

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

## Biblical Theology 2

NT-640 (3 units)  
Fall 2009 @ MBBS: Fresno  
Tuesday 8:30–11:30 AM  
August 25–December 8, 2009  
No class on October 13 (Module week)

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the major theologies and themes of the New Testament. The goal is not primarily to master a theological system. It is rather to learn how to think biblically and theologically about crucial issues addressed within the New Testament and relevant for the church in mission today. *Prerequisite: Biblical Theology 1 (OT-640) or permission of instructor.*

### COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

Traditionally, *NT Theology* has been organized in one of three ways: topically (e.g., Guthrie), historically (e.g., Wrede, Bultmann), or under one over-arching theme, like *Heilsgeschichte* or salvation-history (e.g., Ladd, Morris). To optimize the benefits of these three (and avoid some of their pitfalls), we will experiment with G. B. Caird's "conference table" model. In this model, the writers of the NT are each invited to speak to the issues that they themselves raise. As the "microphone" is passed from one NT writer to the next, our aim is to hear the unity that reverberates through their different theologies, as well as the "symphonic effect" produced by the diversity of their theological expressions. In the back-and-forth dialogue between the members of the NT conference, an "interpretive space" is created within which successive faith communities are empowered by the Spirit of the risen Christ to do their own theological thinking and appropriation, embodying the subject matter to which the NT gives witness. While the risks of misappropriation are ever present in such an enterprise, the promise of God's presence continues to propel each Christian community forward, equipping them with the discernment skills needed to faithfully represent the Kingdom of God before the "watching world" and thereby to invite its participation in God's mission.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through a variety of activities (i.e., textbook readings, written assignments, and class discussions), students are invited to engage personally and critically the New Testament witness to God's activity in our world. At the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Articulate and explain the central message of the New Testament writings, both in their diversity and in their unity (*Knowledge Objective*).
2. Identify and navigate the methodological issues involved in constructing a New Testament theology—historical development, philosophical presuppositions, symbolic world, Christian experience, theological framework, etc. (*Skills Objective*).

3. Confess and appropriate the New Testament witness, in its assigned role within the Christian Bible, as the living guide for the faith and life of the Christian community—as opposed to a timeless “catalogue” of theological propositions (*Values Objective*).

4. Interact with the various theological proposals on specific issues and then formulate personal convictions regarding the theological reflection that best *extends* the New Testament witness into the life of the church in our contemporary context. While personal resolution may be achieved on many issues, the aim is to establish useful strategies for the ongoing challenge of working toward clarity on those that are currently unclear (*Skills Objective*).

## MBBS PROGRAM GOALS

This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program in that it will help the student to:

1. Discern with greater precision the subject matter to which the biblical text gives witness, both its foreignness as well as its power to draw, to claim, and to transform life (MBBS desired outcome #1: *Demonstrate commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus in Christian community*; specifically outcomes 1.1 and 1.2; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

2. Engage in the theological task of exploring ways that the symbolic world out of which the biblical text emerged can inform, form, and reform the cultural norms which shape our present faith community (MBBS desired outcome #2: *Articulate commitment to a biblical theological Christian perspective*; specifically outcomes 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

3. Nurture interpersonal and personal formation by interacting with those (scholars, instructors, and fellow classmates) who represent viewpoints that differ from one’s own, and by integrating those insights that are useful (MBBS desired outcome #3: *Interpret one’s own and other cultural contexts of ministry using theological perspectives integrated with social scientific approaches*; specifically outcomes 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

4. Develop skills in sound biblical exegesis and theological interpretation for preaching, teaching, social advocacy, personal enrichment, and our life together (MBBS desired outcome #4: *Practice skills in pastoral and educational leadership*; specifically outcomes 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4; see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/educational-outcomes>).

## TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES

A contemporary translation of the Bible that aims at “dynamic equivalence” (e.g., *NRSV*, *TNIV*, *NIV*) is required. For comparison, it is often useful to consult more “formal equivalent” translations (e.g., *NASB*) as well as the more “functional equivalent” translations (e.g., *NLT*, *GNT*) or single-translator versions that are more paraphrastic (e.g., *Message*). This kind of comparative study can be facilitated by the use of either a “parallel” Bible (e.g., *The Precise Parallel New Testament* [Oxford, 1995], *The Contemporary Parallel New Testament* [Oxford,

1998]) or a Bible software program (e.g., *Bible Works*, *WordSearch*, *Logos*, *Quick Verse*, *PC Study Bible*, *Accordance*).

