

Veritas School of Theology

Veritas School of Theology Core Program Description

Veritas School of Theology is a two-term program designed to help students build a foundation of biblical theology and apply that foundation to their life and ministry. Students in this program will be taught both “what to think” (forging confessional unity) and “how to think” (creating lifelong learners). By taking an integrative approach to the study of Scripture, students will emerge from the program with the ability to *think biblically* in a variety of areas—from personal spiritual growth to missional living, from exegesis to discipleship, from parenting to epistemology.

This Theology Program is offered in 2 Terms: Term I (Mid May - Late June); Term II (Early September - Mid November). Sessions will be delivered in a hybrid model including Saturday seminars, Monday evening classes, small group cohort gatherings, and video lectures. Any students living within two hours of Veritas Church (Tiffin, IA) are expected to attend each Saturday seminar in-person, while any students living within one hour of Veritas Church (Tiffin, IA) are expected to additionally attend Monday evening class sessions in-person. [Click here](#) to view a month-by-month breakdown of the program!

Course Objectives

Biblical Spirituality:

- Define biblical spirituality in relation to specific passages of Scripture and Christian doctrine.
- Demonstrate familiarity with Scripture and Christian resources believers might employ to deepen their spirituality.
- Defend biblical spirituality among various views of spirituality in light of Scripture and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

- Articulate the role the spiritual disciplines (Bible intake, meditation, prayer, journaling, fasting, accountability relationships, etc.) play in the life of the believer and their value for Christian leadership.

Theology I & II:

- Clearly state their doctrinal position regarding Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology
- Be aware of the various doctrinal positions that exist regarding Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology
- Establish the connection between one's doctrinal position and one's faith practice
- Recognize the interconnected nature of their various doctrinal positions
- Clearly state their doctrinal position regarding the doctrine of Revelation, the nature of God, Creation and Providence, Angelology, Anthropology, and Hamartiology
- Be aware of the various doctrinal positions that exist regarding the doctrine of Revelation, the nature of God, Creation and Providence, Angelology, Anthropology, and Hamartiology
- Establish the connection between one's doctrinal position and one's faith practice
- Recognize the interconnected nature of their various doctrinal positions

Introduction to Hermeneutics:

- Explain and defend biblical inerrancy, and identify ways in which presuppositions related to biblical inerrancy influence interpretive methodology and exegesis.
- Identify and distinguish the various genres of Scripture.
- Implement principles for interpreting Scripture with respect to its genre and historical situation.
- Critique hermeneutical methodologies in light of their doctrinal conclusions.

Survey of Historical Theology:

- Justify the task of historical theology as an aid to systematic theological formulation.
- Demonstrate critical awareness of the methods and objectives of historical-theological inquiry.
- Defend selected Christian doctrines from an historical-critical perspective.
- Develop greater skill in applying historical-theological knowledge to the work of Christian proclamation and disciple making.

Course Resources

Credit & Foundations Resources:

- Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 2012. 110 pages. ISBN: 978-0881414271. \$9.80 (Please purchase [this](#) specific edition!)
- Bartholomew, Craig G., and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0801049569. 288 pages. \$17.32
- Bridges, Jerry, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2006. 352 pp. ISBN: 1631468723. \$14.49
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0310517979. 1616 pages. \$22.39
- Morgan, Christopher W., ed. *Biblical Spirituality*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 304 pp. ISBN: 1433547880. \$21.99
- Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993. ISBN-13: 978-0830816507. 286 pages. \$10.93
- Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0830839834. 145 pages. \$15.30
- Rinne, Jeramie. *Church Elders: How to Shepherd God's People Like Jesus*. 9 Marks: Building Healthy Churches. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1433540875. 122 pages. \$14.99
- Schreiner, Patrick. *The Kingdom of God and the Glory of the Cross*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1433558238. 160 pages. \$14.40
- Sproul, R.C. *Who is the Holy Spirit?* Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1642890488. 72 pages. \$3.00
- Whitney, Donald. *Spiritual Disciplines For the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press. 2014. 304 pp. ISBN 9781-61521-617-8. \$10.44
- A sturdy copy of the Bible (in CSB, ESV, or NIV translations)
- Additional Resources will be assigned as weekly readings throughout the course.

