

WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

VIRTUAL CAMPUS

SCHOOL OF RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Mission: 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 AND TITLE

RLGN 5313 VC01 Issues in Contemporary Theology: Evangelical Views of Hell

TERM AND DATES

Summer 2018 May 28-Aug 11, 2018

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr.

Professor of Religion and Philosophy

Office) 806.291.1166 Assist) 806.291.1160 Fax) 806.291.1969 Mobile) 806.292.3957

jgivens@wbu.edu

Instant Messaging available through Blackboard IM (download through Tools section)

OFFICE LOCATION AND HOURS

Flores Bible Building office suite

Tues 2:00-5:00; Wed 9:00-10:00; 2:00-3:00; Thurs 8:00-11:00 CST/CDT (phone and instant messaging)

*Other times available by email and/or appointment; **Mobile phone for emergencies***

CLASS MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Asynchronous interaction; WBUonline Blackboard website

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Research in issues in contemporary theology based upon the writings of major twentieth-century theologians.

The traditional doctrine of hell, solidified by Augustine at the end of the Patristic period, has increasingly been questioned by modern theologians. Many evangelical theologians in the past few decades have moved away from the traditional view. This course will introduce the student to the biblical texts and arguments of various evangelical positions to help students consider their own theological position.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COURSE NUMBERS

None.

REQUIRED RESOURCE MATERIALS

1. *STUDENT TEXTBOOKS* (See [WBUonline bookstore](#) for ISBN numbers)
 - a. Preston Sprinkle, ed., *Four Views on Hell*, 2nd ed with new contributors, Counterpoints: Bible and Theology Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016). Primary text to introduce evangelical views on the doctrine of hell.
 - b. Christopher M. Date, Gregory G. Stump, and Joshua W. Anderson, eds., *Rethinking Hell: Readings in Evangelical Conditionalism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014). Supplemental text defending the doctrine of hell as eternal effect.
 - c. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004). Supplemental text defending the doctrine of hell as eternal process.
 - d. Bible, any modern Christian translation.
2. *INTERNET EQUIPPED COMPUTER*
 - a. All assignments and other class issues will be available through the [Blackboard website](#).
 - 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 BLACKBOARD COURSE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE*
 - 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.
4. *WBU RESOURCE LEARNING CENTER (Library)*

Textbooks, articles, databases, e-books, and other items necessary for research.

OPTIONAL RESOURCE MATERIALS

1. Bb for Students—Apple App Store or Google Play

COURSE OUTCOME COMPETENCIES

The student will

1. compare and contrast the contemporary views of hell: eternal punishment, conditional immortality, and universalism.
2. evaluate the views in light of key biblical passages and past theologians.
3. construct a statement of the student's personal belief about hell in light of the biblical, historical, and contemporary evidence.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
2. Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.

3. Student "attendance" in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).
4. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
5. Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course.
6. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term 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.
7. When a student reaches a number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will submit a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress to the student's WBU student email account and to appropriate university personnel.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

In this course, plagiarism or other forms of cheating will result in a zero for the assignment for any first instance. A zero in the course for any subsequent instance.

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 Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

1. *Discussion Boards.* Students will participate in weekly discussions based on assigned readings. Through these boards, students will engage one another in discussion and analysis of issues related to the doctrine of hell. These boards are intended to enhance student understanding of the issues, clarify personal theological views, and develop student reflective and critical thinking skills. Instructions and expectations will be provided in the Course Info section of the Blackboard course for the initial post and subsequent interaction.

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](#)).

2. *Book Review.* Students will write a **4-6 page** summary and review of a text on the doctrine of hell. The books will be selected during the start of the semester. Students will select a text on a doctrinal position other than the student's current position. Student reviews will be posted in Blackboard and will serve as the point of discussion for the week they are due, so students are responsible for reading the reviews of classmates. Detailed instructions will be provided in the Course Info section of Blackboard and at the start of term.

3. *Personal Position Papers.* Students will write reflective papers that contain a statement on their personal doctrine of hell. An initial paper at least **2 pages in length** will be written at the start of the term on what the student's current view is. The final reflective paper will be based on the readings and research conducted during the term. The paper will be at least **5 pages in length** and must critically interact with the biblical story, key biblical texts, and theological issues discussed during the term, not only stating your view but arguing why it is the best interpretation (including how it is a better understanding of the biblical narrative and individual texts than other discussed interpretations). The purpose of the reflective paper is to synthesize the various facts of the course into a meaningful whole expressing your personal view. This will **not** be a summary of discussion board posts nor a research paper. It is a reflective exercise describing the student's personal view over all reading and writing assignments throughout the term.

4. *Final Examination.* Students will take a comprehensive examination at the end of term, which will engage the different texts and topics discussed through the term.

