

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

T491 Current Issues in Theology

3 Credits. Prerequisites: T220 Theology I and T221 Theology II

♣ On Campus 'A' Live-Stream ■ Video on Demand

March 6-10, 2023 Module D Monday-Friday, 9AM-4PM Ewen Butler, PhD. ewen@ewenbutler.ca

Please note: This course includes reading before the module.

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 evaluate these issues from a biblical and evangelical Christian perspective and develop their own theologically-informed responses to these trends. The key topics of discussion will vary.

Focus topics for this term include open and relational theology, climate change and creation care, disability studies, the prosperity Gospel, LGTBQ issues, and gender issues.

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

- 2. Assess the use of the Bible and theological presuppositions in theological texts.
 - Assessment: Book Review
- **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, Book Review

Course Work

Required Readings

Open and Relational Theologies

Basinger, David. "Practical Implications." In Pinnock, Clark H., et al. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, 155-76. Downers Grove: IVP, 1994.

The Science-Faith Dialogue

Warren, E. Janet. "Pneuma and Pneumonia: Reconsidering the Relationship between Spiritual and Medical Healing." *Fuller Magazine* 11 (2018) 36–41.

https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/pneuma-and-pneumonia-reconsidering-the-relationship-between-spiritual-and-medical-healing/.

Creation Care/Eco-theology

Ackerman, Thomas P. "Christian Action in the Face of Climate Change." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 66.4 (2014) 242–47. https://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2014/PSCF12-14Ackerman.pdf

Deane-Drummond, Celia. *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017. Ch 1: Ecotheology: A Map, 1–17.

Prosperity Theology

Bowler, Catherine. *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Conclusion, 226–37.

LGBTQ Issues in Christianity

Beilby, James K. and Eddy, Paul Rhodes. *Understanding Transgender Identities*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. Understanding Transgender Experiences and Identities: An Introduction, 10-66. Available here on the DTL.

Yarhouse, Mark A. *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. Chapter 1: What Does God Think About Homosexuality, 17–36 (no pages in online version).

Gender Issues

Giles, Kevin. "Complementarian Theology in Crisis." In *Eyes to See And Ears to Hear Women:* Sexual Assault as a Crisis of Evangelical Theology, edited by Tim Krueger, Jeff Miller, and Mitch Randall, 59-81. Minneapolis, MN: CBE International, 2018.

**While students have the benefit of accessing their textbooks online through the <u>Digital Theological Library</u>, 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

Portfolio Components. *Position Paper*. This assignment must be edited for inclusion in your e-portfolio. It will be added to the Biblical and Theological Literacy *e-project* when you enroll in a Portfolio lab. See the Portfolio Guide for further information.

BEFORE THE MODULE

1. Pre-Module Reading.

Students will read the following assigned readings before the module:

• Warren, Ackerman, Bowler, Yarhouse, Giles.

The readings will help to establish the broad context of what theology is, and the kind of theology that we need to be doing. They will permit reflection and class engagement that is "biblical" "evangelical," and "spiritual." More specifically, they will help to lay the foundation for practicing that theology in relation to current issues. Confirm your completion of the reading on Populi. The articles and chapters are available on Populi.

• **Due date:** Mar 6, 2023 at 9am.

AFTER THE MODULE

2. Content Test.

A short-answer, open book online test covering course content in lectures, videos, and required reading. Students are to be sure to complete the remainder of the required reading before taking the test. The test will consist of 25 questions with point form or brief paragraph length responses and will evaluate biblical and theological competency and the level of understanding of current theologically related issues that concern the contemporary church.

- Related learning outcomes: #1, #4
- **Due date:** Mar 23, 2023.
- **Time limit:** 4 hours.

3. Position Paper (Choose one of the course focus topics)

This paper, 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 the issue and articulate your own position. Explain how your position relates to Christian spirituality. It will be helpful to engage with two to four sources, including other position papers. The paper will be evaluated on the basis of its content: biblical texts and theological themes used to support the position and whether the contemporary culture and the wider church approach have been taken into consideration.

• Related learning outcome: #1, #3

• **Assignment length:** 1000-1200 words.

• **Due date:** April 1, 2023.

4. Book Review

A critical review of a book related to ONE of the course topics that must be a different topic from that of the position paper. It may be chosen from the bibliography or self-selected with prior approval from instructor. Identify the book's main argument(s) or position(s) and summarize its content (approximately one-third of the review). Consider how the author uses (or fails to use) the Bible, identify the theological presuppositions present in the author's arguments, whether implicit or explicit, and comment on whether the author's position is evangelical or not and why. Explain how the book's topic is relevant for contemporary Christian engagement with culture. Finally, offer an appreciative and/or critical assessment and a recommendation for whether this book will help or hinder your audience's proper biblical evaluation of the topic. This assignment will be evaluated on the basis of clarity, thoughtful evaluation, theological reflection, and awareness of contextual issues in contemporary Christianity.

