



To know God and to make Him known is a high and noble calling. This course will introduce the student to the study of systematic theology, its relationship to biblical theology, exegesis, historical theology and practical theology. Because it is a required initial class in all of Maranatha's masters programs, this course will also introduce Seminary students to the research and writing expectations of Maranatha Baptist Seminary, to aid them in the writing and formatting of formal research papers, and to introduce them to basic research tools.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

Required:

Millard Erickson. *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. This will be used in all of your Systematic Theology courses; it is expensive, but go ahead and buy a copy. You will use it in two more or four more classes, depending on your program.

Renald Showers. *There Really is a Difference*. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel, 1990. You must read Showers, if you have never read his work. If you have read it previously, you are not required to read it for this class.

Nancy Jean Vyhmeister. *Quality Research Papers*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. We will work through only some of the chapters of this book. You need to purchase this small work. It will be invaluable for you during your Seminary career. Be sure you get the 4th edition; there has been a problem with our textbook supplier sending the wrong edition.

Reference:

Kate Turabian, Wayne Booth, et. al. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Ninth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. This is for reference only. Turabian is the gold standard for theological research papers. If you follow Vyhmeister and the Maranatha Guides, you will not need a personal copy of Turabian until you begin work on a doctoral degree. Your local library should have a copy for reference, if you need one.

MBU Institutional Outcomes supported by this course:

1. **Written Communication.** Students will write correctly and cohesively with compelling argumentation.
2. **Critical Thinking.** Students will apply a framework for logical decision-making in various contexts.
3. **Biblical Knowledge.** Students will acquire skills related to biblical study methods, interpretation, and doctrine.

4. **Biblical World View.** students will articulate a world view that will tie all fields of study to the Scriptures “to the praise of His glory.”

COURSE GOALS. By the end of this class:

1. You will have a better understanding of the concept of Systematic Theology.
2. You will develop a basic comprehension of the relationship of Systematic Theology to other biblical disciplines.
3. You will understand the questions raised concerning doing theology and to be able to formulate answers based on biblical truth.
4. You will have a basic understanding of the relationship historically between philosophy and theology.
5. You will learn how to do theological research, what tools are available and how they can be used.
6. You will learn the basics concerning how to research and write a good research paper.
7. You will learn how to use the Maranatha template for research papers.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Weekly readings from Nancy Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers*, with an assessment to determine comprehension.
2. Weekly readings from Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* and related course notes from the professor. This material will be assessed via the discussion forum.
3. Read the prolegomena from one of the books in the bibliography. Write a 5-page summary of the prolegomena, especially the approach given and the impact the writer’s prolegomena has on his theology. Check your choice of theologians with the instructor. You will present your summary to the rest of the class.
 - a. Use the Paper Template - No Title Page. Be sure to follow Vyhmeister and the Sample Paper for correct formatting. Include a bibliography (even though it may only contain one entry).
 - b. The summary should include four key elements. 1) An overall summary of the author’s prolegomena, with a focus on the author’s presuppositions. 2) The strengths of his prolegomena. 3) The weaknesses of his prolegomena. 4) Your evaluation of the author’s prolegomena in terms of theological accuracy, usefulness to the reader, and an appropriate balance between biblical and philosophic arguments. When you comment on others’ summaries, be sure to include references to these four key points.
 - c. I understand that for many of you this is a brand new endeavor and evaluating a scholarly work may seem intimidating. Just look at the work from your own perspective and respond honestly.
 - d. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is treating another’s language or thought as one’s own original work. Plagiarized papers will be required to be rewritten, but the late penalty will still be in effect.
 - e. Do not hand in a paper from another course or one that has been revised from another course. Do not even attempt to hand in work done by another student.

4. Write a devotional on a topic of your choice. Specific information is given in the Devotional Template in the Research Module.
5. The final exam will be taken at the completion of the course. It is open book and open notes; it is focused on the Prolegomena section of the course, not on the research and writing section.

GRADING

Vyhmeister Assessment	15%
Reading	10%
Class Discussion	20%
Prolegomena Summary	20%
Devotional	10%
Final Exam	25%

GRADING SCALE	
94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
85-89	B
83-84	B-
81-82	C+
75-80	C
73-74	C-
64-72	D
0-63	F

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Every student will need a web browser to interact with MyMaranatha in order to complete their coursework. The most important aspects of the web browser you use are **the type of browser and the version of the browser**. As you begin classes make sure your browser is the most up to date version. You can contact IT support at 920-206-2322 or send an email to support@mbu.edu to obtain help in updating your browser.