Grading Criteria

1. University Grading System		2. Procedure Used for Computation of Final Grade	
A	90-100	a. <i>Weekly Discussions</i>	20%
B	80-89	b. <i>Book Review</i>	25%
C	70-79	c. <i>Initial Reflective Paper</i>	10%
D	60-69	d. <i>Final Reflective Paper</i>	20%
F	below 60	e. <i>Final Examination</i>	25%

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 Executive Vice President/Provost to the 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction to the Contemporary Debate on the Doctrine of Hell

Initial Position Paper Due (start of term)

- a. Sprinkle, Introduction to *Four Views of Hell*
- b. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, Introduction to *Hell Under Fire*
- c. R. Albert Mohler, “Modern Theology: The Disappearance of Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- d. John G. Stackhouse Jr., Foreword to *Rethinking Hell*
- e. Gregory G. Stump, Preface to *Rethinking Hell*
- f. Christopher M. Date, Editor’s Introduction to *Rethinking Hell*

Week 2 – Introduction to the Traditional View (Hell as Eternal Process)

- a. Denny Burk, “Eternal Conscious Torment,” in *Four Views of Hell* (and responses from other contributors)
- b. Robert A. Peterson, “Systematic Theology: Three Vantage Points of Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- c. Sinclair B. Ferguson, “Pastoral Theology: The Preacher and Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*

Week 3 – The Bible as Read by Traditionalists

- a. Daniel I. Block, “The Old Testament on Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- b. Robert W. Yarbrough, “Jesus on Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- c. Douglas J. Moo, “Paul on Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- d. Gregory K. Beale, “The Revelation on Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*
- e. Christopher W. Morgan, “Biblical Theology: Three Pictures of Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*

Week 4 – Introduction to Conditional Immortality (Hell as Eternal Effect)

- a. John G. Stackhouse Jr., “Terminal Punishment,” in *Four Views of Hell* (and responses from other contributors)
- b. Peter S. Grice, “Igniting an Evangelical Conversation,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- c. Glenn A. Peoples, “Introduction to Evangelical Conditionalism,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- d. Christopher W. Morgan, “Annihilationism: Will the Unsaved Be Punished Forever?” in *Hell Under Fire*

Week 5 – The Bible as Read by Conditionalists

- a. Basil F. C. Atkinson, “The Doom of the Lost,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- b. Kim G. Papaioannou, “The Development of Gehenna between the Old and New Testaments,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- c. E. Earle Ellis, “New Testament Teaching on Hell,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- d. Ralph G. Bowles, “Does Revelation 14:11 Teach Eternal Torment?” in *Rethinking Hell*
- e. Harold E. Guillebaud, “The General Trend of Biblical Teaching,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- f. Anthony C. Thiselton, “Claims about ‘Hell’ and Wrath,” in *Rethinking Hell*

Week 6 – Conditionalism in the Early Church and Recent Influential Defenses

- a. LeRoy E. Froom, “Conditionalism in the Early Church,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- b. Edward W. Fudge, “The Final End of the Wicked,” in *Rethinking Hell*
- c. Stephen H. Travis, “The Nature of Final Destiny,” in *Rethinking Hell*

- d. John R. W. Stott, "Judgment and Hell," in *Rethinking Hell*
- e. Clark H. Pinnock, "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," in *Rethinking Hell*
- f. John W. Wenham, "The Case for Conditional Immortality," in *Rethinking Hell*

Week 7 – Conditionalism's Philosophical Support and Conditionalism within Evangelicalism

- a. Philip E. Hughes, "Is the Soul Immortal?" in *Rethinking Hell*
- b. Henry Constable, "Divine Justice," in *Rethinking Hell*
- c. Nigel G. Wright, "A Kinder, Gentler Damnation?" in *Rethinking Hell*
- d. Richard G. Swinburn, "The Future of the Totally Corrupt," in *Rethinking Hell*
- e. Evangelical Alliance, "Hell and Evangelical Unity," in *Rethinking Hell*
- f. Roger E. Olson, "Diverse Christian Beliefs about Life beyond Death," in *Rethinking Hell*
- g. Ben Witherington III, "Equally Orthodox Christians," in *Rethinking Hell*

Week 8 – Introduction to Evangelical Views of Universalism and Purgatory

- a. Robin A. Parry, "A Universalist View," in *Four Views of Hell* (and responses from other contributors)
- b. J. I. Packer, "Universalism: Will Everyone Ultimately Be Saved?" in *Hell Under Fire*
- c. Jerry L. Walls, "Hell and Purgatory," in *Four Views of Hell* (and responses from other contributors)

Week 9 – Finish Book Reviews

Book Review Due

Week 10 – Discussion of Book Reviews

Week 11 – Final Considerations on Hell

Personal Position Paper Due

Final Examination

INSTRUCTOR'S CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT

The doctrine of hell should make any Christian who truly reflects on it despair for those who are lost in their sins. It is about the eternal destiny of those who do not know the Father through his Son, who alone reveals him. While the Spirit helps us to understand what the Father has revealed through the Son as this is recorded in the Bible, we must confess that we are human beings with finite understanding attempting to understand an infinite God and his eternal plans. We are also fallen creatures whose sin will always taint our interpretation of Scripture though we mercifully thank the Father that he has given us his Spirit to help us hear his voice as we read and reflect on them.

Therefore, we should approach this topic with gravity and sensitivity and demonstrate charity to our colleagues as we read, reflect, and discuss this doctrine during the term. All of us live by faith that God's love is so deep it will forgive anyone who seeks him regardless of their sin. All of us live with the awareness that our sins have injured our neighbors and deserves the wrath of God for what we have done to them. All of us live in the hope that God one day will be all in all because Christ has reconciled all things. We may disagree how these truths work

themselves out, but our doctrinal differences do not negate our adoption as one new humanity in Christ so we should always seek to live as one as our triune God is one.