

Shorter University

CST 3725ONLH

Systematic Theology I

Instructor Information

This information can be found directly on Canvas.

Course Information

Course Description

This course offers a systematic approach to understanding biblical themes and doctrines. Course content includes a study of the following doctrines: God, Scripture, angels, sin, and Jesus Christ. Prerequisite: CST 1011 or CST 1012 or permission of the instructor.

Required Textbooks

The Bible, preferably a modern translation of the Bible such as the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), New English Translation Bible (NET Bible), English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New International Version (NIV), New Revised Standard Version, (NRSV), etc.

Thorsen, Don. *An Exploration of Christian Theology*. Peabody, MA: Henderickson Publishers, 2008.

Vymeister, Nancy Jean and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Your Guide to Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*, 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Supplementary Resources: Recommended – But NOT Required –

Demarest, Bruce and Keith J. Matthews, gen. eds. *Dictionary of Everyday Theology and Culture*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2010.

Erickson, Millard J. *Introducing Christian Doctrine, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

McGrath, gen. ed. and James I Packer, assoc. ed. *Zondervan Handbook of Christian Beliefs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

The Baptist Faith and Message. Nashville: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2008 (print edition with explanatory notes), OR access The Baptist Faith & Message (2000) online at <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics with commentary by Norman Geisler at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago2.html>

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>

Course Objectives

Student who successfully complete the course will:

1. Possess a general knowledge and understanding of Christian theology and how it addresses human concerns (Educational Principle I—Learning and Analysis, Educational Principle VI—Enrichment)
2. Possess a general knowledge and understanding of historical theological development as well as various theological perspectives within the Christian community (Educational Principle I— Learning and Analysis, Educational Principle II—Discussing Values, Educational Principle VI—Enrichment)
3. Be able to converse intelligently with others of differing theological viewpoints and engage in a strong defense of the Christian faith when appropriate. (Educational Principle I— Learning and Analysis, Educational Principle II—Discussing Values, Educational Principle III—College Skills, Educational Principle, Educational Principle V—Social Responsibility, VIII—Preparation for future career and education)
4. Express ideas and engage in open dialogue regarding the teachings and implications of Christian Scripture, while remaining current in understanding and evaluating various views of Scripture. (Educational Principle II—Discussing Values, Educational Principle III—College Skills, Educational Principle V—Social Responsibility)
5. Demonstrate the ability to organize thoughts and express ideas in writing in a clear, concise, and compelling manner. (Educational Principle III—College Skills)
6. Demonstrate an increasing ability and desire to read, understand, and relate theological truth to personal growth and contemporary life. (Educational Principle I—Learning and Analysis, Educational Principle VI—Enrichment, Principle VIII—Preparation for future career and education)

Grading Information

1. Students will complete weekly Discussion Forums (35% of course grade)
2. Students will complete (7) Theological Worksheets (35% of course grade)
3. Students will complete eight (8) weekly exams (30% of course grade)

Course Schedule

Lesson One: Theology and the Theologian

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapter 1

- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Introduction Forum and Discussion Forum
- Complete Exam 1

Lesson Two: God Makes Himself Known

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapter 2
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 2

Lesson Three: The Bible

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 3-4
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 3

Lesson Four: Who is God?

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 5-6
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 4

Lesson Five: What Does God Do?

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 7-8
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 5

Lesson Six: The Problem of Evil

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 9-10
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 6

Lesson Seven: What Does it Mean to Be Human?

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 11-12
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 7

Lesson Eight: Sin and the Human Condition

- Complete Reading Assignment: Thorsen, chapters 13-14
- Review Supplemental Resources
- Complete Lesson Activities: Discussion Forum and Theological Worksheet
- Complete Exam 8

Summary of Assignments

Introductory Forum Post

Introduction Forum Post: Introduce yourself to your classmates. Write an introductory paragraph in the Introduction Forum. Provide the following information:

- Your name
- Where you live
- Your major (if you have one)
- Something interesting about yourself
- Anything you would like to share with classmates
- Include in the post your expectations for the class.

Post your introduction before 11:55 pm Tuesday.