There are three textbooks for this course. The Vanhoozer, Kraus, and Young texts are available for purchase @ Pacific Bookshop (or through Amazon.com, new or used) and on two-hour reserve @ *Hiebert Library*.

Kraus, C. Norman. *God our Savior: Theology in a Christological Mode*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A book-by-book survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 2008.

Young, William P. *The Shack*. Los Angeles: Windblown, 2007.

In addition to the above textbooks, several readings from the following works will also be assigned.

Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Johnson, Luke T. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. Rev. edition. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.

The literature on *NT Theology* is extensive, ranging from “conservative” to “liberal” and all points in between! A partial list of significant works available in English follows below. Each is on two-hour reserve @ *Hiebert library*.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. K. Grobel. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, 1955.

Caird, George B. *New Testament Theology*. Compiled and edited by L. D. Hurst. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981.

Kümmel, Werner Georg. *The Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. J. E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1973.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Revised by D. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 1993.

Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.

Morris, Leon. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

Neill, Stephen. *Jesus Through Many Eyes: Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Strecker, Georg. *Theology of the New Testament*. Completed by F. W. Horn. Trans. M. E. Boring. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000.

Thielman, Frank. *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Theological Dictionaries are a useful place to begin when researching a topic. Not only do they give concise information, the bibliographies at the end of each article often point to the significant literature on that topic. See the *Reference Section* of the *Hiebert Library*.

*Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Ed. Kevin Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005 [REF BS 440.D495].

*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Ed. D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992 [REF BS 440.A54].

*The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006 [BS440.N443].

## COURSE DESIGN

*Biblical Theology 2* is designed as an intermediate course to be taken near the middle of the student's program. The idea is to provide a space for students to reflect theologically on the wide variety of formational experiences that are part of their seminary study program. Of special interest, is to build on the biblical foundation that students have established in *Biblical Theology I*. In order to promote these aims, the format of the course will follow a "seminar style" with a combination of lecture and discussion.

While the course meets face-to-face each week for presentations and activities, students will be using the Seminary website's *Folders* and *File Storage* for accessing supplementary material (exegetical notes, pedagogical notes, handouts, etc.) and the website's *Forums* for posting responses to assignments and questions.

## COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

### **Aug. 25—Meeting #1—Introduction to Biblical Theology**

- introduce aims, objectives, methods, format, and expectations for the course
- compare and contrast Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology
- discuss opportunities and challenges of Biblical Theology

#### -post-meeting assignment:

- \*read Johnson, "The symbolic world of the NT," pp. 1–16, posted to the *Handouts* folder
- \*read Ehrman, "What is the NT," pp. 1–16, posted to the *Handouts* folder
- \*read Ehrman, "The world of the early Christians," pp. 18–45, posted to the *Handouts* folder
- \*complete Reading Log and Processing Questions for Meeting #2, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

### **Sept. 1—Meeting #2—Introduction to New Testament Theology (NTT)**

- review the status of NTT to date
- assess the three main models for doing NTT
- outline parameters for establishing a viable NTT—one that deals with the diversity (i.e., the theologies of the NT writings) and the unity (i.e., the theological themes driving the NT witnesses)
- present the "Conference Table Model" of NTT

-see Isaak, "Introduction to NTT," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Johnson, "The Christian experience," pp. 93–104, 107–119, 125–149, posted to the *Handouts* folder

\*read Ehrman, "The traditions of Jesus," pp. 48–59, posted to the *Handouts* folder

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #3, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Sept. 8—Meeting #3—*NTT as a Historical and Theological Discipline***

-differentiate between a historical model and historical method

-reconstruct the symbolic world out of which the NT writings emerged

-review the early Christian experience and confession and interpretation

-propose a "center" for *NTT*

-see Isaak, "History and Theology," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Vanhoozer, "What is theological interpretation," pp. 13–26

\*read Johnson, "Paul's ministry and letters," pp. 259–273, posted to the *Handouts* folder