A current version of the following Internet Browser types is fully supported:

- Google Chrome (recommended)
- Internet Explorer
- Mozilla Firefox
- Microsoft Edge

What about using a tablet or phone to interact with MyMaranatha?

My Maranatha can be accessed via a tablet or phone but not every feature has been designed to interact with a phone or tablet. **Taking an exam or a quiz must be done on a laptop or computer as this function is not fully supported on a tablet at this time.**

You may use a PC (Windows XP or higher) or Mac (10.3 or higher). (Basically, if your computer is less than three years old, you'll probably be fine.) Webcams and webcam software are optional. You are encouraged to have the latest version of virus protection software installed (i.e. MacAfee Virus Protection, OneCare).

Office 360 is recommended; you can get a student version through IT at Maranatha. Go to my.mbu.edu, login, go to the Quick Links box on the lower left, and click the IT and Online Support link.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

One source for academic help in any course is the Academic Success Center. If you require specific targeted academic help for any reason contact the Academic Success Center located in the Cedarholm Library. You can contact the Academic Success Center director at academicsuccess@mbu.edu.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, the law requires that all students with disabilities be given a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Success Center director at academicsuccess@mbu.edu.

CONTACTS

PROFESSOR:

Dr. Larry R. Oats

Office: 920-206-2324

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IT SUPPORT

920-206-2322

There is a link on my.mbu.edu to email IT Support. Otherwise, email support@mbu.edu.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berkhof, Louis. *Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979. First published by Eerdmans, 1932. This is the Prolegomena for his larger *Systematic Theology*.

_____. *Systematic Theology*. Fourth edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939.

The standard Reformed textbook for systematic theology by a former president of Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This book is a great treasure-house of information and analysis, and is probably the most useful one-volume systematic theology available from any theological perspective. This does not have a prolegomena; that is found in the preceding entry.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. 2 vols., New York: Harper & Row, 1978-79.

A work by a contemporary theologian who is broadly in the Reformed tradition.

Boice, James Montgomery. *Foundations of the Christian Faith*. Revised one-volume edition. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

A Reformed guide to systematic theology written by the theologian-pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. This work is written in a popular, readable style, with helpful application of doctrines to life. The first two chapters are his "Prolegomena," but it is not a standard approach to explaining his methodology.

Boyce, James Petigru. *Abstract of Systematic Theology*. Reprint edition: Christian Gospel Foundation, n.d. First published 1887.

A Baptist systematic theology that is also Reformed in doctrinal orientation by a former president and professor of systematic theology in the Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. The first chapter is his prolegomena.

Buswell, James Oliver, Jr. *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962-63.

A Reformed systematic theology by the former dean of the graduate faculty at Covenant College and Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. The Introduction is his prolegomena.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Ed. by John T. McNeill. Trans. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles. The Library of Christian Classics, Vols. 20-21. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960. Trans. from the 1559 text and collated with earlier versions.

This is the best available English translation of Calvin's systematic exposition of the Christian faith. Calvin did not write a prolegomena

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. 7 vols. plus index vol. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-48.

Chafer (1871-1952) was the first president of Dallas Theological Seminary. The seven-volume edition is the most extensive dispensational systematic theology ever written. The two volume edition is a condensation of the earlier work. Chapter 1 is his prolegomena.

Dabney, Robert L. *Systematic Theology*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985. Reprint of 1878 edition.

A Southern Presbyterian who represented a strongly Reformed position, Dabney (1820-98) was professor of theology at Union Seminary in Virginia. He was also chaplain and later chief of staff for General Stonewall Jackson during the American Civil War. Section 1 is (sort of) his prolegomena.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.

A thorough textbook in systematic theology from a Baptist perspective. Erickson was Academic Dean at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn, and on the faculty at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. He is currently Distinguished Professor of Theology at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. This book includes interaction with all the major trends in contemporary non-evangelical theology, as well as helpful material for personal application. Erickson's first section is his prolegomena.

Finger, Thomas N. *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive*.

Madison, WI: IVP Academic, 2010. One of the best Anabaptist theologies. It also contains good historical information. Part 1, Chapters 3, 4 are as close as he comes to a prolegomena.

Gill, John. *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978.

