TYNDALE UNIVERSITY

TYNDALE SEMINARY
COURSE SYLLABUS

"The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel."

Semester, Year	Winter 2027
Course Title	**SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING**
Course Code	**THEO 0531 1A**
Date **Delivery Format**	From January 11 to April 11, 2027 ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The course is web-based asynchronous with no fixed class time. **BI-WEEKLY COFFEE HOUR (Online)**: Every other Tuesday from 3:00 to 4:00 PM (EST) on the dates indicated on the course page in Moodle, along with the meeting link. Alternative arrangements to meet with the instructor can be made for those who are unable to join during these times.
Instructor	**ALEX TREW, PhD** Email: atrew@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca email account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Empowers students to use the tools of systematic theology to understand, proclaim, and live the Christian faith today. We will address such questions as: How can we know God, and how do we adjudicate truth claims about God? How can God be both one and three? How can Jesus be both divine and human? Who is the Holy Spirit and how does the Spirit's work relate to that of the Father and Son? How does theological knowledge impact our day-to-day lives in the church and in the world?

Prerequisites: HIST 0561 or HIST 0562

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the interconnection and cohesion of Christian doctrines and apply implications for Christian life, vocation, and mission.
2. Evaluate intelligently, graciously, and critically the theological ideas and writings of others, and articulate your own positions in a manner that is informed, coherent, winsome, and charitable.
3. Distinguish between the essentials and non-essentials of the Christian faith through deeper and broader exposure to the historic Christian Tradition.
4. Effectively identify, assess, and analyze theological sources through electronic library research tools.
5. Express their love for God and their worship of God through deeper and more integrated knowledge of God.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Seventh edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2025. (**hereafter *CT***).

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline.* Translated by G.T. Thomson. Harper & Row, 1959.

Other assigned readings will be available via the course page, as per the schedule below.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends STEPBible – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

NOTE: Marking rubrics for all assignments will be posted on our course page on Moodle.

Assignments are to be uploaded to the assignment submission section of the course page in pdf or Microsoft Word format by 11:59 PM (Eastern Time) on the assigned due date. **Papers submitted after 11:59 PM on the due date will receive a grade deduction (i.e., A to B) for each day (or part thereof) following the due date.** This late policy will apply to all assignments for which no extension has been granted. Extensions will be granted only for serious personal, family, or health situations.

1. Group Discussions (20% of Final Grade).

Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in forums. During weeks 3, 4, 6, and 9 students will be expected to participate in online group discussions. The purpose of the discussions is to engage the theological content of the course and explore the implications of the material covered for discipleship and ministry. The instructor will post a question each week for group reflection.

Students are expected to post their own response to the question (300-400 words) by 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) on Tuesday evening of the week in question, and then reply to the reflections of each of the other students in their group by 11:55 PM (Eastern Time) on Thursday of that same week.

Students will be assessed individually for their contributions to each weekly discussion.

2. Preliminary Research Assignment (15%; due Feb 14 11:59 PM [Eastern Time])

This assignment will prepare students for the final research paper and provide an opportunity for the instructor to give students feedback and direction. Students should follow the steps below, outlining a response for each step for the instructor.

a) **Initial research on theologian or issue.** Choose a particular theologian or theological issue you would like to research and find two encyclopedia entries that provide an overview of the theologian or issue (lists of topics and resources to be provided).
b) **Identifying possible topics.** If you choose a theologian, identify two or three major issues they addressed, based on the encyclopedia articles you read. If you choose an issue, identify two or three major thinkers who have addressed the issue.
c) **Choosing your topic.** From the above, choose *one issue* you would like to address, and *one thinker* who addresses that issue. Then state your topic in the form of a *research question*, and provide a tentative answer.
d) **Identifying good quality resources.** Find eight or more good quality academic sources on the proposed topic. Sources must include at least three academic journal articles, at least one academic monograph, and relevant sources from the major thinker in question as per the proposed topic.

3. Open-Book Examination (30%; due Mar 14 11:59 PM [Eastern Time]).

A set of short-essay examination questions (with some choice) will be posted online on Oct 30, and students will have until Nov 13 at 11:59 PM (Eastern Time) to complete the exam. Further instructions will be provided at that time.

4. Short Research Paper (9-10 pages, 35%; due Apr 11 11:59 PM [Eastern Time]).

Students will write a research paper on the topic proposed in assignment 2, above. Students should consult **at least** 8 good quality academic sources beyond the course materials. A

detailed marking rubric will be provided on the course page. The research paper should demonstrate thoughtful reflection, critical analysis, and should embody a conceptual argument (thesis) in which various angles of the topic are explored in fairness.