\*read Vanhoozer, pp. 84–123

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #4, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Sept. 15—Meeting #4—*The Theological Contribution of Paul—Part 1***

-review the debate about the "center" of Paul's theology

-reconstruct the early Christian proclamation

-propose a "center" for Paul's theology

-see Isaak, "Paul—Part 1," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Vanhoozer, pp. 124–185

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #5, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Sept. 22—Meeting #5—*The Theological Contribution of Paul—Part 2***

-sketch the theology that drives the letters in the Pauline corpus

-trace Paul's modification of traditional apocalyptic theology

-explore the christological implications of Paul's apocalyptic/eschatological center

-see Isaak, "Paul—Part 2," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Vanhoozer, pp. 27–59

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #6, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Sept. 29—Meeting #6—*The Contribution of the First Three Evangelists***

-trace the theological vision of the Synoptic Gospel writers (Mark, Matthew, and Luke)  
-sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements  
-see Isaak, “Mark, Matthew, and Luke,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Vanhoozer, pp. 60–73, 222–228, 233–247

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #7, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Oct. 6—Meeting #7—*The Contribution of the Johannine Traditions***

-trace the theological vision of the writings in the Johannine Traditions (Gospel of John, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Revelation)  
-sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements  
-see Isaak, “Johannine traditions,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Vanhoozer, pp. 186–221, 229–232

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #8, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

\*complete Research paper (due Oct. 12)

**Oct. 12—Research paper due**

**Oct. 13—No class—Module week**

**Oct. 20—Meeting #8—*The Contribution of the Remaining Canonical Witnesses***

-trace the theological vision of the remaining canonical witnesses (Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter)  
-sketch the theological themes emerging from these vision statements  
-see Isaak, “Remaining witnesses,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 13–40

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #9, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Oct. 27—Meeting #9—*Christology: The Person and Work of Messiah Jesus***

-sketch the issues in Christology—the person and the work of Jesus of Nazareth

-Christology group presentation  
-see Isaak, "Christology," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 41–67

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #10, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Nov. 3—Meeting #10—*Revelation: God's Self-Disclosure***

-sketch the issues involved in Revelation—the church's use of scripture

-Revelation group presentation

-see Isaak, "Revelation," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 68–101

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #11, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Nov. 10—Meeting #11—*Theology: God-Talk and Imagination***

-sketch a biblical theology of God

-Theology group presentation

-see Isaak, "Theology," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 102–130

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #12, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Nov. 17—Meeting #12—*Anthropology: What it Means to be Human***

-sketch some of the issues in developing a biblical anthropology

-Anthropology group presentation

-see Isaak, "Anthropology," for more details related to today's topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 131–160

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #13, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Nov. 24—Meeting #13—*Pneumatology: God's Living Presence***

-identify the NT characterization of the Holy Spirit and instruction on spiritual gifts

-Pneumatology group presentation

-see Isaak, “Pneumatology,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 161–186

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #14, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

\*complete Position paper (due Nov. 30)

**Nov. 30—Position paper due**

**Dec. 1—Meeting #14—*Ecclesiology: The Gathered Messianic Community of God***

-explore NT metaphors for the church

-test a missional model for the church—the church as “Outpost of God’s Kingdom”

-see Isaak, “Ecclesiology,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*read Kraus, pp. 187–223

\*complete Readings and questions log for Meeting #15, posted to *Assignments* folder and email it to me by 9:00 AM on the Monday before we meet

**Dec. 8—Meeting #15—*Eschatology: Picturing the Completion of Creation***

-review the development of afterlife in Judaism

-outline three basic views of biblical eschatology

-reflect on the issues remaining regarding “the end” and “final judgment”

-see Isaak, “Eschatology,” for more details related to today’s topic, posted to the *Extending the Table* folder following the meeting

-post-meeting assignment:

\*complete Reflection paper (due Dec. 14)

**Dec. 14—Reflection paper due**

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXPECTATIONS**

The assignments are designed to promote the course and degree objectives listed above. The expectations for each assignment are listed below as well as what students can expect from me.

