



**A MINISTRY OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF INDIANA AND KENTUCKY
IN COOPERATION WITH ABC-GI ALONG WITH SPONSORING
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES & ASSOCIATIONS**

C104-Introduction to Theology

October 6, October 20, November 3 & November 17, 2018

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Description and Purpose

This Theology Course will enable you to define what you mean by “theology”. You will engage with classmates in discussing doctrines of Christian belief and ways we communicate our faith, and respond to challenges of faith in the twenty-first century. The approach that Rev. Kiser will take is known as “Systematic Theology,” which divides the theological quest up into various areas, such as: the study of the Trinity, the study of sin, the study of salvation, the study of the Church, etc. This is the form that both our texts use.

Two books will help us to do this: (1) An older text, Christian Beliefs, by the Dean and Professor of New Testament at the American Baptist Seminary. (2) A more recent book by Millard J. Erickson, Introducing Christian Doctrine, 2nd ed. Erickson is past president of the Evangelical Theological Society.

Finally, we will explore other contemporary issues of life, and how we approach them in the light of what we believe – how we “do faith.” People will often say things with which we don’t agree. So, we must learn to listen to others well, even if what they say, questions one of our core beliefs. We will work on listening skills this semester as well.

Focus of This Experience

- As to the manner in which we will study. Our class will be driven by discussion. To have an informed opinion, we must read the writings of others. To best understand what we read, we must write about and discuss our readings. This formula is tested through time and seems effective. We will write to learn.
- Each session, you will be asked to write a few one-paged papers on your reading. Please share the ideas that your reading stimulates and show me that you have read the text by what you write. By reading and writing, we will have much more interesting discussions in class. I am looking for content in writing, not grammatical perfection. These papers may either be typed or handwritten. They will not be graded, but I will take them seriously, so I hope that you take them seriously too.
- It is very likely that the instructor will present handouts for each class. These handouts will be the writings of other theologians who are discussing the topics that we are addressing each session. These handouts will be both read and discussed in class. This will not constitute extra work for you outside of class.

Required Texts

1. Christian Beliefs, by Ralph E. Knudsen, Judson Press,
If you have difficulty finding this book, CLI has permission from the publisher to copy it for your use. Please send \$15 to cover the cost of this expense. You may include it in the same check you send for your registration or send the payment separately. All checks must be made payable to *ABC-IN/KY*.
2. Introducing Christian Doctrine, 2nd ed. by Millard Erickson, Baker Book House Publishers, Copyright 2001, hardback, \$21.33. (This can be found on Amazon books)

Student Expectations

1. Attend all sessions whenever possible
2. Contact the instructor in advance, if you will be absent
3. Be prepared for each class session
4. Participate in class
5. Support and encourage other students in the class
6. Communicate with the instructor, if you have any questions or concerns

Please bring the following to each class session:

- Textbooks
- Good English Translation of the Bible
- Notebook (for handouts, assignments and taking notes)
- 2 pens/pencils (electronic device to take notes, if preferred)
- Syllabus, handouts & assignments
- Personal Journal

Requirements to Earn Credit

1. Completion of all reading and written assignments.
2. Participation in class discussions and exercises.
3. Read additional articles or blogs as may be assigned
4. Bring textbooks and completed assignments to each class session.
5. Attend at least 15 of the 20 hours of classroom time
6. If absent one class session, earn an excused absence by doing the following:
 - a. contact the instructor about your absence (preferably before the absence, but at least within 72 hours of the absence)
 - b. obtain notes from two students who did participate in any class session you missed
 - c. request a copy of the PowerPoint presentation(s) for the class session you missed in note format (3 slides per page); of course, this only applies if the instructor uses PowerPoint in the class session you missed.
 - d. complete a special assignment given by your instructor in addition to regular assignments; this is usually an enriching experience that will most likely pertain to the class session the student missed in some way.

Class Sessions

Note: Assignments listed under each class session date are due on or before that date.

Session 1—October 6

Assignments *prior* to Session 1:

- Read the Preface & the first five chapters (69 pages) of Christian Beliefs by Knudsen
- Titled “What I believe”—Write a brief (no more than 1 page) statement on your present beliefs that are the core of your Christian commitment.
- Read the 1st chapter in Erickson, pages 15-22, and focus on his understanding of what theology is. Pay special attention to the questions he has at the beginning of each chapter. Read pages 129-136 and write a response to any 3 questions on p. 129.
- Please come prepared to discuss the following: (1) What is your present area of ministry in your local church? (2). How do you think that the study of theology may help you grow in ministry? (3). How may this class help you to grow both intellectually and spiritually in order for you to minister even better?