The paper should be double-spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font, with 1" margins. The standard citation method for theological papers is **full footnotes with a complete bibliography** in the **Chicago style.** For proper citation style, consult the tip sheet, "Documenting Chicago Style" (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* Online, especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the tip sheet, "How to Cite Sources in Theology".

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
1. Group Discussions	Various	20 %
2. Preliminary Research Assignment	Feb 14	15 %
3. Open-Book Examination	Mar 14	30 %
4. Short Research Paper	Apr 11	35 %
Total Grade		**100 %**

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Jan 11-17): What is Faith? 1: No Scripture without Doctrine

McGrath, CT, 'Preliminaries', 97-113
McGrath, CT, 'Early Christianity', 5-23
Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 9-21
Frances M. Young, *Scripture, the Genesis of Doctrine: Doctrine and Scripture in Early Christianity, Vol. 1* (Eerdmans, 2023), 'Chapter 1: Doctrine and Scripture: Mutually Coinherent? What are the Problems?'

Week 2 (Jan 18-24): What is Faith? 2: Is It the Same for Everyone?

McGrath, 'Sources', 122-154
McGrath, 'Middle Ages and Renaissance, 23-43
Barth, 22-34
Kwok Pui-Lan, 'Can the Native Speak Theologically?', *Modern Theology* 37, no. 4 (October 2021): 1006-1015

Week 3 (Jan 25-31): God Makes Godself Known in Creation and Redemption
Mandatory Forum Discussion #1

Knowledge of God; revelation; the role of philosophy; the nature of theological language.

CT chapter 7, “Knowledge of God.”
CT chapter 8, “Philosophy and Theology.”
CT, chapter 3, “The Age of Reformation.”
Alister McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, fifth edition (Chichester, UK: Wiley, 2017), 2.28 (Edwards), 2.29 (Paley), 2.37 (Barth) 2.38 (Brunner) 2.47 (Packer on Revelation) 2.51 (McGrath).

Week 4 (Feb 1-7): God is One
Mandatory Forum Discussion #2
The God of the Bible and classical theism; divine attributes; theodicy
CT chapter 9, “The Doctrine of God.”
CT, chapter 4, “The Modern Period.”
Aquinas, ch. 1 of *Shorter Summa*, 9-34.

Week 5 (Feb 8-14): ‘Creator of Heaven and Earth’: The Goodness of Things and the Presence of Evil
Preliminary Research Assignment due Feb 14 11:59pm ET
McGrath, ‘Doctrine of God’, 224-239
Barth, 50-64
Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Doctrine of God* (Fortress Press, 2015), 362-379

READING DAYS (Feb 15-21) – No class

Week 6 (Feb 22-28): Jesus Christ is God and Human
Discussion #3
Who is Jesus? Scriptural foundations; Patristic Christology
CT chapter 10, “The Person of Jesus Christ.”
Victor Ezbigo, “Jesus as God’s Communicative and Hermeneutical Act: African Christians on the Person and Significance of Jesus Christ,” in *Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World,* ed. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 37-58.

Week 7 (Mar 1-7): Christ Atoned for our Sin
The work of Christ as the ground of our salvation; atonement and justification
CT Chapter 11, “The Nature and Basis of Salvation.”
McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader*, 5.2 (Irenaeus), 5.7 (Rufinus), 5.13 (Anselm), 5.14 (Abelard), 5.19 (Calvin), 5.28 (Aulén), 5.32 (Packer), 5.38 (Weaver), 6.23 (Luther), 6.25 (Melanchthon), 6. 27 (Calvin), 6.28 (Trent).
Hans Boersma, “Penal Substitution and the Possibility of Unconditional Hospitality,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 57, no. 1 (2004): 80-94.

Week 8 (Mar 8-14): 'He died and was buried': Salvation Embodied
Take Home Examination due Mar 14 11:59pm ET

McGrath, 316-326
Barth, 121-136
David Tonghou Ngong, 'Rumors of Salvation', in *Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, ed. Elias Kifon Bongmba (Routledge, 2022), 429-442
Mayra Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh* (Duke University Press, 2015), 19-28

Week 9 (Mar 15-21): The Holy Spirit is God
Discussion #4

Who is the Holy Spirit? Scriptural foundations; Patristic Pneumatology

CT, chapter 12, "The Holy Spirit."
Barth, 137-140
Thomas Oden, "The Person of the Holy Spirit," in *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009), 513-525.