I expect that each student will:

1. Prepare for, attend, and participate in class discussions. Consult the *Course Schedule* (above) for the texts to be read and the assignments to be completed. I will begin each class by highlighting the key ideas to be processed and move rapidly to discussion and to group exercises. Be prepared to contribute with your discoveries, evaluation, and reflection. I expect each one to offer something significant each meeting.

In order to enhance the processing beyond the class, I will assign you to *Theology group*. Most weeks there will be a follow-up question emerging from our in-class discussion posted to *Forum* section of the class page. You are expected to post a response (at least 25 words) and reply to a group mate's post (also at least 25 words). While you are encouraged to make at least two entries like this each week, I will be looking for at least ten weeks where you are thus active in your theology group.

Later in the second half of the semester, your theology group will prepare and make a twenty-minute presentation on the day's theological focus. Be sure to summarize the topic's key components, the debates, the prospects, and your desired outcomes.

Your overall participation assessment will be determined as follows: strong participation in the forum and in your group presentation ( $\geq 18/20$ ), average ( $\geq 16/20$ ), and passable ( $\geq 14/20$ ).

Participation value of the final grade = 20%

2. Complete thirteen of fourteen *Readings and questions logs* (that's right, you get to skip one!). The "fillable" Acrobat pdf for each week is posted in the *Assignments* folder. The **first part** amounts to a readings log where you indicate how much of the assigned reading you have completed.

The **second part** amounts to composing the indicated processing questions about the author's presentation. Think about issues on which you would like further clarification or about which you would like to challenge the author or discuss further. Put each issue in the form of a question. Include a several-sentence paragraph of rationale for each question, explaining why it is significant to you. Use no more than a 100 words for each question.

These assignments are **due at 9 AM on Monday, before our Tuesday morning meeting.** Please email your filled pdf file to me at <jisaak@mbseminary.edu>.

Each assignment will be graded at one of four levels: "excellent" ( $\geq 9$  pts), "good" ( $\geq 8$  pts), "passable" ( $\geq 7$  pts), or "unsatisfactory" ( $< 7$  pts). Assignments rated "good" or better will give evidence of having read the assigned pages and of thoughtful and engaging questions; this is my "baseline" expectation. Assignments will lose 1 point, if submitted after the 9 AM deadline and will not be graded, if submitted after our meeting begins.

I will select several of these questions to form the agenda for our in-class discussion following the break. If your question is selected, I will call on you to present it.

Readings and questions log value of final grade =  $13 \times 10 \times 2/13 = 20\%$

3. Write a Research paper (5 pages, double spaced, 1500 words) exploring the life, work, and thought of a NT theologian that interests you. A sampling of NT theologians include: F. C. Baur, J. Christiaan Beker, Raymond E. Brown, Rudolf Bultmann, G. B. Caird, Hans Conzelmann, Oscar Cullmann, Nils A. Dahl, W. D. Davies, C. H. Dodd, J. D. G. Dunn, Reginald Fuller, Leonard Goppelt, Donald Guthrie, Richard Hays, Martin Hengel, Joachim Jeremias, Ernst

Käsemann, Leander Keck, Werner Kümmel, George E. Ladd, I. Howard Marshall, Ralph Martin, Frank Matera, Robert Morgan, Leon Morris, Stephan Neill, Georg Strecker, Peter Stuhlmacher, and Frank Thielman. Check with me if you have another NT theologian that you would like to research.

Your Research paper must include each of the following sections:

- ✓ A presentation of the NT theologian's life, including formative experiences and social setting. Consult Theological Dictionaries (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*) and other sources. Cite correctly.
- ✓ A discussion of where the theologian's work fits in comparison to the work of others. Do some "compare and contrast." Consult the major works of the theologian (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*) as well as secondary sources.
- ✓ A summary of the main themes and concerns for which this theologian is known. Elaborate on each point showing its significance and contribution to the field.
- ✓ An assessment of the relative merit of the theological model that this theologian presents. What are its strengths and weaknesses in your view? Where do you find it helpful? What is missing for you?
- ✓ A list of "Works Cited." Include dictionaries, articles, monographs, and websites that you consult and cite.

Your score out of 20 points will be determined by how well you have addressed each of the above criteria (see *Appendix B*). Late submissions will be penalized ½ a point per day.