• Related learning outcome: #2, #4

• **Assignment length:** 1000-1200 words.

• **Due date:** April 12, 2023.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is being offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have **same and different assignment due dates** as inclass students. Adjusted due dates include:
 - o Content Test: due March 31 at 11:59PM
 - o Position Paper: due April 3 at 11:59PM
- Students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from one full day of the module according to the schedule below. VOD students will submit a 250-word report to Populi that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording 2) summarizes one thing you learned that week that will help you reach the

course learning outcomes, and 3) explain at least one question you had after watching the class recording.

- o Day 1 Lectures and Report: March 10 at 11:59PM
- o Day 2 Lectures and Report: March 14 at 11:59PM
- o Day 3 Lectures and Report: March 18 at 11:59PM
- o Day 4 Lectures and Report: March 22 at 11:59PM
- o Day 5 Lectures and Report: March 26 at 11:59PM
- In order to pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly submissions. These submissions are marked are pass/fail based on whether or not they demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the lecture content and in-class activities.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

		3 3/
Classroom time	30 hours	N/A
1. Pre-Module Reading	5 hours	March 6 at 9am
2. Content Test	14 hours	March 23
3. Position Paper	15 hours	April 1
4. Book Review	30 hours	April 12
Total =	94 hours	

Assessment Rubrics

Rubrics will be available at the beginning of class on Populi under the Lesson "T491 Assessment Rubrics."

COURSE OUTLINE/CLASS SCHEDULE (*subject to change)

Monday March 6

AM: Overview/Background/Context

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

PM: Open and Relational Theologies

• Key issues, review and discussion of biblical texts, pastoral/practical implications

Tuesday March 7

AM: The Science-Faith Dialogue

• Varying approaches, key issues

PM: Climate Change/Creation Care/Eco-theology

• Key issues, facts and figures, definitions, position statements

Wednesday, March 8

AM: Prosperity Theology

• Key issues, examples, concerns

PM Overview of Gender/Sexuality

- Key issues, definitions, biblical anthropology
- Seminary student presentations

Thursday, March 9

AM: Overview of Gender/Sexuality (cont'd)

*10:50am-12:20pm—Chapel

PM: LGBTQ Issues in Christianity

- Homosexuality, varying views, transgender, position statements
- Seminary student presentations

Friday March 10

AM: Gender issues

• Gender roles, relevant biblical texts, Christian feminism, sexual abuse in church

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

• First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after **April 14, 2023**.

Date	Revisions Due
Monday, April 17, 2023	Resubmissions of Content Test and Position Paper (as
	necessary)
Tuesday, April 18, 2023	Resubmissions of <i>Book Review</i> (as necessary)
Wednesday. April 19, 2023	Secondary Resubmissions
Thursday, April 20, 2023	Additional Resubmissions

• No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after April 20, 2023.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the Horizon <u>Format Guide</u> 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. To submit extension requests, students must submit the <u>Assignment Extension Request Form online</u> and *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.

Unexcused late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late or if a student incurs multiple instances of unexcused late submissions, it will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation,

failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline.

Resubmission of Assignments

Students have until the last day of revision week to submit revisions. Students can generally submit up to two revisions for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward achieving competency.

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 more than 40% of the 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
		Student met competency requirements	B+	3.3	77-79
M	Meeting	for all learning outcomes and may have	В	3.0	73-76
		exceeded in 40% or less.	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	C+	2.3	67-69
		or more learning outcomes, and met or exceeded competency requirements for all other outcomes.	C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
	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 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; Jessie Lysholm, Associate Dean of Students, at jlysholm@horizon.edu; or Leanne Bellamy, Academic Coach, at jlbellamy@horizon.edu.

Class Attendance

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or through live-streaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. 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. 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.

Live-Streaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through live-streaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While live-streaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via live-stream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. 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 (*indicates suitable for book review)

Overviews

Olson, Roger E. *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction*. IVP Academic, 2013.

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. Niebuhr, H. Richard. Christ and Culture. Harper & Brothers, 1951.

Walsh, Brian and Middleton, Richard. The Transforming Vision. IVP, 1984.

Wolters, Albert M. Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview. Eerdmans, 1985, 2005.

Open and Relational Theology

*Boyd, Gregory. God of the Possible. Baker, 2000.

*Boyd, Gregory. Is God to Blame? IVP. 2003.

*Oord, Thomas J. The Uncontrolling Love of God. IVP, 2015.

*Oord, Thomas J. God Can't: How to Believe in God and Love after Tragedy, Abuse, and Other Evils. Sacrasage Press, 2019.