Week 10 (Mar 22-28; Good Friday, Mar 26): The Spirit Regenerates our Fallen Nature

The work of the Spirit in regeneration; the problem of sin

John Wesley, Sermons 44 and 45, "Original Sin" and "The New Birth," In *The Works of John Wesley,* volume 2, edited by Albert Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985): 170-201.
Ray Aldred, "An Indigenous Reinterpretation of Repentance: A Step on the Journey to Reconciliation," in *So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World*, ed. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 116-137.
Christopher R. J. Holmes, "Regenerated Sight," in *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 167-180.

Week 11 (Mar 29-Apr 4): Trinity: The Fitting Theological Conclusion

McGrath, 'Trinity', 351-383
Gregory of Nyssa, *On Not Three Gods*

Week 12 (Apr 5-11): The Spirit is Poured Out on All Flesh
Short Research Paper due Apr 11 11:59pm ET

The Spirit as pledge of our inheritance; the consummation of God's work of redemption

CT, chapter 18, "Last Things."
Amos Yong, "I Believe in the Holy Spirit: From the Ends of the Earth to the Ends of Time," in *The Spirit Over the Earth*, 13-33.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bacote, Vincent, Laura C Miguélez, and Dennis L Okholm, eds. *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority, and Hermeneutics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

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Castelo, Daniel, and Robert W. Wall. *The Marks of Scripture: Rethinking the Nature of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019.

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Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.

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VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to "Guidelines for Interactions" on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Integrity website for further details. Students must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in Academic Calendar and consult guidance from their course instructors.

For proper citation style, consult Citation Guides for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult Writing Services.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for polices and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tyndale Seminary's Academic Calendar provides a definition and broad descriptions of types of Academic Dishonesty using AI.

Academic dishonesty includes the submission of work for which previous credit was given, the submission of work under one's own name that is largely the result of another person's efforts, aiding another's dishonesty, cheating on exams and giving false information for the purpose of gaining admission, credits, etc. … Academic dishonesty also includes submitting academic work

which has been written, rewritten, or substantially edited by an artificial intelligence program. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 173.)

AI programs are not adequate information sources for academic writing. Students should not use AI in academic writing without explicit permission from their course instructor. Given the tendency of AI programs to give inaccurate information and even falsify citations, students are cautioned against using AI prompts to begin researching or summarizing a topic. Instructors may deduct points from [or give a failing grade to] assignments for the improper use of AI sources. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 174.)

Students *may* use AI as an enhanced search engine, provided they are extremely careful about checking its sources. That means personally verifying texts and claims *every time* by clicking through to the source link or independently searching. This also means public information sources like Wikipedia are not satisfactory sources. We recommend using sites like Google Scholar or the variety of journal and research databases available with a Tyndale student ID.

Students *may* use AI to transcribe interviews, videos, or dictations of their own ideas when preparing for assignments. But they must read through the transcripts themselves and *manually* verify accuracy, make selections to quote, or edit for concision and clarity. This use of AI is reserved only for ideas that students have created themselves. Students may not submit course lectures, videos, or other course material to AI or any other software to transcribe, synthesize, annotate, or otherwise summarize course content.

Students *may not* use AI in any aspect of the planning and writing process for class assignments, including but not limited to early planning, ideas, outlining, argumentation, grammar, syntax, or phrasing. Struggling with all this is fundamental part of human learning. This struggle is precisely what develops writing ability and is essential to developing critical thinking and communication skills. If further clarification is required, students should ask their professors, not an AI assistant.

Students *may not* use Grammarly or similar AI copyediting programs, including Copilot in Microsoft Word. Tyndale students are expected to write with sophistication in English. Use of a LLM to edit/re-write/re-phrase/alter student work will be viewed as a breach of the Tyndale AI policy. Students should also be aware that many of these programs can/will change student ideas without permission or notification and should be careful to turn off any generative AI features in any software they use for course assignments.

Special Note:
Students should carefully discern and justify any use of AI tools. Convenience, efficiency, academic pressure, lack of time or even health issues are not sufficient reasons to rely on AI. If personal or external difficulties affect your work, you should first speak with your instructor before using AI assistance. Your personal formation, theological reflection, and authentic engagement with the course remain the priority in completing assignments.

Some course professors may allow AI use for specific projects within specific limits. All Seminary syllabi (or course pages on Moodle) will contain guidelines for permitted uses of AI. When using AI for any professor-approved application in assignments, students should save all rough work and earlier versions of their assignments before editing. Students may be required to produce these versions on request. The name of the AI software used must be noted (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) including the specific version number and model of that software, and the specific text of all prompts employed to get the results must be reported in the submitted assignment.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- Student Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity (Guide, Video, Spectrum)

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the Extension Request Form. The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tyndale Library supports courses with e-journals, e-books, and the mail delivery of books and circulating materials. See the Library FAQ page.

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary Grading System & Scale.