Format: Weekly Discussion Forums are intended to promote interaction between students to further the learning experience. Steps to constructing the initial forum post are:

1. Find a source – an article in a magazine or newspaper, a movie, a picture or painting, a song, a video clip, etc. – relevant to the lesson topic. Source materials must be appropriate for use by a general audience and for use in a classroom setting.
2. Begin the initial post with a bibliographic citation of the source (see style guide). The initial post should be 350-400 words. Then, summarize the source explaining the relevance of the source for understanding the topic/doctrine, the connection between the source and the topic/doctrine, and how the source informs our understanding of the topic/doctrine.
3. Interactive responses should be a minimum of 150 words. As the title implies – interactive responses – should move beyond expressions of agreement to positive interaction with the content of the initial post.
4. Initial posts and interactive responses should reflect critical interaction with course materials and the topic.

Grading: Be sure to respond to at least two of your classmates' posts. Answers will be graded on accuracy, insightfulness, grammar, and overall understanding of the subject. Grading for Forum assignments is as follows:

- Initial Post: 50 points
- Interactive Response #1: 25 points
- Interactive Response #2: 25 points

Interactive responses, in order to receive full credit, should not only agree or disagree with original post, but should offer additional information to help other students gain more knowledge & insight into the topic.

Lesson 1 Discussion Forum: The theologian and the need for theology.

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm

Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 2 Discussion Forum: How does he make himself known?

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 3 Discussion Forum: The Bible in contemporary culture

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 4 Discussion Forum: God in contemporary culture

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 5 Discussion Forum: God at work in contemporary culture

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 6 Discussion Forum: The problem of evil and its significance today

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 7 Discussion Forum: What does it mean to be human?

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Lesson 8 Discussion Forum: Sin and its significance in contemporary culture

Initial Essay due Wednesday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #1 due Thursday before 11:55pm
Interactive Response #2 due Friday before 11:55pm

Projects/Worksheets

Students will complete seven (7) theological worksheets using the following methodology.

1. Define the topic
2. Collection of biblical materials
3. Organization of biblical materials into coherent topics/categories.
4. Summary of biblical teachings expressed in a series of statements.
5. Contemporary relevance of the biblical teachings on the topic.

Detailed instructions for the worksheets are available on Canvas.

Weekly Exams

In an effort to distribute equally the workload throughout the class, an exam will be given each week. The following conditions apply:

- 20 questions (multiple choice, True/False, short answer, matching)
- Open book
- 1 hour time limit
- 1 attempt per exam

Questions will require critical thinking and reflection on your part, so be sure to read the material carefully before attempting the exam.

Class Policies

Shorter University's Mission in Academic Preparedness

Listed among the core educational principles of Shorter University are the goals to “ensure that students reach the level of skill in written and oral communication” (III College Skills), to “promote the habit of acting on their responsibilities” (V Social Responsibility), and to “prepare students for careers or further education” (VII Preparation for Future).

In keeping with the mission of Shorter University, the mission statement of the Christian Studies department has three goals for its graduates: 1) academic excellence, 2) professional competence, and 3) passionate devotion to Christ. The classroom is one place where academic excellence, professional competence, and devotion to Christ are demonstrated.

Thus, it is expected that students will demonstrate academic excellence by completing assignments accurately and submitting them in a timely manner; and demonstrate professional competence and devotion to Christ by consistent attendance and participation in classroom activities.

Christian Studies Department Goals

In pursuit of the mission, the School of Christian Studies plays a pivotal role in the success of Shorter University and seeks to reinforce the mission of the university through the accomplishment of five major goals:

- I. Christian Studies students will assimilate historical, literary, and theological knowledge of the Bible.
- II. Christian Studies students will develop knowledge and skills necessary for application of historical, literary, and theological understandings of the Bible to other academic disciplines, personal devotions, and in the performance of career duties.
- III. Christian Studies students will develop knowledge and skills necessary for proper research and use of grammar in the composition of written assignments and presentations.
- IV. Christian Studies students will develop skills necessary to understand, interpret, communicate, or present biblical understandings and truths effectively using critical methodologies.
- V. Christian Studies students will develop skills necessary for dialoguing critically with current knowledge and future developments in the fields of biblical and ministerial studies.

Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes are used to assess whether the School of Christian Studies is achieving its educational goals.