Session One Objectives:

1. We will introduce ourselves, and share what we hope to learn from this course.
2. We will define what we mean by “theology.”
3. We will discuss Knudsen’s first five chapters (covering the Bible, God and Jesus Christ).
4. We will share our “What I Believe” statements regarding our own theological faith.
5. We will view a DVD by Lee Strobel, featuring his own form of theological ministry that is known as “Apologetics.” This will serve as another way to “do” theology.
6. There will also be a class handout from *A Layman’s Guide to Protestant Theology* on the value of theology.

Session 2—October 20

We will discuss three aspects of theology in Knudson and Erickson. They are: 1) the Holy Spirit; 2) sin and forgiveness; and 3) salvation.

Assignments *prior* to Session 2:

- In pp. 71-83, in Knudson, we will discuss the role and work of the Holy Spirit. Look on page 83, and write a one-paged response to 1 of the 10 questions. Choose whichever of the 10 questions you wish.
- On pages 269-285 in Erickson, we also will discuss the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Choose one of the 3 questions on page 269, and write a one-page response.
- In pp. 85-97, in Knudson, we read of the topics of “sin and forgiveness.” Please choose one of the 10 questions on page 97 and write a one-page response.
- In Erickson, pp. 187-201. On page 187, choose 1 of the 5 questions and write a one-paged response. On page 193, choose 1 of the 5 questions and write a one-paged response.
- On pages 99-111, Knudson deals with the topic of “salvation.” Write a one-paged response to one of the questions on page 111.
- On pages 289-296, Erickson deals with the “conceptions of salvation.” Write a one-paged response to one of the study questions on page 289.

Session Two Objectives:

1. Grow in our understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit.
2. Grow in our understanding of the concepts of sin and forgiveness.
3. Grow in our understanding of the concept of salvation.
4. Work on our listening skills.

Session 3—November 3

In session 3, we will discuss issues such as the church and the kingdom of God.

Assignments *prior* to Session 3:

- On pages 113-126, Knudson discusses “the church.” Please write a one-paged paper in response to the 10 questions on pp. 125-126.
- On pages 339-368, Erickson discusses the church in a different way from Knudson. Please write a one-paged response to the questions on page 339. Also do the same with the questions on pages 346 and 356.
- On pages 127-151, Knudson discusses the “Kingdom of God.” Please respond to one of the 10 questions on both pages 138 and 151. Write a one-paged response to each of the two questions you choose.

Session Three Objectives:

1. Grow in our understanding of the function and calling of the “Church.”
2. Understand and be able to convey to others the importance of the local church in God’s overall plan of salvation.
3. Understand the role of the church in the “kingdom of God.”

Session 4—November 17

In session 4, we will discuss “Immortality.”

Assignments *prior* to Session 4:

- Please read pp. 153-163 in Knudson and write 2 one-paged papers in response to 2 questions from the questions on page 163. This is a deviation from our normal practice.
- Erickson discusses “Last Things” on pp. 371-414. On pages 371, 383 and 406, you will find questions to consider. Please write a one-paged response to one of the questions on each of these three pages (e.g. 3 one-paged papers). You will notice that you are not required to write a page on the questions on p. 393, but the information in that section may prove to be a topic of discussion in class, so please read it prayerfully.

Session Four Objectives:

1. Students will discuss how they have used (and/or will use) some learnings/insights in terms of their own faith journey.
2. Turn in all work due to complete the requirements of this course
3. Complete Evaluation Forms

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Arrive 8:45am

9:00-10:15 Session A

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-11:45 Session B

11:45-12:30 Lunch

12:30-1:45 Session C

1:45-2:00 Break

2:00-3:15 Session D

CLASS LOCATION

Oct 6, Oct 20 & Nov 3

Franklin College

(Campus Address: 101 Branigin Blvd, Franklin, IN 46131)

Johnson Center for Fine Arts (corner of Branigin Blvd & Grizzly Dr)

South Entrance (off Grizzly Drive)

1st Floor, Room 104

CLASS LOCATION

November 17

TBA