

**Associated Canadian Theological Schools  
of Trinity Western University**

**THS 571 OL - Theology I (Online) – Fall 2019**

Dr. Brian Cooper, PhD (the one you talk to)  
Dr. Archibald J. Spencer (the one in the videos)  
Fall 2019  
3 Credit Hours

E-mail: [brian.cooper@twu.ca](mailto:brian.cooper@twu.ca)  
Course Duration: Sep 3 – Dec 21, 2019  
Instructional Content: Sep 3 – Oct 26, 2019

**Table of Contents**

[Course Description](#)

[Objectives](#)

[Course Textbooks](#)

[Course Assignments](#)

[Grading Scale](#)

[Important Academic Notes from ACTS](#)

**Course Description**

This course introduces the student to Believers' Church theology. It begins with a study of the nature and necessity of doing theology in the contemporary world with primary attention given to the authority of God's self-disclosure in Scripture, as well as discussions regarding hermeneutical issues from within a Believers' Church perspective. The subject matter then concludes with a consideration of the nature, ministry, and mission of the church in the world.

**Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, a student should be able to:

- describe the nature of theology, its role and importance in the life of the individual Christian and of the church as a whole;
- discuss the general structure and function of theology as an academic discipline, demonstrating an understanding of the relationship between various areas of theological study and their significance in the ACTS curriculum;
- explain the key features that mark the theological perspective of the Believer's Church Tradition, showing an appreciation for its relationship to other theological traditions within historic Christianity and recognizing the significance of such concepts in their own ministry setting;
- articulate the historic Christian doctrines of Revelation and Scripture, together with their biblical basis, contrasting these with other non-Evangelical perspectives;
- discuss important theological issues which arise in relation to these doctrines, together with significant historical perspectives on those issues and key biblical concepts which apply to them;
- apply basic methodological principles, techniques, and tools for effective theological reflection and ministry application in an Evangelical, Believer's Church Christian framework;
- formulate concrete plans for appropriate personal theological development through the course of the student's program;
- integrate personal theological development with practical aspects of personal Christian life and ministry.

## Course Textbooks

### Required:

Michael Allen, Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics: An Introduction and Reader*, (New York: T & T Clark International, 2012)

Brian Cooper. "What Was I Thinking?" n.d. <https://bdrcooper.wordpress.com/>. Selected articles as indicated on the course Moodle page.

Stanley Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2004)

Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th edition, (London, UK: Blackwells Publishing, 2011, pp. 1-264) Note: There are at least 6 editions of this book in print. Any one of them are acceptable as a text but the pagination of required reading, and the reading schedule are based on the 5th edition. It is up to the student to figure out the reading schedule based on a comparison of any other edition index with the 5th edition.

Archie J. Spencer, THS 571 Course notes (Unpublished and in PDF on-line). Note: Students will have access to the course notes on line and are asked not to reproduce these notes or to distribute them to others. Students can print a paper copy if they so choose.

## Course Instructional Content

This course will be delivered through the Moodle platform. You are required to watch, listen to, and/or read the course instructional content and interact about the content in the online forums. The full instructional script along with links to the videos and audio podcasts will be posted in the Moodle online classroom.

## Course Assignments

Assignments are due by midnight (your time) on the day they are due. I would ask that you submit your assignments in the online Moodle classroom accessible through MyCourses. When you go to the Moodle classroom, you will see assignment folders where you can submit assignments. Once I have marked your assignment, I will put it in your grade book in the Moodle classroom where you can check your grade and review the comments I made on the assignment (you will receive an automatic notification whenever I put a graded assignment in your grade book). Please note that I will typically deduct 5% of an assignment's total possible value for each day that it is late. I will consider extensions in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency (when a doctor's note accompanies the request). For the times when I allow a student to rewrite an assignment, I will generally take off 20% of the assignment's value before assigning a grade to the rewritten assignment.

Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of them:

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% Final Grade	Cumulative %
	Sep 3	Pre-reading Due		
1	Sep 3-7	Forum Week #1	5%	5%
2	Sep 9-14	Forum Week #2	5%	10%
3	Sep 16-21	Forum Week #3	5%	15%
4	Sep 28	Two Book Reviews	30%	45%
5	Sep 30-Oct 5	Forum Week #4	5%	50%
6	Oct 7-12	Forum Week #5	5%	55%
7	Oct 15-19	Forum Week #6	5%	60%
8	Oct 26	Major Essay	40%	100%

### Course Pre-Reading Requirement

Due to the condensed nature of this course, please have the following read before the course begins on Sept 3, 2019:

Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th edition, (London, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8.

You will be expected to integrate ideas from this textbook into the forum discussions and other assignments.

### Readings and Online Forum Participation (30% of the final grade)

This course has six online forum weeks where you will have an opportunity to interact with others in the class around key questions, assignments and/or additional lecture material. These discussions are designed to foster creative discussion and growth in theological understanding and acumen. You should plan to invest approximately four hours into each forum week. Each forum is worth 5% of your final grade.