1. Christian Studies students will exhibit the ability to read, understand, and recall or remember the information from the readings assigned in the course textbook(s), resources, and biblical texts. The achievement of the comprehension outcome will be pursued and assessed through participation in class discussion, written assignments, quizzes, examinations, or presentations (*Departmental Goals I, II, and IV; University Educational Principles I, II, III, IV, VI and VIII*).
2. Christian Studies students will demonstrate knowledge of the biblical text, including historical and literary contexts and critical questions related to specific the biblical writings (*Departmental Goals I, II and V; University Educational Principle I, II, and IV*). Information competency will be assessed through objective and subjective items on quizzes and examinations, in class discussions, interpretive/exegetical projects, or group presentations.
3. Christian Studies students will exhibit knowledge of the interpretive process and use of critical methodologies (*Departmental Goals I, II, III, and IV; University Educational Principles III, IV, and VIII*). The achievement of this outcome will be pursued and assessed through participation in class discussion, written assignments, group projects, or examinations.
4. Christian Studies students will gain procedural knowledge and apply research methods using tools to the disciplines of biblical and theological studies in order to identify source materials, gather data, synthesize, organize, and analyze data related to the fields of biblical studies and theological studies. The research outcome will be pursued and assessed through an annotated bibliography, research paper, and individual or group presentations (*Departmental Goals I, II, III, IV, and V; University Educational Principles I, II, III, IV, and VIII*).
5. Christian Studies students will display an ability to analyze and evaluate information and arguments presented in assigned readings and other class resources. This includes an ability to analyze and interpret biblical material. Critical thinking skills will be assessed using the elements of critical thinking and the Intellectual Standards established by the Foundation for Critical Thinking (*Departmental Goals III, IV, and V; University Educational Principle I and IV*).
6. Christian Studies students will demonstrate skills necessary to communicate and present theological information in oral, written and digital formats (*Departmental Goals II, III, IV, and V; University Educational Principles I and III*). The communication outcome will be pursued and assessed through participation in class discussion, written assignments, examinations, or presentations (*Departmental Goals I, II, IV, V; University Educational Principles I, III, and VII*).

Student Responsibilities

Since the ultimate goal of every class includes consistent, on-task, participatory, professional behavior the Christian Studies department has established the following guidelines for its classes.

1. General Expectations – Learning is a time and effort intensive endeavor, a requirement that cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Any student who enrolls in this class is responsible for all course work, regular and punctual attendance to all classes, laboratories, and other student meetings required by the university, and active engagement in the class.

2. Class Assignment Policy – Unless specified otherwise, assignments submitted electronically must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document or PowerPoint via Canvas. Submissions in formats other than Microsoft Word or PowerPoint will be returned to the student for reformatting. Late penalties will apply to resubmissions.

Assignment Format

The Christian Studies Department uses Vyhmeister and Robertson, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*, 3d ed. as our writing style guide. All major writing assignments (e.g. essays, research papers, book reviews, etc.) must adhere to the guidelines established in Vyhmeister and Robertson. All other writing assignments must adhere to the following format:

Example:

Ima A Student
Dr. My Instructor
Course Number and Title
January 13, 2013
Assignment Title/Name

Font: Typed using 12pt Times New Roman

Spacing: double-spaced unless otherwise specified by the Instructor

Margins: 1" all around

Edited: Proofread reading assignments at least twice for mechanical errors such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence fragments, subject/verb agreement, pronoun use, etc. *When finished with an assignment, the last thing you should do is grammar and spell check!*

Late Work – Assignments must be turned in on the date and at the time determined by the professor. *As a general rule late assignments will be not be accepted.* Students with extenuating circumstances (natural disaster, personal illness requiring hospitalization, etc.) must seek instructor approval before submitting late work.

Assignment Grading Rubric – Unless otherwise specified, assignments will be graded according to the following criteria:

The Thinker Guidelines for Thinking	
Clarity	Could you elaborate further? Could you give me an example? Could you illustrate what you mean?
Accuracy	How could we check on that? How could we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?
Precision	Could you be more specific? Could you give me more details? Could you be more exact?
Relevance	How does that relate to the problem? How does that bear on the question? How does that help us with the issue?
Depth	What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?
Breadth	Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Do we need to consider another point of view? Do we need to look at this in other ways?
Logic	Does all this make sense together? Does your first paragraph fit in with your last? Does what you say follow from the evidence?
Significance	Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?
Fairness	Do I have any vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others?