Pinnock, Clark H., Rice, R., Sanders, J., Hasker, W., & Basinger, D. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God.* IVP, 1994.

- *Pinnock, Clark H. Most Moved Mover. Baker, 2001.
- *Rice, Richard. The Future of Open Theism: From Antecedents to Opportunities. IVP, 2020.
- *Sanders, John. The God Who Risks. IVP, 1998.
- *Ware, Bruce. God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism. Crossway, 2000.

Science and Faith Dialogue

- Barbour, Ian G. Religion and Science. Harper, 1997.
- Stump, J. B. Science and Christianity: An Introduction to the Issues. Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

Creation Care/Climate Change

- *Bell, Colin. Creation Care and the Gospel: Reconsidering the Mission of the Church. Hendrickson, 2016.
- *Bouma-Prediger, Steven. For the Beauty of The Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care. Baker, 2001, 2010.
- *Brunner, Daniel, Jennifer Butler and A. J. Swoboda. *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis*. Baker, 2014.
- *Deane-Drummond, Celia. A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth. Wipf and Stock, 2017.
- *Johnson, Elizabeth A. Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril. Orbis, 2018.
- *McFague, Sallie. A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming. Fortress, 2008.
- *Snyder, Howard. Salvation Means Creation Healed: Overcoming the Divorce between Heaven and Earth. Cascade, 2011.
- *Veldman, Robin Globus. *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change*. University of California Press, 2019.
- *Wilkinson, Katherine. Between God and Green: How Evangelicals Are Cultivating A Middle Ground on Climate Change. Oxford, 2012.

Prosperity Theology

- *Attanasi, K., Yong, A. (eds) *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement*: Springer, 2012.
- *Bowler, Kate. *Blessed, A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*; Oxford University Press, 2013.
- *Fortner, Michael D. *The Prosperity Gospel Exposed: And Other False Doctrines*. Create Space Publishing, 2011.
- *Hill, Edward. *Prosperous Christians: 10 Commandments of Godly Prosperity*. Best Seller Publishing, 2019.
- *Hinn, Costi. God, Greed, and the (Prosperity) Gospel: How Truth Overwhelms a Life Built on Lies. Zondervan, 2019.
- *Jones, David and Russell Woodbridge. *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* Kregel, 2010.
- *Mumford, Debra J. *Exploring Prosperity Preaching: Biblical Health, Wealth and Wisdom.* Judson Press, 2012.

*Osteen, Joel. Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential. Faithwords, 2004.

Disability Theology

- *Brock, Brian. Wondrously Wounded: Theology, Disability and the Body of Christ. Baylor, 2019.
- *Creamer, Deborah Beth. *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- *Gaventa, William. Disability and Spirituality: Recovering Wholeness. Baylor, 2018.
- *Melcher, Sarah J., Mikeal C. Parsons, and Amos Yong (eds.). *The Bible and Disability: A Commentary*. Baylor, 2017.
- *Reinders, Hans S. Disability, Providence and Ethics: Bridging Gaps, Transforming Lives. Baylor, 2014.
- *Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Brazos Press, 2008.
- *Yong, Amos. *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*. Baylor, 2007.
- *Yong, Amos. *The Bible, Disability, and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God.* Eerdmans, 2011.

LGTBQ Issues

- *Balch, David. Homosexuality, Science and the "Plain Sense" of Scripture. Eerdmans, 2000.
- *Branch, J. Alan. Affirming God's Image: Addressing the Transgender Question with Science and Scripture. Lexham Press, 2019.
- *DeFranza, Megan K. Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God. Eerdmans, 2015.
- *Hartke, Austen. *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*. Westminster John Knox. 2018.
- *Hill, Wesley. Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality. Zondervan, 2016.
- *Thatcher, Adrian. God, Sex and Gender: An Introduction. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- *Vines, Matthew. God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships. Convergent, 2014.
- *Yarhouse, Mark. Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends.
 - Bethany House, 2010.
- *Yarhouse, Mark. Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture. IVP, 2015.

Gender Roles

- *English de Almina, Margaret and Lois Olena (eds). Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry: Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church and Ministry. Brill, 2016.
- *Giles, Kevin. What the Bible Actually Teaches about Women. Cascade Books, 2018.
- *Giles, Kevin. The Headship of Men and the Abuse of Women. Cascade Books, 2020.
- *Matthews, Alice. Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught about Men and Women in the Church. Zondervan, 2017.

- *Padgett, Alan G. As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission. Baker Academic, 2011.
- *Piper, John and Wayne A. Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway Books, 1991.
- *Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart. Gender and Grace. IVP, 1990.
- *Webb, William J. Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis. IVP, 2001.
- *Westfall, Cynthia Long. Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ. Baker, 2016.