






## T101 Introduction to Theology

3 credits. Prerequisites: none.

 Mississauga Campus  Live-Stream  Video on Demand

September 16 – December 20, 2024

Fall Semester

Tuesdays, 10:00am – 1:00pm (ET)

8:00am-11:00am (SK) \*Time changes to 9am (SK) mid-semester

Rev. Cheryl Ritskes, MTS

[cheryl.ritskes@mcs.edu](mailto:cheryl.ritskes@mcs.edu)

### Course Goals

#### Course Description

This foundational course introduces students to the study of God, also known as theology. Students will learn the value of theology, survey and understand the biblical basis for traditional Christian beliefs as outlined in the Apostles' Creed, and develop basic skills in reading theology.

#### Relationship to MCS-Horizon's Mission

This course will help students gain a foundational understanding of historic Christian belief as well as its significance for Christian life and ministry.

#### Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



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

- 1) Analyze and interpret first-year-level theological texts.
  - Assessment: Reading Theology
- 2) Identify and define key theological terms.
  - Assessment: Theology Tests
- 3) Explain the historical doctrinal consensus of the Christian Church and its theological basis.
  - Assessment: Theology Tests
- 4) Compare and contrast historic Christian belief with other beliefs in Canadian society, including the major world religions.
  - Assessment: Belief Response, Theology Tests



To demonstrate competency in *Spiritual Maturity* students will:

- 5) Explain the importance of theology for ministry and Christian life.
  - Assessment: Value of Theology Reflection
- 6) Assess how they have matured by studying theology.
  - Assessment: Theology Tests

## Course Work

### Required Resources

Bird, Michael F. *What Christians Ought to Believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Through the Apostles Creed*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. (ISBN: 9780310520924)

DTL: <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/953170313>

McKim, Donald K. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. 2nd edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014. (ISBN: 978-0664238353). **\*\*Note 2nd edition.**

DTL: <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/880878468>

\*\*While students have the benefit of accessing many of 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

#### 1. *Reading Theology: Orientating Analysis and Content Analysis* – 25%

Throughout the course you will develop your skills in reading theology as you read through your textbook, *What Christians Ought to Believe*. The professor will provide you with critical questions that will help you analyze the logic and meaning of theological writing. Answers should be submitted in point form. This assignment has two aspects:

- 1) Orienting analysis. This will be completed near the beginning of the course.
  - 2) Content analysis. Throughout the course you will analyze the content of chapters 4-14 in your textbook. This analysis will help you become more familiar with the historical doctrinal consensus of the church. It will also help you gain the knowledge you need for the theology tests.
- Be sure to:
    - Answer all questions provided in the assignment templates.
    - Answers should be submitted in point form and single-spaced.
    - Indicate page numbers (in parenthesis) where evidence is found. No bibliography is necessary.
    - Follow the [MCS-Horizon Format Guide](#).
  - Related learning outcome: 1
  - **Assignment length:** 1-2 pages for each chapter.
  - **Due dates:** Orienting Analysis = Sept 20; Content Analysis = Sept 30; Oct 11; Nov 12

#### 2. *Theology Tests* – 50%

- To prepare for each of the three tests, students will read and analyze the textbook (see assignment 1). In *all tests* you will explain and justify historic Christian doctrines. In addition, on the *third test* you also will write out or say the Apostles' Creed, explain or identify key theological terms, compare and contrast the beliefs of major world religions with Christian belief, and reflect on how you have matured in your theology during this course. The professor will provide you with a study guide in a lesson on Populi. Resubmissions for Test 1 and 2 will take place in the middle of the term, rather than during revision week.

- Be sure to:
  - Complete the closed-book tests on Populi.
- Related learning outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 6
- **Assignment length:** 4 hours.
- **Due dates:** October 18; November 15; December 12

### 3. *Value of Theology Reflection – 10%*

In this reflection assignment, you will articulate why theology is valuable. To prepare for this assignment you will first interview (in person, phone, or video messenger [no emails/ no texting]) at least two pastors, and ask them about why theology is valuable for

- the health of the church
- their personal life
- their ministry/vocation
- Christian service in and for the world.

There is no specific list of questions. Instead, use the list above to guide your interviews. After the interviews, you will report on your findings from your interview during an in-class discussion of the topic. In your assignment submission you can draw on your interviews, class discussion, and your own personal experience. (For this assignment only, no citations are necessary unless you are quoting something.) Your assignment should *not* be a report on or a summary of your interviews. Instead, in your reflection you will describe at least five reasons that *you* think theology is valuable and five examples that illustrate these reasons. For each reason, briefly indicate how the course helped you to come to these conclusions (e.g., something specific from the class discussion, from the interviews, etc.).