- How well a student follows assignment directions (sufficient length, detail, etc.)

- Grammar, style, sentence and/or paragraph construction

- Evaluation of the assignment content will be according to the universal intellectual standards:

(Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Thinker's Guide to Analytic Thinking*, 7)

- How well a student produced original work/reflection demonstrating critical thought, interaction with appropriate source materials, and/or appropriate personal experiences

3. Communication – The official means of communication are Shorter Hawk mail and

Canvas, the University email and Canvas, the University learning management system. Students may communicate with professors via email or phone. Please insert the course number and section number (CST 3111ONLH) in the subject line of all email correspondence. Professors will respond to emails within 24 hours.

4. Accommodations – Shorter University provides accommodations for students who have a disability. The student must contact the Director of Educational Support in FSU 219 (706-233-7323) as soon as possible to discuss your needs. Shorter University is committed to providing access to programs and services to all qualified students with disabilities. Student Support Services is located in the Fitton Student Union, Room 219 (706-233-7323). Academic support is available to all students through the Center for Learning and Academic Success at Shorter (CLASS). The Center offers peer tutoring and coordinates study groups for students seeking assistance.

5. Course Withdrawal Policy – Please see the *Shorter University Student Handbook* for official voluntary and involuntary withdrawal policies, and for applicable deadlines for withdrawal.

6. Complaints and Grievances – For complaints with a faculty member, the student should talk personally with the instructor first. Should the student and instructor be unable to resolve the conflict, the student may then turn to the chair of the involved department for assistance. The chair (or dean) will meet with both parties, seek to understand their individual perspectives, and, within a reasonable amount of time, reach a conclusion, share it with both parties, and reach a final resolution. A full copy of the Complaints/Grievances Policy can be found on the Scholar website or in the University Catalog.

7. Grading Scale – *Please keep in mind grades are earned, not awarded or negotiated.*

90-100 = A

80-89.9 = B

70-79.9 = C

60-69.9 = D

Less than 59.9 = F

Academic Integrity Policy

A Community of Honor

As a liberal arts university committed to the Christian faith, Shorter University seeks to develop ethical men and women of disciplined, creative minds and lives that focus on leadership, service and learning. The Honor System of Shorter University is designed to provide an academic community of trust in which students can enjoy the opportunity to grow both intellectually and personally. For these purposes, the following rules and guidelines will be applied.

Academic Dishonesty

"Academic Dishonesty" is the transfer, receipt, or use of academic information, or the attempted transfer, receipt, or use of academic information in a manner not authorized by the instructor or by university rules. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism as well as aiding or encouraging another to commit academic dishonesty.

"Cheating" is defined as wrongfully giving, taking, or presenting any information or material borrowed from another source - including the Internet by a student with the intent of aiding himself or another on academic work. This includes, but is not limited to a test, examination,

presentation, experiment or any written assignment, which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade.

"Plagiarism" is the taking or attempted taking of an idea, a writing, a graphic, musical composition, art or datum of another without giving proper credit and presenting or attempting to present it as one's own. It is also taking written materials of one's own that have been used for a previous course assignment and using it without reference to it in its original form.

Students are encouraged to ask their instructor(s) for clarification regarding their academic dishonesty standards.

Procedure

A. It is the responsibility of an instructor to certify that academic assignments are independently mastered sufficiently to merit course credit. The responsibility of the student is to master academic assignments independently, refrain from acts of academic dishonesty, and refuse to aid or tolerate the academic dishonesty of others.

B. If an instructor determines that the student is guilty of academic dishonesty, the instructor must discuss the matter with the student. In the event the instructor cannot reach the student in a timely manner, such as when the student has gone home at the end of a semester, the instructor may assign a grade of "I" (Incomplete) until the student can be contacted and the matter of academic dishonesty discussed. The instructor then completes the "Academic Violation Form" (see *Appendix A*) which should include evidence and other necessary documentation. The instructor will determine the appropriate remedy: either to assign a grade of zero on that assignment in question or a grade of "F" in the course. The student will designate whether he/she accepts the remedy for the violation of the dishonesty policy or wishes to appeal the instructor's decision. If a student elects to appeal, the "appeal due date" line must be completed on the Academic Violation Form. (See the Appeals section below for more information regarding the appeals process)

C. Upon completion, the instructor forwards the Academic Violation Form to the Registrar's for the placement in the student's permanent record. The Registrar will forward copies of the Academic Violation Form to the student, the faculty member, department chair, academic dean, dean of students, provost, and president. Not appealing when the form is first completed or by the appeal due date will be taken as an admission of guilt, except under compelling circumstances to be determined at the sole discretion of the provost.

