1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course prepares students to engage in thinking theologically, to do research, and to write research papers in the theological fields.

2. TEXTBOOKS


3. CLASS STRUCTURE

This course is a Blackboard course that does not require class attendance. However, you will need to spend several hours in the Lipscomb library (or another library with good theological holdings). You will be given one week to do each assignment, as noted on the schedule below. Assignments turned in late will result in lower grades.

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should 1) understand the nature and purposes of theological education, 2) be able to use the standard tools for doing biblical and theological research, 3) utilize the proper style for writing biblical and theological papers, and 4) write a paper on a biblical or theological topic.

5. REQUIREMENTS

**Reading:** Each week you will read from the various textbooks, online articles, and the instructor’s ramblings; and you may occasionally even watch and listen to online videos and audios.

**Discussion Questions:** After doing your initial reading each week, you will then normally respond on Blackboard to “Discussion” questions. You will occasionally need to do this by Wednesday evening so that you may respond to at least two other class members by Friday evening. I will then respond to the whole discussion by the next Monday. I may add additional questions for you to email back to me personally (not for class discussion).

The responses need not be long (but consider 100 words a minimum for the initial posting and 50 words for your comments on others’ responses). The first posting should respond fully to the instructor’s questions, and all responses should reflect thoughtfulness. The grade for this component is based both on completing the assignment and on the quality of the responses. A good response will demonstrate that you have read and understood the reading and that you have thought critically about the discussion topic. You will be informed if your responses are not meeting expectations.
Please do not get behind on this requirement. The grade for this requirement will be lowered for late or missed responses. If you should miss a deadline, post the response(s) ASAP so that you will at least get some credit.

Also, keep in mind that there may be disagreements in the course of the threaded discussions, and that is fine. But responses must be polite, respectful, and address the person’s comment, not the person him/herself. The grade will be lowered significantly for inappropriate participation. And please do not use the Discussion Board to send personal messages to the instructor or other students. Use e-mail for that.

Assignments: During most weeks there will be at least one assignment due. These assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Quizzes: Brief quizzes will be given on occasion.

Research paper: The student will write an 8-page, double-spaced paper. More details will be given at the appropriate time during the semester.

6. GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Discussions 20%
- Assignments 30%
- Quizzes 10%
- Book Review 15%
- Research Paper 25%

Although grades may be curved, you will get no less than the following grades for the percentages indicated:

A = 92-100%  B = 83-91%  C = 70-82%  F = 0-69%

7. OTHER MATTERS

Academic Integrity: In keeping with our identity as a Christian University and our goal to help shape lifelong disciples of Christ, academic integrity will be taken very seriously in this class. Unless specific permission is given to collaborate on assignments with other students, each student’s work shall be his/her own. Cheating on exams or assignments and plagiarizing on written assignments will, depending on the severity of the case, result in penalties ranging from a significantly reduced grade on the assignment to failing the course. Instances of cheating or plagiarism may also be reported to appropriate members of the administration, depending on the situation. Decisions in these matters rest with the instructor. For information on Lipscomb’s policies and procedures see the “Academic Integrity” page on Lipscomb’s website (http://academics.lipscomb.edu/content.asp?CID=5329&SUID=12).

Dropping the Course: A decision to stop attending class or to not turn in assignments does **not** constitute dropping the course. Please see the "Graduate Catalog" for the official policies and procedures for dropping a course. If a student's name appears on the roster at grading time and the course has not been officially dropped, he/she will receive a grade based on the course requirements and grading percentages above.

Incompletes and Failure to Turn in Assignments. **No incompletes** will be given except in cases of extreme emergency for the student or the student’s immediate family. Failure to complete course requirements will result in a grade of no better than C for the course.
Computing and Safeguards: It is assumed that the student has some knowledge of using the Internet and e-mail. The student is responsible for solving his/her technical problems. Keep in mind that strange things happen in cyberspace (e.g., e-mails get lost, servers disconnect). Therefore, do not wait until the last minute to do your work. Allow plenty of time to meet deadlines. The student is solely responsible for getting work in on time. Also, back up all of your work on a disk or make a hard copy. Save everything in this way until you receive your final grade in the course.

A Note on e-mail: We will use the e-mail function within the web course to communicate, not your personal email or even your normal Lipscomb email. Check e-mail frequently. It is the student's responsibility if he/she misses important information by failing to check e-mail.

8. SCHEDULE

- Week 1: Introduction and preliminary matters
  - Hazelip School of Theology: Mission and Curriculum
  - Read: How to read a book
  - Read: Articles on Bible translations
  - Blackboard discussion: Translations and scholarship

- Week 2: Being a theology student
  - Read: On being a student (Camp, 1-28)
  - Read: On being a theologian (Stone & Duke, 1-25)
  - Blackboard discussion: Re Stone and Duke reading
  - Blackboard: Post an introduction to yourself

- Week 3: Proper style (SBL Guide)
  - Read: The writing guide
  - Read: The stuff of theology (Stone & Duke, 27-40)
  - Blackboard discussion: Questions on Stone and Duke reading
  - Assignment: Proper bibliography style
  - Assignment: Be thinking about research paper topic

- Week 4: Using the Library
  - Read: The sources of theology (Stone & Duke, 41-58)
  - Blackboard discussion: Questions on Stone & Duke reading
  - Assignment: Bibliography of specific library resources

- Week 5: Using Journals and Book Reviews
  - Read: Book reviews
  - Discussion: Primary and secondary sources, biased and un-biased
  - Assignment: Proper footnote style
  - Assignment: Fill out Profiles of Ministry instrument

- Week 6: Using the ATLASerials database
  - Scholarly writing: Gender-inclusive language
  - Read: Writing well (Strunk & White, 1-33)
  - Discussion: Gender inclusive language
  - Assignment: 1) ATLA search results

- Week 7: Using the internet for research
  - Read: Writing well (Strunk & White, 34-85)
Read: How to write a research paper
Quiz: Strunk & White, part 1
Assignment: Be deciding on topic for research paper

- Week 8: More resources for research
  - Read: On plagiarism and other sins
  - Quiz: Strunk & White, part 2
  - Assignment: Topic and preliminary bibliography for research paper
  - Assignment: Be deciding on book for book review

- Week 9: More internet tools
  - Read: Stone and Duke, 59-82
  - Assignment: Google Scholar, Google Books, etc.
  - Assignment: Work on research paper
  - Discussion: Stone and Duke reading

- Week 10: Thinking about faith
  - Assignment: Outline of paper due
  - Read: Stone and Duke, 83-113
  - Discussion: Stone and Duke reading
  - Assignment: Continue to work on research paper (due next week)

- Week 11: Theological education and faith
  - Read: Stone and Duke, 113-31
  - Discussion: Camp reading
  - Assignment: Paper due

- Week 12
  - Read: Camp, 29-56
  - Discussion: Theological education and faith
  - Assignment: Work on book review

- Week 13:
  - Read: Camp, 59-105
  - Read: Article on building a personal library
  - Discussion: Camp reading
    - Assignment: Bibliography and footnotes of specific resources

- Week 14: Using Journals and Book Reviews
  - Read: On theological exegesis
  - Discussion: Theological exegesis
  - Assignment: Book review due

- Week 15: TBA