- Be sure to:
  - Follow the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
  - To save space, introduce and conclude your assignment with only a sentence rather than whole paragraphs.
  - Either write a 500-700 word reflection paper (about 2 pages) or submit a 5-6 minute video reflection (submit a link to wherever you upload the video). For the video option, you will still hand in at least one page of notes formatted into an outline that will guide your presentation.
  - If written, include a word count after your conclusion.
  - Regardless of which option you choose, on your title page of your paper or notes you will indicate 1) the date of the interviews, 2) the names of the 2+ people interviewed, 3) their designations (job titles), 4) the name of their churches.
- Related learning outcome: 5
- **Assignment length:** 500-700 words or a 5-6 minute video with 1+ page of notes in an outline.
- **Due date:** November 12 (in-class interview report); November 26 (reflection due)

### 4. *Belief Response – 15%*

This assignment is meant to help you understand and appreciate how Christian belief differs from other beliefs in Canadian society and how belief affects values, goals, attitudes, and behaviors. Using a survey prepared by the professor (found on Populi), you will interview three people of your choice who do not consider themselves Christians in order to discover what the interviewees believe about matters of ultimate importance and why and how these beliefs affect their daily life. You might make a trip to a local university or college, go to the mall,

interviewing non-Christian friends or family, calling a religious place of worship, etc. Take careful notes at, or soon after, each interview. You have two options for completing this assignment: either write a paper (1200-1500 words = about 4 pages), or submit a 10-12 minute video response (submit a link to wherever you upload the video). For the video option, you will still hand in at least two pages of notes formatted into an outline that will guide your presentation. Regardless of which option you choose, your response has two parts, which should each be half of your response:

- 1) Summarize your findings and your reactions. What data from the interviews stands out to you and why? Are there common themes that emerge from the responses? Are there exceptions among the responses? Or do the responses contain different answers? Are beliefs worked out in practical ways? If so, how? What surprised you?
  - 2) Compare (points of agreement) and contrast (differences) historic Christian belief with the beliefs that you encountered during your surveys. You should also explain the theological basis for historic Christian belief and how this belief does and should affect your life in practical ways (e.g., What does this mean for how you live? Interact with others? Interact with creation? Make decisions? Spend your money?, etc.).
- Be sure to:
    - Follow the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
    - Include a statement on the title page affirming that you interviewed at least 3 people who were not Christians and when the interviews happened.
    - In your notes or paper, draw on and cite (via footnotes) both the textbook and class discussion. Include at least 5 footnotes (total). No bibliography is necessary.
    - Include 2 parts: The first half summarizes your findings and reactions, and the second half discusses historic Christian belief in relation to your findings.
    - If written, include the word count after the conclusion.
  - Related learning outcome: 4
  - **Assignment length:** 1200-1500 words (about 4 pages), or a 10-12 minute video with 2+ pages of notes in an outline that includes footnotes.
  - **Due date:** December 3, 2024

### **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 *some different assignment due dates* from in-class students.
  - Reading Theology: Orienting Analysis, Monday, September 30
  - All remaining assignments do *not* have adjusted due dates and are due on the dates indicated below.
- Each week, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from that week's classes.
  - By Saturday at 11:59 pm each week, VOD students will submit a 2-3 minute video report where they will 1) affirm they have watched the required recording for the last seven days, 2) summarize one thing they learned that week that will help them reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explain at least one question they had after watching the class recording. Videos may be shared with students in class.

- In order to pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly reports. These submissions are subject to the late assignment policy and are marked as 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)

			Assignment Weighting
Classroom time	29 hrs	n/a	n/a
2. Reading Theology Orienting Analysis Content Analysis	30 hrs	Sept 20 (VOD Sept 30) Sept 30; Oct 11; Nov 12	25%
3. Theology Tests	16 hrs	Oct 18; Nov 15; Dec 12	50%
4. Value of Theology Reflection	6 hrs	Nov 12 (in-class interview report) Nov 26 (reflection due)	10%
5. Belief Response	10 hrs	Dec 3	15%
TOTAL =	91 hours		

**Assessment Rubrics**

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi under each assignment.

**Class & Reading Schedule**

✘**Note:** Reading Theology Content Analysis is due with each reading from chapters 4-14.

Date	Class Topics	Reading and Assignments Due
Tues 17 Sept	Intro to the Course (& write due dates in calendar); Reading Theology Well	<b>Orienting Analysis</b>
Tues 24 Sept	Invitation to Theology; Reading Theology Well Part 2 (& discuss survey questions)	<b>Ch. 1-3</b>
Tues 1 Oct	Invitation to Theology Part 2;	<b>Ch. 4✘ Content Analysis</b>
Tues 8 Oct	“...In God the Father...Jesus Christ...the Holy Spirit” (Trinity); “God the Father Almighty...”;	<b>Ch. 5-9✘ Content Analysis</b>
Tues 15 Oct	“Creator of Heaven and Earth”; Test 1 Review	<b>Test 1</b>
Tues 22 Oct	“In Jesus Christ”; “Crucified, died, and was buried”	
Tues 29 Oct	No Class: Reading Week	
Tues 5 Nov	No Class: Module Week	