Gill (1697-1771) was a highly influential Baptist pastor, a prolific writer, and a respected theologian in 18th century England. He was also Reformed in his view of God's sovereignty. He does not have a prolegomena.

Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation, and Authority*. 6 vols. Waco, Tex.: Word, 1976-83.

A major work containing detailed interaction with hundreds of other scholarly positions. Henry is a leading evangelical theologian with great strengths especially in the areas of apologetics and philosophical theology. This is not a traditional systematic theology, so he does not have a typical prolegomena.

Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. First published 1871-73.

A major Reformed systematic theology which is still widely used today. Hodge (1797-1878) was professor of systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Chapter 1 is his prolegomena, although he does discuss some of the material of a typical prolegomena in the following chapters.

Lewis, Gordon R., and Bruce Demarest. *Integrative Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987-94.

Lewis and Demarest are both professors of systematic theology at Denver Seminary in Colorado (a Conservative Baptist seminary). This is an excellent contemporary work that integrates historical, biblical, apologetic, and practical material with systematic theology. Chapter 1 is their prolegomena.

Litton, Edward Arthur. *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*. New edition, ed. by Philip E. Hughes. London: James Clarke, 1960. First published 1882-92.

A standard Anglican (or Episcopalian) systematic theology by an evangelical British theologian of the 19th century. Litton lived from 1813 to 1897. He is an older writer, so he

does not have a prolegomena, but his first two chapters cover some of the material expected in a prolegomena.

MacArthur, John and Richard Mayhue. *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017.

This theology is dispensational, mildly Calvinistic, and evangelical. Chapter 1 is their prolegomena.

McCune, Rolland. *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity*. Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009.

This 3-volume systematic theology is a fundamental Baptist theology by a long-time professor at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. The first section is his prolegomena.

Miley, John. *Systematic Theology*. 2 vols. Library of Biblical and Theological Literature, Vols. 5-6. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1892-94. Reprint: Peabody, Mass.: Hendriksen, 1989.

This is probably the most scholarly and extensive Arminian systematic theology ever written. Miley was a professor at Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey. The Introduction is his prolegomena.

Mueller, John Theodore. *Christian Dogmatics*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1934.

A condensation and translation of Francis Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* (Christian Dogmatics) by a professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, a Missouri Synod Lutheran seminary. An excellent statement of conservative Lutheran theology. The Introduction is his prolegomena.

Mullins, Edgar Young. *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1917.

An evangelical systematic theology by a former president of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Mullins lived from 1860 to 1928.

Murray, John. *Collected Writings of John Murray*. 4 vols. Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1976-82.

Murray (1898-1975) was professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and one of the most articulate modern defenders of Reformed theology. This is not a systematic theology, so there is no prolegomena.

Olson, Arnold T. *This We Believe: The Background and Exposition of the Doctrinal Statement of The Evangelical Free Church of America*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Free Church Publications, 1961.

A guide to Christian doctrine based on the widely-used statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America. Olson was the first president of the Evangelical Free Church.

Pieper, Francis. *Christian Dogmatics*. 4 vols. Trans. by Theodore Engelder et al. St. Louis: Concordia, 1950-57. First published in German, 1917-24.

This is standard systematic theology of conservative Lutheranism. Pieper (1852-1931) was a Missouri Synod theologian and professor and president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. His first section is a prolegomena.

Pope, William Burt. *A Compendium of Christian Theology*. 2d ed. 3 vols. New York: Phillips and Hunt, n.d.

This work, first published in 1875-76, is one of the greatest systematic theologies written from a Wesleyan or Arminian perspective. His "Preliminaries" is the prolegomena.