Students are expected to contribute to the forum discussions by posting a minimum of three conversational and two substantive contributions per forum week. Please make sure that you spread out your contributions over at least three days during the designated forum weeks so that you engage in the forum conversations at different points.

By conversational contributions, I mean simply joining the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said).

By substantive responses, I mean responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this usually takes 200-300 words). We have a tremendous opportunity to build upon one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. At times, we will respectfully challenge each other. We anticipate that this will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to take place, we must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. Disagreeing and challenging can be stimulating if done in an edifying manner.

#### **Substantive participation may include (among other things):**

- Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

#### **What Substantive Participation is NOT:**

- Very basic comments such as "I agree" or "I disagree."
- Restating what someone has said (*unless there is a direct purpose in doing so*).
- Disrespectfully disagreeing.
- Pat answers that are not thought-provoking.

**Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others' thinking:**

- What would happen if...
- Other times it may be helpful to...
- It is my understanding...what is your experience with this?
- You might approach this from...
- Is it possible that...
- Would you consider...
- Maybe...
- Possibly...
- Sometimes...
- I'm wondering if...
- Do you think...

Have fun!

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class!

### **Two Review Papers (30% of the Final Grade)**

All three texts (or designated parts thereof) are required reading throughout the duration of the course, as assigned. The course requires up to but no more than 1500 pages of text readings plus further research for the paper. Much of your learning in this course will depend upon careful, disciplined reading of assigned texts. A four-page summary/review, one for each of the McGrath and the Grenz texts books, should be submitted in the drop box marked "Reviews" on the Moodle web site for this course, on the following date: **Due Sept 28.**

### **Major Essay (40% of the final grade, Due October 26)**

Students will produce a research paper of not less than 15 and not more than 20 pages in length. It is to be typed using 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced. All supporting documentation and bibliography should be done in accordance with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 9th ed. All versions of Microsoft Word use this as a template for theses and term papers so I recommend this software to you. The paper should demonstrate a clear understanding of the doctrine, and/or methodological principle under discussion. It should also seek to establish, by weight of evidence from the Scriptures and secondary sources, a thesis statement in relation to the doctrine under discussion. Again, refer to the Syllabus Supplement for expectations on the shape and format of a research paper. There you will find a list of possible subjects and bibliographic resources to get you started. You can request further guidance from me if you require it. **Due Oct 26.**

### **Course Evaluation**

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Moodle classroom in Week 8.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skillful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.

C-	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

## Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Office.

## Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

### **Web Support – Student Portal** <https://www.twu.ca/students/current-students>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

### **Campus Closure**

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the following radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), STAR FM (107.1 FM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM). As well, an announcement will be placed on the University’s campus closure notification message box (604.513.2147) and on the front page of the University’s website (<http://www.twu.ca> – also see <https://www.twu.ca/campus-notification> for more details).

An initial announcement regarding the status of the campus and cancellation of classes is made at 6:00 AM and covers all classes beginning before 1:00PM. A second announcement is made at

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

11:00AM that covers all classes which begin between 1:00PM and 5:00PM. A third announcement is made at 3:00PM and covers those classes which begin after 5:00PM.

### **Paper Formatting**

Students need to adhere to Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format except for in counselling courses, for which APA format is used and for CanIL courses. Please refer to the TWU Citations Style Guides page ([https://www8.twu.ca/library/style\\_guides.html](https://www8.twu.ca/library/style_guides.html)) for information on different styles.

Students are strongly encouraged to use RefWorks (available through the library home page <https://www.twu.ca/library>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html) or <http://www.macmillanlearning.com/catalog/static/bsm/hacker/resdoc/home.htm>. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 7th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 6th edition. For Turabian, note that there are two formats – Notes (or Bibliography Style) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>.

For free online programs that will enable you to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> ("Chicago stands for "Turabian") or <http://www.citationmachine.net/>.

**Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!**

### **Research Ethics**

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <https://www.twu.ca/research/research-services/research-ethics>

Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

### **Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see 2016-17 Student Handbook, pp. 48-50). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage ([www.actsseminaries.com](http://www.actsseminaries.com)) at the following link: <http://www.actsseminaries.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ACTS-Catalogue-2014-15-Final-14-10-03.pdf>.

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self-running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10ujmBKDRdb53SZ3XHRoXJF6M52Uhu-kr2CV8l654XeA/edit#slide=id.p4>

[http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism\\_Spectrum\\_US\\_8.5x11.pdf](http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism_Spectrum_US_8.5x11.pdf)  
<https://prezi.com/dcbl-pnzuv9i/whats-the-big-deal-about-plagiarism/>

### **Equity of Access**

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. To repeat: To ensure that instructors know to accommodate a student who has a learning access issue, the student must inform the Director of Student Life of a disability before the beginning of the class. After that is too late.