D. If upon receipt of the Academic Violation Form the Registrar determines that the student is guilty of a second offense, then a grade of FD (Failure Due to Academic Dishonesty) will be assigned by the Registrar for the course regardless of the remedy specified on the Academic Violation Form. Assigning the FD is to be done by the Registrar when the second Academic Violation Form is placed in the student's record, and the Registrar will notify all parties in writing. The student is then permanently barred from membership in any honorary society and is permanently ineligible for any SU honor list. The student may petition the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee to have the dishonesty notation removed from the transcript after one year or upon graduating from the University if no additional dishonesty offenses occur and the student satisfactorily completes the Academic Integrity Program. The grade of F remains on the transcript. Upon receipt by the Registrar of a third offense, the Registrar will assign the grade of

FD and then notify all parties. After all appeals are exhausted, if the third offense still stands, then the student will be permanently expelled from the University. The notice of expulsion will be forwarded to the student, department chair, appropriate academic dean, dean of students, provost, and president. A copy of the final report with the three offenses will become a part of the student's permanent record. The university reserves the right to expel the student after a first or second offense, depending on the circumstances and at the sole discretion of the provost.

Appeals

A. The student who wishes to appeal an academic violation charge should submit his/her appeal in writing to the chair of the appropriate department by the appeal due date indicated on the Academic Violation Form, which is normally within ten regularly scheduled class days after the completion date of the Academic Violation Form. This statement should contain the reasons for which the student is appealing the instructor's decision. The burden of proof lies with the student in such a case to show that an error or malfeasance has occurred. Within ten regularly scheduled class days of receiving the written appeal, the department chair will notify in writing both the instructor and the student of the chair's decision. If the department chair is also the instructor who files the Academic Violation Form, then the student must appeal to the appropriate academic dean.

B. When, in the opinion of the department chair, the student fails to show reasonable cause for further investigation, the chair may deny the appeal without taking further action. When, in the opinion of the department chair, a student's appeal raises reasonable doubt as to whether a mistake or malfeasance has occurred, the chair will meet with the faculty member and with the student and render a decision within ten regularly scheduled class days of the receipt of the appeal. If the decision favors granting the student's appeal, the department chair may request that the Registrar remove the Academic Violation Form from the student's record. The chair will notify both the student and the instructor of this action.

C. If the student files the initial appeal or elects to appeal the chair's decision during Maymester, Summer I, Summer II or during final exam week of the Fall or Spring semesters and if the instructor or department chair is not available during that time, all of the foregoing time requirements begin to run with the first day of class in the next major term. In extreme or unusual circumstances regarding the timeliness of the appeals process, the provost will make the final determination.

D. Any student who has exhausted the remedies open under the procedures outlined above may appeal the entire matter to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee in writing within ten regularly scheduled class days of receiving the response from the department chair. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee will review the matter and issue a decision within fifteen (15) regularly scheduled class days. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee has the authority to deny the appeal, reduce the penalties in the event of extenuating circumstances, or direct the registrar to remove the record of the Academic Violation Form from the student's permanent record. The results of the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee are final.

E. All results from the proceedings of the Academic Dishonesty Appeals Committee should be reported to the appropriate academic dean, dean of students, provost, and president as information.

NOTE: During the appeals process, the student may continue to attend the class in which the violation occurred.

Students Needing Accommodations

Shorter University provides accommodations for students who have a disability. The student must contact the Director of Educational Support in FSU 219 (706-233-7323) as soon as possible to discuss your needs. Shorter University is committed to providing access to programs and services to all qualified students with disabilities. Student Support Services is located in the Fitton Student Union, Room 219 (706-233-7323). Academic support is available to all students through the Center for Learning and Academic Success at Shorter (CLASS). The Center offers peer tutoring and coordinates study groups for students seeking assistance. Also, students can receive help with writing through individual tutoring in the Writing center. CLASS is located on the second floor of the Sheffield-Thompson building in the Bailor Suite.