- Reymond, Robert. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Waco: Word, 1998. A lengthy, current Reformed theology structured on the Westminster Confession. He is strongly Calvinistic. He has been criticized for abandoning Nicene Trinitarianism for a “Reformed” view of the Trinity. His historical, biblical and systematic approach has been generally well received. The “Introduction” is his prolegomena.
- Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology*. Wheaton: Victor, 1986.
A very clearly written introduction to systematic theology from a dispensationalist perspective, by a former professor of systematic theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. Section 1 is his prolegomena. This may not be used for GST 510 Prolegomena by any students who have graduated from a Bible college.
- Shedd, William G. T. *Dogmatic Theology*. 3 vols. in 4. Reprint edition: Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1979. Originally published by Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1889.
A useful Reformed systematic theology by a former professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Shedd lived from 1820 to 1894. The “Theological Introduction” is his prolegomena.
- Strong, Augustus H. *Systematic Theology*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1907.
Strong (1836-1921) was president and professor of theology at Rochester Theological Seminary, and, from 1905 to 1910, was the first president of the Northern Baptist Convention. This text was widely used in Baptist circles for most of the twentieth century, until it was largely replaced by Millard Erickson’s *Christian Theology*. Part 1 is his prolegomena.
- Thiessen, Henry Clarence. *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. First published 1949.
An evangelical systematic theology textbook by a former chairman of the faculty of the graduate school at Wheaton College. Thiessen is Baptist and Dispensational in theological perspective. The first two chapters are his prolegomena.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles*. Fifth edition, revised. London: Church Book Room Press, 1956. (First published 1930.)
Although this book is structured around the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles, it functions well as a thoughtful introductory text in Christian doctrine even for those outside the Anglican tradition. It has been widely used in British evangelical circles for many years. Thomas (1861-1924) was principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and then professor of Old Testament at Wycliffe College, Toronto. He also played a role in founding Dallas Seminary just before his death. This is not a standard theology and does not have a prolegomena.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. 3 vols. Trans. by George Musgrave Griger. Ed. by James T. Dennison, Jr. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1997.
Turretin (1623-87) taught theology for over thirty years at the Academy in Geneva. His work, written in Latin, is said to be one of the fullest expressions of Calvinistic theology ever published. It was reprinted (in Latin) in 1847 and widely used as a theological textbook for American Presbyterians, most notably by Charles Hodge at Princeton. His “First Topic” is his prolegomena.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *Biblical and Theological Studies*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976. Warfield did not write a standard theology, so there is no prolegomena in any of these three works.

_____. *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*. 2 vols. Nuttley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970-73.

_____. *Studies in Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Warfield (1851-1921) was a Reformed theologian who taught New Testament and then systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1887-1921. In the estimate of many people, he was one of the greatest American theologians.

Wiley, H. Orton. *Christian Theology*. Three vols. Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1940-43.

An Arminian systematic theology by a respected theologian in the Church of the Nazarene. Probably the best Arminian systematic theology published in the twentieth century, but it does not match Miley in scholarly depth.

Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology From a Charismatic Perspective*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988-92.

Williams is a charismatic scholar who teaches at Regent University (formerly CBN University). This clearly written theology interacts extensively with the biblical text and with other literature. It is the first published from an explicitly charismatic perspective. The "Introduction" is his prolegomena.

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Oct 25	Module 1 Begins Read the Course Syllabus	Orientation Introductions	Vyhmeister Chap 1 Module 2 is open
Nov 1	Module 2 Begins Read Erickson, Chapter 1 Read Lesson 1 Notes	Module 2 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chaps 3, 4 Discussion Forum Initial Answer	Discussion Forum Response Module 3 is open
Nov 8	Module 3 Begins Read Erickson, Chapter 2 Read Lesson 2 Notes	Module 3 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chapters 11, 12 Discussion Forum Initial Answer	Discussion Forum Response Module 4 is open
Nov 15	Module 4 Begins Read Erickson, Chapter 3 Read Lesson 3 Notes	Module 4 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chaps 13, 14 Discussion Forum Initial Answer Choose theologian for Prolegomena Summary Choose Devotional Topic	Discussion Forum Response Module 5 is open
Nov 22	Module 5 Begins	Module 5 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chapter 15 Discussion Forum Initial Answer	Discussion Forum Response Module 6 is open
Nov 29	Module 6 Begins Read Erickson, Chapter 4	Module 6 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chaps 16, 17 Submit your Devotional Rough Draft	Respond to the Devotionals of Fellow Students Module 7 is open
Dec 6	Module 7 Begins Read Erickson, Chapter 5	Module 7 Reading Report Research Paper Videos Vyhmeister Chaps 18, 19 Discussion Forum Initial Answer	Discussion Forum Response Upload Sample File Module 8 is open
Dec 13	Module 8 Begins Submit Prolegomena Summary to Discussion Forum	Module 8 Reading Report Vyhmeister Chapters 21, 22	Discussion Forum

Jan 10

Submit Final Prolegomena
Summary for grading
Submit Final Devotional for
Grading

Submit Showers Reading
Report

FINAL EXAM must be
completed by 5:00 PM
Friday.
You have one hour to take
this test. You may only
open this test once. This is
an open book and open
notes test.