Date due: October 12

Research paper value of final grade = 20%

4. Write a Position paper (5 pages, double spaced, 1500 words) exploring a theological topic that interests you and staking out your position. See *Appendix A* for a sampling of possible topics.

Your Position paper must include each of the following sections:

- ✓ A statement of the question and/or issue which you are addressing.
- ✓ A discussion of the "alternative viewpoints" (i.e., Which are the positions defended by Christians? How are the various options defended biblically?). Consult Theological Dictionaries (see list in *Textbooks and Resources*). Then check other resources. Cite correctly the sources that you use.
- ✓ A statement concerning what is at stake (i.e., Why does it matter which position is held? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various options?).
- ✓ A defense of the position you hold on this issue at this time, indicating *what* you believe and *why* you hold this position (biblical support, theological reflections, etc.).
- ✓ A statement of what still remains uncertain for you with regard to this topic and your follow-up intentions (i.e., What do you plan to do about those points that remain uncertain?).
- ✓ A list of "Works Cited." Include dictionaries, articles, monographs, and websites that you consult and cite.

Your score out of 20 points will be determined by how well you have addressed each of the above criteria (see *Appendix B*). Late submissions will be penalized ½ a point per day.

Date due: November 30

Position paper value of final grade = 20%

5. Write a Reflection paper (5 pages, double spaced, 1500 words) interacting with several of the themes developed in William Young's work of fiction, *The Shack*, and five of the "take home" ideas that have become important to you over the semester.

Your Reflection paper must include each of the following sections:

✓ A discussion of several of the theological themes that Young develops in his work of fiction, *The Shack*. Why did you choose these particular themes? How was Young helpful for you? What questions do you still have? Why do you think some reviewers are critical of Young's work? What is your assessment? Explain.

✓ A presentation of the "top five" ideas that you will "take home" from our semester-long excursion into the historical, theological, and thematic issues of the NT. These ideas may relate to your discussion on *The Shack*, but they need not. Why did you choose these? How do you think your ministry or your life will be different because you have wrestled with these ideas? What lingering queries will help keep these ideas "in play" for you as you carry on?

Note: this is not a research or a position paper. It is a reflection paper. No additional library research is needed to complete this assignment. However, if you are referring to certain passages in one of the textbooks, please cite it correctly.

Your score out of 20 points will be determined by how well you have addressed each of the above criteria (see *Appendix B*). Late submissions will be penalized ½ a point per day.

Date due: December 14

Reflection paper value of final grade = 20%

It is only fair and right that you have equally high expectations of me as well. My commitment to you is that I will endeavor to:

1. Join you in our mutual aim of encountering more deeply the disturbing and inspiring presence of God to which Scripture gives witness. While I function as "supervisor" in guiding your reading and writing, I am committed to participate with you as a "co-journeyer" in our common quest to bring/nourish life and healing in a broken world—which is the mission of God.

2. Foster a learning community atmosphere during our sessions where ideas can be discussed and explored freely without fear of ridicule or attack. Many people have thought deeply on the subject of *NTT*. While each of these "visions" or "constructions" is not equally valid or defensible, each deserves to be heard and explored within the evaluative process.

3. Provide careful and helpful feedback. I believe that it is pedagogically most helpful to have constructive criticism throughout the learning process. Therefore, I am open to visiting with you about your writing projects while you are working on them so that you can test, clarify, and

expand your ideas. Stop by my office and let's talk. I also aim to give useful feedback on the papers that you turn in and to do so in a timely fashion.

## SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Monday	October 12	Research paper due
Monday	November 30	Position paper due
Monday	December 14	Reflection paper due

## SUMMARY OF GRADING SCHEME

Participation.....	20%
Readings and questions log.....	$13 \times 10 \times 2/13 = 20\%$
Research paper.....	20%
Position paper.....	20%
Reflection paper.....	20%
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	100%

## NOTES

1. Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, accommodations for disabilities, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to me or consult the Registrar.

2. Evaluation. Each of the assignments has specific grading criteria (see descriptions above). Note also the grading rubric in *Appendix B* for a sense of what I am looking for.

All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.

