue for or against a side of the issue. The essay should engage 8-10 academic sources and demonstrate critical thinking. Note that, although the immediate context may be pastoral, the essay is primarily theological. Essays are evaluated on the basis of adequate content, clear argumentation, and original thinking. There is a rubric under “Lessons” to guide you in this assignment.

Examples:

- Should Pentecostal leaders be active in the environmental movement? Why? How?
  - A church member approaches you, their leader, stating that they are attracted to someone of the same sex as them and asks for your advice – how would you respond?
  - How does a biblical understanding of sexuality inform our current Christian response to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity?
  - Do you think that prosperity teaching is helpful or harmful to most Christians?
  - How should the church treat people with disabilities? Should this be different from the way secular society treats such people?
  - A woman approaches you, her pastor, saying that she thinks her husband is abusing her sexually but that the Bible teaches that her body belongs to him. How do you respond?
  - A couple whose child just died of cancer comes to you for pastoral counseling. They are angry at God for “taking their child away.” How might an open and relational perspective help them?
- Related learning outcomes: #1, #2, #4
  - **Assignment Length:** 3000 words. **Due date:** May 3, 2021.

#### **Assessment Rubrics**

Rubrics for the course will be available on Populi by the first day of class under the Lesson “TS6209 Assessment Rubrics” for the Position Paper and the Research Paper. Traditional course grades will still be given for each assignment.

## **Course Outline / Class Schedule**

### **Monday March 8**

AM: Introduction/Overview

- Course overview
- Issues in contemporary theology, approaches to Christianity and culture, approaches to the Bible, worldviews, contextual theology
- Lecture, class discussion

PM: Open and Relational Theologies

- Key issues, review and discussion of biblical texts, pastoral/practical implications
- Lecture, video, class discussion

### **Tuesday March 9**

AM: The Science-Faith Dialogue

- Varying approaches, key issues
- Lecture, in-class readings, meet with seminary students

PM: Climate Change/Creation Care/Ecotheology

- Key issues, facts and figures, definitions, position statements
- Lecture, video, mock debate

### **Wednesday March 10**

AM: Prosperity Theology

- Key issues, examples, concerns
- Lecture, video

PM: Disability Theology

- Key issues, definitions, pastoral responses
- Lecture, video, role plays

### **Thursday March 11**

AM: Overview of Gender/Sexuality

- Key issues, definitions, biblical anthropology
- Lecture, seminary student presentations

PM: LGBTQ Issues in Christianity

- Homosexuality, varying views, transgender, position statements
- Lecture, video, role plays, seminary student presentations

### **Friday March 12**

AM: Gender issues

- Gender roles, relevant biblical texts, Christian feminism, sexual abuse in church
- Lecture, seminary student presentations

PM: Q&A, library presentation, individual meetings with students

## **Academic Policies**

### **General Guidelines for the Submission of Written Work**

#### *Formatting Papers*

- Papers should be typed, double-spaced and follow the appropriate formatting guidelines (e.g. 1 inch margins).
- Follow the [Horizon Format Guide](#) consistently.
- The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded and will receive a grade reduction.

Failure to follow these guidelines warrants a grade reduction.

#### *Submitting Your Assignments*

Assignments should be submitted via [Populi](#). The resource at this link

<https://support.populiweb.com/hc/en-us/articles/223792507-How-to-submit-work-for-assignments> explains how to submit assignments on Populi (the link to the video is also available on the info tab of the Populi course page).

### **Late Assignments and Extensions**

All assignments are due when stated by the professor or, if not specified, within 8 weeks after the first day of class. Please contact the professor well in advance if you would like to request an adjustment to any of your due dates. A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 days late, penalty of 20%. After six days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0.

### **Grading**

Grade	Percentage	GPA
A+	97-100%	4
A	93-96%	4
A-	90-92%	3.7
B+	87-89%	3.3
B	83-86%	3.0
B-	80-82%	2.7
C+	77-79%	2.3
C	73-76%	2.0
C-	70-72%	1.7
D+	67-79%	1.3
D	63-66%	1.0
D-	60-62%	0.7
F	<60%	0

### **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 College [Student Handbook](#).

### **Disability Services Information**

If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to pre-existing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, contact the Academic or Student Life departments at the beginning of the course. Horizon will work to meet your learning and/or physical needs where possible. 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, contact Bob Williamson, Dean of Students, at [bwilliamson@horizon.edu](mailto:bwilliamson@horizon.edu); Heather Wood, Associate Dean of Students, at [hwood@horizon.edu](mailto:hwood@horizon.edu); or Leanne Bellamy, Academic Coach, at [lbellamy@horizon.edu](mailto:lbellamy@horizon.edu).

### **Class Attendance**

Students should attend all classes in order to optimize their learning experience. 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.

### **Campus Health Policy**

While on campus, please maintain 2 metres of physical distance between yourself and others. Do not come on campus if you are experiencing symptoms (even if they are mild) of fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, runny nose, or a loss of your sense of taste or smell. If you have any of these symptoms, do not return to campus until advised by Public Health. You should self-isolate and contact HealthLine 811 for advice on whether you should be tested for COVID-19. This will help keep others safe and possibly spare them from self-isolation and testing. While you are in self-isolation, you may attend class online. The link to access your class is posted on the course page on Populi, under the Syllabus tab, under Links on the right side of the page.

### **Live-Streaming Etiquette**

If attending class online via live-stream, keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise, and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

### **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.

## Select Bibliography

### Overviews

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Smith, David L. *Theologies of the 21st Century: Trends in Contemporary Theology*. Wipf and Stock, 2014.

### Contextual Theology/Worldview

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Orbis, 1992.

Cortez, Marc. *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*. T&T Clark, 2010.

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### Open and Relational Theology

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### **Prosperity Theology**

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### **Disability Theology**

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### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

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### **Gender Roles**

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### **Creation Care/Climate Change**

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