Additional Resources Required for Credit Students:

- Duesing, Jason G., and Nathan A. Finn, eds. *Historical Theology for the Church*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2021. 416 pages. ISBN: 978-1433649158. \$33.67
- Duvall, J. Scott and Hays, J. Daniel. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. (4th Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0310109174. \$26.01.
- Holcomb, Justin S. *Know the Creeds and Councils*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2014. 192 pages. ISBN: 978-0310515098. \$8.49

- Treat, Jeremy R. *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0310516743. 320 pages. \$16.79.
- Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Style Guide (Fourth Edition). *You can purchase a digital version of this Style Guide online at <https://shop.mbtis.edu/> for \$10. Otherwise, we do have a physical copy available at Veritas Church that you can periodically utilize as you prepare your final assignments.*

Assignments

Weekly Assignments

- **Reading, Reflection, and Participation**
 - In our experience, these 3 threads are inseparable elements to truly learning and growing in the educational environment. Reading well leads to fruitful reflection (practical application to life and ministry AND asking deeper questions of the material). This reflection leads to engaging and enriching participation in the classroom...which then propels the student into the next module of learning.
 - Each week, students will be assigned reading from the Bible and from at least one other resource that is key to the topic being discussed at the next class session. All students will be expected to complete a brief weekly participation assignment, which will include either an open-book written reflection ([Critical Reading Discussion](#)) or a series of closed-book quiz-type questions regarding the content.
 - In-person attendance is expected from all students for all scheduled class times and cohort gatherings. If you are unable to attend class in-person for any reason, you will be responsible to complete a make-up assignment to earn back your missed attendance points within two weeks of your absence. This assignment includes submitting a 250-word summary of the missed lecture content.

Key Projects

Theology I&II

- **Doctrinal (Confessional) Statements** (Required for All Students)
 - All students will be expected to complete two Doctrinal Statement projects.
 - Projects will be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman
 - For each of the assigned categories, students will be expected to answer the question, “What do I believe about...?”
 - The Scriptures
 - God
 - Man
 - Sin
 - Christ

- Salvation
- Kingdom
- Church
- End Times
- Holy Spirit
- Credit Students will be expected to adhere to the MBTS Style Manual.

Biblical Spirituality

- **Essays** (Both “Credit Only” & “All Student” Assignments)
 - If our spirituality is going to be Christian, it must be biblical, theological, and ecclesial. Students will build on their reading and discipleship group time by writing three essays to explain the “what,” “why,” and “how” of biblical spirituality and spiritual disciplines and apply that truth to their own church context. These essays provide students an opportunity to reflect theologically and practically on Scripture’s descriptions and prescriptions for spirituality.
 - Essay #1 (Credit Only) will focus on what biblical spirituality is, Essay #2 (Credit Only) will focus on why Christians should cultivate and practice biblical spirituality, and Essay #3 (All Students) should focus on how Christians should cultivate and practice biblical spirituality.
 - Credit Students will be expected to adhere to the MBTS Style Manual.
- **Personal Journal** (Credit Only)
 - Credit Students are asked to develop and record a daily journal that spans for four weeks during the VST Core Program. This daily journal will include: Quiet time reflections, personal Bible study notes from weekday Bible studies or services you attended, Sunday or weekday sermon notes, personal and professional prayer request list, daily diary insights, and any other areas of Spiritual Disciplines as discussed in our course and textbook materials.
- **Discipleship Groups** (Both “Credit Only” & “All Student” Assignments)
 - All students will meet in Discipleship Groups (outside of class) four times for 90-120 minutes each meeting during the VST Core Program. These groups are an excellent way for students to share their own experience and prior learning from classmates! Students will use given prompts, along with the student’s current or recent experience and perspectives to focus the discussion of each group meeting, laying a foundation for the “Rule of Life Project” due at the end of this class.
 - Credit Students only will additionally be required to submit a brief 1-2 page (double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman) summary of each meeting.

