



WBUonline
School of Christian Studies

UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

COURSE NUMBER & NAME:

THST 5302 Christian Theology

TERM & DATES:

Fall 1 2026 Aug 10—Oct 3, 2026

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr.
Professor of Theological Studies
Ben and Bertha Mieth Professor of Missions

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Office phone: 806.291.1166 (assistant 806.291.1160)
WBU Email: jgivens@wbu.edu
Mobile phone: 806.292.3957 (please reserve for emergencies)

OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:

Flores Bible Building office suite
Office Hours will be posted in the Instructor Info section of Blackboard

COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines managed through [Blackboard](#)

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Research in the nature, source, and scope of the doctrines of Christianity

PREREQUISITE:

None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:

Title	Editor/Author	Publisher	Ed	Year	ISBN
<i>Created for Community</i>	Grenz/Smith	Baker Academic	3rd	2014	9780801049293
Bible	Any modern translation recognized by mainstream Christianity				

NOTE: There is an Automatic eBook already in the Blackboard classroom – click on the menu link for information. Should you wish to purchase a print copy remember to opt out by the date listed in Blackboard.

1. INTERNET EQUIPPED COMPUTER

- A. Must conform to [minimum recommended settings](#) identified by WBUonline
- B. Should use compatible browser and have [correct settings](#) as recommended by Blackboard
- C. Must utilize WBU [student email account](#) for official university communications

2. WBU BLACKBOARD COURSE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

- A. All assignments and other class issues will be available through [Blackboard](#).
- B. WBUonline technical support can assist you with log in issues, such as username and password.
- C. Contact to technical support is available on the login page of Blackboard. Support is 24/7 support by phone and available also by chat or creating a case.

3. WBU MABEE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

- A. Use the [LRC website](#) to search for book (sent via priority mail), articles, online articles and e-books, and other resources.
- B. The website also has tutorials for using their services.
- C. [Email](#) the Distance Learning Librarian with questions on LRC and assistance identifying/securing resources for papers.

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

Suggested texts for deeper understanding of topic

- 1. Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, Eerdmans, 2000
- 2. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 6th ed., Wiley, 2016
- 3. James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (4th ed.) and vol. 2 (2nd ed.), Wipf & Stock, 2014

COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

The student will:

- 1. Demonstrate knowledge of major doctrinal positions, including identification of relevant biblical passages, chief exponents, and key theological terms.
- 2. Articulate clearly his or her own personal beliefs in relation to historic Christian doctrines.
- 3. Identify meaningful ways to relate theology to the ministry of the church.
- 4. Demonstrate graduate-level research, writing, and argumentation in the field of theology.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
- Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.
- Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).

- Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
- Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 2 or more weeks of an 8 week term, may receive an F for that course.
- Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given session is considered a “no-show” and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
- A student with excessive non-participation may also have a Predict Report filed with student’s WBU email and appropriate administrative personnel.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Read Wayland Baptist University’s [policy on academic integrity](#), as you will be held to it in this course. There is a no tolerance for plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

No use of any generative AI tools permitted.

1. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like ChatGPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
2. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
3. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

The instructor will use AI roleplaying assignments in Blackboard each week to facilitate understanding of select doctrinal issues, but students should submit their own work on all assignments.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:

1. *Blackboard Scavenger Hunt.* The hunt is designed to help familiarize you with the essential features of Blackboard. **Complete by Wednesday of Week 1 (3rd day of class). 1 point** will be deducted each day for **late submissions**.
2. *Discussion Boards.* Students are expected to participate in all discussion boards and any other weekly group activities. Active, robust student participation in class interaction on theological topics enriches the class.

NOTE: Because the university classroom is a place designed for the free exchange of ideas, students are encouraged to think aloud and to be honest about their theological perspectives and concerns. Students should respect the views of their peers, addressing any concerns or questions about another's views with charity and compassion, so that the whole body of Christ might be built up (Eph. 4:11-15).

3. *Dialogues with Theologians.* Students will interact with assigned AI chatbots roleplaying theologians to learn more about these theologians' perspectives on doctrines. Students will respond to a prompt after engaging in dialog with the AI.
4. *Research Paper.* Students will write a research paper on a selected Christian doctrine. Sample topics are available on Blackboard.

The paper should set forth the student's doctrinal position in light of the Bible and historical developments as informed by a critical analysis of sources. The paper should consist of **10-15 pages of text** in **10 or 12 point** legible font. The paper should be written in proper English utilizing the [style guide of the School of Christian Studies](#) (Turabian).

Sources:

- A. **Minimum of ten** strong sources
- B. [Monographs](#) on the topic are the preferred source for research
- C. **At least one** [peer-reviewed journal article](#) should be used, *if available*
- D. Bibles, biblical reference works, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the textbook do **not** count toward the minimum number, but should be included in your bibliography if used
- E. Per School of Christian Studies guidelines, Internet sources **must** have approval of the professor before they are used in the paper; **only one** Internet source may be used in the paper; additional sources may be used *only if* approved by instructor

Grading:

- A. Incremental **due dates** are listed in Blackboard
 - B. Grading will be on a rubric provided in the Course Info section
 - C. Students should make sure that they **reference** not only direct quotations but also information gleaned from sources but cited in an indirect manner (whether summarized or paraphrased)
 - D. Research papers should utilize direct quotations **only** when *central* to the paper. The student should learn to put material into her or his own words
 - E. **Late** papers will be lowered **3 points per day**, including weekends. Instructor may allow extensions for pre-approved reasons and emergency situations
5. *Exam.* Students will take a proctored final exam over the material covered in class discussion.

GRADING CRITERIA

University Grading Scale	B 80-89
A 90-100	C 70-79

D 60-69
F below 60

Procedure Used for Computation of Final Grade

1. Scavenger Hunt.....5%
2. Discussions.....25%
3. Dialogues20%
4. Research Paper25%
5. Exam25%

Grade Appeal Statement: Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	Introduction; Chs. 1 & 2
Week 2	Chs. 3 & 4
Week 3	Chs. 5 & 6
Week 4	Chs. 7 & 8
Week 5	Chs. 9 & 10
Week 6	Chs. 11 & 12
Week 7	Exam (not final assignment)
Week 8	Submit Research Project

INSTRUCTOR'S CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT

It is the instructor's belief that the Bible is written *exactly* the way God intended for it to be written. The instructor is also committed to the historic position of Baptists that religious liberty is for all . . . including his students. ☺

The liberty I contend for, is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration, is despicable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest, to grant indulgence; whereas, all should be equally free, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Christians. Test oaths and established creeds should be avoided as the worst of evils.

— John Leland, Virginia Baptist and advocate for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; quoted in *Baptist Ways* by Bill Leonard (2003, pp. 130-31).