



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

## **TS6209 Current Issues in Theology**

3 credits. Prerequisites: none.

👤 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 substantial reading and preparation work 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 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**

#### **Background/Context**

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Faith and Culture series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992. Chapter 3: The Notion and Use of Models, 23-29.

Olson, Roger E. *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013. Intro: The Cultural Context of Modern Theology, 17 -30.

Walsh, Brian and Richard Middleton. *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1984. Chapter 2: Analyzing Worldviews, 31–39.

#### **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.

Sanders, John. “An Introduction to Open Theism.” *Reformed Review* 60.2 (Spring 2007) 34-50.  
<https://repository.westernsem.edu/pkp/index.php/rr/article/view/1586>.

#### **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/Ecotheology**

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**

Attanasi, Katherine. “Introduction: The Plurality of Prosperity Theologies and Pentecostalism.” In *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic*

*Movement*, edited by Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong, 1-12. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

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 [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-Module Reading.**

Students should read most, if not all of the course pack, before the week of the module. 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. Please confirm the amount of reading you finished on Populi.

- **Due date:** Mar 6, 2023 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, and #4.
- **Assignment length:** 15 minutes.
- **Due date:** March 9 or 10, 2023.

## **AFTER THE MODULE**

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

A short-answer, open book online test covering course content in lectures, videos, and required reading. Students are to be sure to complete ALL 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 and #4.
- **Due date:** Mar 23, 2023.
- **Time limit:** 4 hours.

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

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 what 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 outcomes: #1 and #3.
- **Assignment length:** 1000-1200 words.
- **Due date:** April 1, 2023.

### **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 research. Identify the primary issue(s), consider arguments on various sides of the problem, biblical, evangelical, and spiritual aspects of the issue, examine the context of Church and culture, and argue for or against a perspective on the issue. The essay should engage 8-10 academic sources and demonstrate critical thinking. Please note: 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.

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?
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- Related learning outcomes: #1, #2, and #4.
  - **Assignment length:** 2500-3000 words.
  - **Due date:** April 28, 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 in-class students. Adjusted due dates include:
  - Class Presentation: due March 30 at 11:59PM (\*submit a YouTube link to Populi of your presentation. You can create a free YouTube account, and then set the video to “Unlisted.”)
  - Content Test: due April 6 at 11:59PM
  - Position Paper: due April 14 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) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
  - Day 1 Lectures and Report: March 10 at 11:59PM
  - Day 2 Lectures and Report: March 14 at 11:59PM
  - Day 3 Lectures and Report: March 18 at 11:59PM
  - Day 4 Lectures and Report: March 22 at 11:59PM
  - 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 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)

Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	Assignment Weighting
1. Pre-Module Reading	17 hrs	March 6 at 9am	N/A
2. Class Presentation	10 hrs	March 9 or 10	15%
3. Content Test	6 hrs	March 23	25%
3. Position Paper	15 hrs	April 1	20%
4. Research Paper	42 hrs	April 28	40%
Total =		~120 hrs	

**COURSE OUTLINE/CLASS SCHEDULE (tentative)****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

- Assignments will not be accepted after *May 1, 2023*.

## 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	Descriptor
A+	97-100%	4	Exceptional
A	93-96%	4	Excellent
A-	90-92%	3.7	Excellent
B+	87-89%	3.3	Good
B	83-86%	3.0	Good
B-	80-82%	2.7	Good
C+	77-79%	2.3	Satisfactory
C	73-76%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	70-72%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	67-79%	1.3	Minimal Pass
D	63-66%	1.0	Minimal Pass
D-	60-62%	0.7	Minimal Pass

F	<60%	0	Failure
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### **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 Seminary [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); Jessie Lysholm, Associate Dean of Students, at [jlysholm@horizon.edu](mailto:jlysholm@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 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 full 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*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1994.

Pinnock, Clark H. *Most Moved Mover*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Rice, Richard. *The Future of Open Theism: From Antecedents to Opportunities*. IVP, 2020. Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks*. IVP, 1998.

### **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.

Hinn, Costi. *God, Greed, and the (Prosperity) Gospel: How Truth Overwhelms a Life Built on Lies*. Zondervan, 2019.

Jones, David. *Health, Wealth & Happiness*. Kregel, 2010.

Mumford, Debra J. *Exploring Prosperity Preaching: Biblical Health, Wealth and Wisdom*. Judson Press, 2012.

### **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 University Press, 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.

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

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

Hill, Wesley. *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality*. Zondervan, 2016.

Thatcher, Adrian. *God, Sex and Gender: An Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

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.

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.

### **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.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. Our Sunday Visitor, 2015.

Snyder, Howard. *Salvation Means Creation Healed: Overcoming the Divorce between Heaven and Earth*. Cascade, 2011.

Wilkinson, Katherine. *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals Are Cultivating A Middle Ground on Climate Change*. Oxford, 2012.