Please note that “student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class” (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The letter grade conversions follow the MBBS Grading Template: A (100–94%), A- (93–90%), B+ (89–87%), B (86–83%), B- (82–80%), C+ (79–77%), C (76–73%), C- (72–70%), and F (69–0%) (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

The performance expectations are as follows: “A ‘B’ grade is the baseline. A ‘B’ grade means the student is doing satisfactory work. The ‘B+’ or higher grade indicates that the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. The ‘C’ grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level” (see <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>).

3. Credit/No Credit. Students may petition to take this course for “credit/no credit.” If granted, the student must complete each assignment as described, earning an overall average of  $\geq 70\%$ , and have no “un-made-up” absences (see note below on *Attendance*).

4. Due dates. Students are expected to submit assignments on time. Late Reading Reports, Research Papers, Position Papers, and Reflection Papers will be penalized as outlined above in the description of the assignment. However, penalties may not apply to students who have a documented emergency that prevents them from submitting the assignment on the due date. Check with me to see if alternative arrangements can be made.

5. Attendance. Students are expected to attend and participate in class. Each class is important. After all the assignments have been graded, your final score will be adjusted down 3% for each “un-made-up” absence. If you anticipate being away or if you would like to “make up” an absence, make a proposal. If approved, the deduction will be removed after successfully completing the “make up” work.

6. Formatting specifications. Parenthetical or footnote citation styles are both acceptable. Choose one and follow it consistently. Consult *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson, 1999) which is in the Reference section of the *Hiebert Library* (Ref PN 147.S26) for examples of how to cite dictionary articles, journal articles, monographs, commentaries, books in series, websites, etc. A pdf file called the *Student Supplement for SBL Handbook of Style* can be found in the *Handouts* folder. Websites and samples pointing to correct Chicago and APA format are also posted to the *Handouts* folder. Slade’s, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) is also a useful guide.

7. Submitting assignments. If you would like to receive handwritten comments on your written assignments, submit a hard-copy version of your paper. You may send me an electronic version of your paper (i.e., an email attachment); however, I will not print your paper. I will read your work online and complete the evaluation rubric only (*Appendix B*), placing it in your mailbox at school.

8. Course evaluations. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student’s evaluation of the course is completed.

## Appendix A: Sample Paper Topics

- a) Are there other ways to God? How is the particularity and universality of Christ conceptualized? (Christology).
- b) How does the Cross/Resurrection deal with sin? How do the NT metaphors for atonement function? (Christology).
- c) Who is Jesus? How can a Jewish male be the world’s savior? How can I relate to him? (Christology).
- d) What is the nature and function of Scripture? What is its relation to Truth? (Revelation).
- e) What is the relation between OT and NT? Does the NT “trump” the OT? How is this collection of “voices” and “theological visions” read as Scripture? (Revelation).

- f) What is the significance of a four-fold Gospel? Can (should) they be harmonized? (Revelation).
- g) What is the “center” of Paul’s theology? How does it relate to Jesus’ theology? (Revelation).
- h) How much of God is known in creation? What is the role of creation? What is the future of creation? (Revelation).
- i) What is the gender of God? How does our image (or the Bible’s image) of God shape our thinking and behavior? (Theology proper).
- j) What is unchanging about God? Does God need human beings? How is God in control? What is the relationship between God’s Sovereignty and human freedom (Theology proper).
- k) What does it mean to be human? Male? Female? How does Jesus reshape what it means to be human? (Anthropology).
- l) What is the purpose and character of the church? What is its relation to the world and to God’s reign? (Ecclesiology).
- m) What is spiritual warfare? What is the nature/reality of demons and spirits (Pneumatology).
- n) What are the “last days”? When do they begin? How long do they last? (Eschatology).
- o) What is God’s wrath? What is God’s judgment? Is there eternal punishment? (Eschatology).
- p) Other issues may be selected, if they are first cleared with the instructor.

## Appendix B: Evaluation Rubric

EVALUATION of *Research, Position, or Reflection Paper* for \_\_\_\_\_ (student)

1. Flow of argument/discussion:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
2. Theological engagement:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
3. Attention to assignment criteria:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
4. Formatting skills:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
5. Grammatical considerations:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____
6. Citation conventions:	inadequate _____	good _____	excellent _____

Score = \_\_\_\_\_ / 20                      strong ( $\geq 18/20$ ), average ( $\geq 16/20$ ), and passable ( $\geq 14/20$ )