



**BIOLA**  
UNIVERSITY

## ESSENTIAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE I - ONLINE

CSAP 541 & CSSR 541 (2 Units) • Course Outline • Spring 2021 • Discussion 1/11-2/27

### I. PROFESSOR & CLASS INFORMATION

*Professor: Kevin Lewis*

<u>Course Title:</u>	<b>Essential Christian Doctrine I &amp; Christian Thought I (Online)</b>	<u>Credit Hours/Units:</u>	2 Units
<u>Course Code:</u>	CSAP 541 & CSSR 541	<u>Class Days &amp; Time:</u>	Discussion 1/11-2/27
<u>Term:</u>	Spring 2021		Megan Stricklin: (562) 906-4570
<u>Location:</u>	Online	<u>Secretary Email:</u>	<a href="mailto:megan.stricklin@biola.edu">megan.stricklin@biola.edu</a>
<u>Office Phone:</u>	562-903-6000 X5506	<u>Office Location:</u>	Biola Professional Building
<u>Office Hours:</u>	By Appointment	<u>Office Mailing Address:</u>	Biola University, Christian Apologetics Program, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Mirada, CA 90639
<u>E-Mail:</u>	<a href="mailto:kevin.lewis@biola.edu">kevin.lewis@biola.edu</a>	<u>ITL Website:</u>	<a href="http://www.itlnet.org">www.itlnet.org</a>
<u>Course Website:</u>	<a href="http://www.theolaw.org">www.theolaw.org</a>		
<u>Dept. Website:</u>	<a href="http://biola.edu/apologetics">http://biola.edu/apologetics</a>		
<u>School Website:</u>	<a href="http://www.biola.edu">www.biola.edu</a>		

### II. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This is a required, core apologetics course. For this course, students must carefully read the course outline, complete the assigned readings, view the required video lectures, participate in a seven-week discussion on Canvas, take two online exams based on one of the textbooks, and submit a paper for the other assigned text. (2 Units)

### III. COURSE DESCRIPTION & TOPICS

#### **Essential Christian Doctrine I (CSAP 541 & CSSR 541)**

*A presentation and biblical defense of the essential Christian doctrines with special reference to contemporary criticism of the value and truth of doctrinal assertions. Required of M.A. students. (This course is offered every school year.)*

**Topics:** The Essential Christian Doctrine sequence of the Apologetics program surveys the vital topics of Systematic, Elenctic and Polemical Theology. Essential Christian Doctrine I will address the doctrines of Theological Prolegomena, which includes the definitions, divisions and method of theology, and the first part of Theology Proper, which includes the existence of God, the definitions of God, the Knowability of God, the Names of God, the Attributes of God, Deficient Views of God, the Trinity, the Divine Decree, Creation, Providence, and Miracles.

## IV. REQUIRED & RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Duncan, J. Lingon, David Hall, *et al.* *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, Global Publishing Services, 2000.
2. Lewis, Kevin. *Essential Christian Doctrine Syllabus*.<sup>1</sup> Spring 2021 Version. Available online on my Biola faculty webpage at [www.theolaw.org](http://www.theolaw.org).
3. Shedd, W.G.T. *Dogmatic Theology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Grand Rapids: P & R Publishers, 2003.

### B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

1. Beilby, James and Paul Eddy, Eds. *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*. Intersociety Press, 2001.
2. Elwell, Walter A., Ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.
3. Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin & Greek Theological Terms*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.

## V. DISABILITY SERVICES

Disability Services exist to assist any student who thinks he or she may need such assistance. Students desiring accommodations for this class on the basis of physical learning, psychological and/or emotional disabilities are to contact The Learning Center which houses both learning assistance and disability services. The Learning Center is located in the Biola Library, Upper Level, Room U-137, and this department can be reached by calling 562.906.4542 or by dialing extension #4542 if calling from on campus.

## VI. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language, and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable and prejudice free. Good writing and speech do not make unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, sex, or sexual orientation. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the Biola community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of invitation.

Avoid the use of stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, language or national origin. Avoid drawing attention to irrelevant identifiers of race or gender. Avoid gender-specific language when referencing people in general. Avoid terms that assume the universality of human experience, and in particular presume the normativity of the socially dominant group. (Biola Policy Statement)

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<sup>1</sup> Note that I refer to the course notes available online as the “Syllabus.” The document explaining the course requirements—the one you are currently reading—is the “Course Outline.”

## VII. BIOLA UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

### TRUTH~TRANSFORMATION~TESTIMONY

The mission of Biola University is biblically-centered education, scholarship, and service; equipping men and women in mind and character to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ.