- **“Rule of Life” Final Project** (All Students)
 - Earlier in this class, students planned a “rule of life” for the duration of the course. For their Final Assignment for Biblical Spirituality, students will report on their practice of each spiritual discipline, reflect on those experiences, and propose how they might continue practicing that spiritual discipline in the future (including any revisions to their initial proposal).
 - Credit Students will be expected to adhere to the MBTS Style Manual.

Intro to Hermeneutics

- **Capstone Project** (Required for Credit, Recommended for Foundations)
 - “Thinking biblically” involves developing the ability to journey from acquiring biblical knowledge to teaching biblical truths to others. As such, the capstone of this program will be a teaching project whereby each student will be assigned a specific scriptural passage and be asked to develop a manuscript of a teaching or sermon. Additional assignment details will be sent out during Term II.
 - The project will be developed in an iterative process over the duration of the course. The final product will include two parts:
 - Part 1: Determining your Teaching
 - Part 2: Situating your Teaching
 - Background/context/genre of the biblical passage
 - Articulation of the locus of the passage within the biblical storyline
 - Articulation of the chosen hermeneutical method (Interpretive Journey, etc)
 - Articulation of the chosen delivery method (Stanley, Keller, etc.)
 - Intended Audience of your teaching/sermon
 - Part 3: Teaching Manuscript
 - The final project should be around 20 minutes in presentation length. A typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman manuscript should be submitted. There is no specific page length requirement—just make sure it reaches 20 minutes if read aloud.
 - Additionally, a one-page, typed journal entry detailing your “Hermeneutical Journey” while completing the Capstone Project should be submitted along with your manuscript.

Survey of Historical Theology

- **Historical Theology Project** (Required for Credit Students)
 - For this assignment, you will be required to perform research on a chosen doctrine, tracing its development through a specific period in the history of the

church. You will be able to choose between 3 contextual tracks (Pastor, Teacher, or Scholar) which will determine the specific format of your assignment.

- You will choose between one of the following two topics: (1) the doctrine of salvation in the Reformation Era; or (2) the two natures of Christ as confirmed at Chalcedon in the Early Church.
- Regardless of which track the student choose, the project must include a brief introduction (.5 pages) and will be followed by three main parts:
 1. An historical narrative that reviews the relevant names, dates, peoples, places, and works, telling the story of the how the doctrine developed in the assigned time period (2-3 pages)
 2. A case study that engages a primary source or sources to illustrate one aspect of the doctrine in history (2.5-3.5 pages)
 3. A concluding section that connects the doctrine in history to churches in the present (.5 pages)
- Credit Students will be expected to adhere to the MBTS Style Manual

Grading

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| Reading/Reflection/Participation | 40% |
| Final Assignments | 60% |

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| A | 96%+ | A- | 93-95.9% | B+ | 90-92.9% |
| B | 87-89.9% | B- | 84-86.9% | C+ | 81-83.9% |
| C | 77-80.9% | C- | 74-76.9% | D+ | 70-73.9% |
| D | 66-69.9% | D- | 63-65.9% | F | <62.9% |

All late assignments will be penalized 10% for each week that they are submitted past the due date (≤ 7 days late = 1 week; 7 to <14 days late = 2 weeks; etc.). **In the case of an emergency**, students may submit a Deadline Extension Request form (see example [here](#)) to request a non-penalized deadline extension. *Students will not be permitted to enroll in the next Term of VST unless all Final Assignments from the previous Term have been submitted.*

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Alyssa at vst@veritascommuniy.org with any additional questions!