Tues 12 Nov	Pastoral Interview Discussions (Value of Theology); Test 2 Review	<b>Ch. 10-14</b> <b>Content Analysis</b> <b>Test 2</b>
Tues 19 Nov	“He rose again”; “Seated at the right hand of the Father”	
Tues 26 Nov	“I believe in the Holy Spirit”; “The holy catholic Church”	<b>Value of Theology Reflection</b> <i>Revisions for Test 1 (as necessary)</i>
Tues 3 Dec	“The forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting”; Test 3 Review	<b>Belief Response</b>
Tues 10 Dec	Christianity Compared to Other World Religions; Course Evaluation	<i>Revisions for Test 2 (as necessary)</i>
<b>*Thurs 12 Dec</b>		<b>Test 3</b>

- **\*\*October 28<sup>th</sup> - November 9<sup>th</sup> – No Classes – Reading Week/Module Week\*\***
- First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after Friday, December 13, 2024.

Revision Week: Monday, December 16 – Friday, December 20, 2024

December 16	<i>Resubmission of Value of Theology Reflection (as necessary)</i>
December 17	<i>Resubmission of Belief Response (as necessary)</i>
December 18	<i>Resubmissions for Tests (as necessary)</i>
December 19	<i>Additional Resubmissions (as necessary)</i>
December 20	<i>Additional Resubmissions (as necessary)</i>

- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after December 20, 2024.

## **Academic Policies**

### **General Assignment Guidelines**

Please see the [MCS-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. To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Assignment Extension Request Form* on Populi 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 unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late submissions will be tracked across each student’s program. If a student incurs multiple instances of 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. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late, the student will fail the course.

### Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

### Assignment 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.

### MCS-Horizon College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment rubric. Once a student's assignment has met all competency requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. Likewise, a final course grade is not calculated until the end of the course. Students pass a course (with a B- or higher) only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all competency requirements* for that course and, therefore, only after they have passed all assignments.

MCS-Horizon CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated <b>exceptional</b> achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
		Student demonstrated <b>excellent</b> achievement of the learning outcomes.	A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated <b>good</b> achievement of all learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

If the student does not meet all competency requirements in a course and, therefore, does not pass all the assignments in a course, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at MCS-Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below according to the scale below.

BTM	Beginning to meet	Student was <b>beginning to meet</b> one or more learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66

	expectations		C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made <b>insufficient progress</b> toward meeting learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

### Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and 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.

### Accessible Learning Services Information

MCS-Horizon aims to provide an accessible learning environment for all our students. If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to temporary or ongoing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, please contact us as soon as possible to schedule a conversation. In all cases we ask that you provide current documentation of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. MCS-Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, contact Wendy Holmes, MCS's Director of Academic Success ([wendy.holmes@mcs.edu](mailto:wendy.holmes@mcs.edu)), or Richelle Bekkattla, Horizon's Library Technician and Academic Accommodations Coordinator ([library@horizon.edu](mailto:library@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 livestreaming 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 the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this 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.

### Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming 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 livestream, 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**

MCS-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 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.

### **Bibliography**

#### ***Internet***

-Be sure you check out the [Christian Theology Virtual Reading Room](#).

-You can also search for books on the [Google books](#) webpage, which often provides access of up to 75% of a book's content.

#### ***Books***

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. trans. G. T. Thomson. London: SCM, 1949.

Bloesch, Donald. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. 2 vols. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978.

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#). rev. ed. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999.

Elwell, Walter A., ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. [[full text of 1<sup>st</sup> ed](#), published 1996]

Erickson, Millard J. *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. Edited by L. Arnold Hustad. 3rd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

- Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Grenz, Stanley, J., and Jay T. Smith. *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Horton, Stanley, ed. *Systematic Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Revised edition. Springfield, MS: Logion, 1995.
- Jenkins, Michael. *Invitation to Theology: A Guide to Study, Conversation and Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 2003.
- Jones, Beth Felker. *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Land, Tony. *Exploring Christian Doctrine: A Guide to What Christians Believe*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.
- Luck, Donald G. *Why Study Theology?* St. Louis: Chalice, 1999.
- Marks, Darren C. *Bringing Theology to Life: Key Doctrines for Christian Faith and Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Theology: The Basics*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Understanding Doctrine: What it is—and Why it Matters*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- McKim, Donald K. *A “Down and Dirty” Guide to Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011.
- Olson, Roger E. *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity*. 2nd Edition. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2016.
- Packer, J. I., and Tomas C. Oden, ed. *One Faith: The Evangelical Consensus*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Richardson, Alan, and John Bowden, ed. *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983.
- Shepherd, Victor. *Our Evangelical Faith*. Toronto: Clements, 2006.
- Tyra, Gary. *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013.
- Vondey, Wolfgang. *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Fullness of the Gospel*. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017.
- Warrington, Keith. *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*. London: T & T Clark, 2008.
- Wilson, Jonathan R. *A Primer for Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.