## VIII. COURSE ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Essential Christian Doctrine I (CSAP 541 & CSSR 541)

This master's-level course is a core course required of M.A. Apologetics and M.A. Science & Religion students. Offered every Spring semester and sometimes in other school terms. Successful completion of this course will prepare students to demonstrate proficiency toward the accomplishment of relevant Program Learning Outcomes listed in the next section.

### **Apologetics Program Learning Outcomes**

1. To Build an intellectual framework, to demonstrate students' understanding of the faith; and to formulate responses to future challenges
2. Display and practice Christ-like character, so as to present and defend the gospel in a winsome manner and gracious spirit
3. Argue effectively to correct misconceptions about historic Christianity; to answer the perennial problems that are offered to discredit Christianity intellectually; and make the case proactively that it is reasonable to put one's faith in Christ

## IX. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

*By completion of this course including viewing the lectures, online interaction with the professor, fellow students, and lecture materials, assigned readings with assigned student responses, and the practical application of doctrines learned, students will accomplish the following objectives and the following learning outcomes will be assessed and demonstrated:*

**IDEA Objective #1:** Gaining factual knowledge (biblical and theological facts, terminology, and topics) about Theological Prolegomena, which includes the definitions, divisions and method of theology, and the first part of Theology Proper, which includes the existence of God, the definitions of God, the Knowability of God, the Names of God, the Attributes of God, the Deficient Views of God, the Trinity, the Divine Decree, Creation, Providence, and Miracles. (*Essential* emphasis).

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** (The learner will demonstrate that he or she has satisfactorily fulfilled IDEA Objective #1 by being able to):

1. **Identify, define and investigate** essential terminology in Theological Prolegomena, which includes the definitions, divisions and method of theology, Theology Proper, which includes the existence of God, the definitions of God, the Knowability of God, the Names of God, the Attributes of God, Deficient Views of God, the Trinity, Creation, Providence, and Miracles. (Fulfilled by the lectures, online interaction, and the Shedd Exam.).
2. **Investigate** some selected topics in the theology of creation (Fulfilled by Duncan paper.).

**IDEA Objective #2:** Learning Bible doctrines about Theological Prolegomena, which includes the definitions, divisions and method of theology, Theology Proper, which includes the existence of God, the definitions of God, the Knowability of God, the Names of God, the Attributes of God, Deficient Views of God, the Trinity, Creation, Providence, and Miracles. and interrelating these doctrines into a defensible theological system (*Essential* emphasis).

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** (The learner will demonstrate that he or she has satisfactorily fulfilled IDEA Objective #2 by being able to):

1. **Explain** briefly the major doctrines of Theological Prolegomena, which includes the definitions, divisions and method of theology, Theology Proper, which includes the existence of God, the definitions of God, the Knowability of God, the Names of God, the Attributes of God, and Deficient Views of God, the Trinity, Creation, Providence, and Miracles, and a survey of the theology of creation. (Fulfilled by the Shedd Exams & Duncan paper).

**IDEA Objective #4:** Developing skills in communicating doctrines about the assigned theological topics in written form (*Important* emphasis).

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** (The learner will demonstrate that he or she has satisfactorily fulfilled IDEA Objective #4 by being able to):

1. **Produce** appropriate theological responses to theological questions by means of the Shedd Exams and be able to state the essence of a particular theological doctrine by means of the Duncan paper.
2. **Develop** in written form an inventory of the student's own ability to argue for these doctrines by means of their online discussions of Shedd, Duncan, and the lecture materials.

## X. ACADEMIC HONESTY

Biola University is committed to ethical practice in teaching, scholarship, and service. As such, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the undergraduate/graduate student handbook and/or the departmental/program/school policy on academic honesty. It is imperative that you present all written, oral, and/or performed work with a clear indication of the source of that work. If it is completely your own, you are encouraged to present it as such, taking pleasure in ownership of your own created work. However, it is also imperative that you give full credit to any and all others whose work you have included in your presentation via paraphrase, direct quotation, and/or performance, citing the name(s) or the author(s)/creator(s) and the source of the work with appropriate bibliographic information. To do otherwise is to put oneself in jeopardy of being sanctioned for an act or acts of plagiarism that can carry serious consequences up to and including expulsion from the university.

<http://studentlife.biola.edu/handbook/policies-procedure/academic-integrity/>

## XI. LEARNING TASKS (ASSIGNMENTS)

### A. COURSE OUTLINE

1. The student must carefully read the entire course outline prior to the commencement of the course.

### B. CONFIRMATION EMAIL

1. After reading the course outline, the student must send a confirmation email to the professor at [kevin.lewis@biola.edu](mailto:kevin.lewis@biola.edu) indicating the student has read the entire course outline.
2. SUBJECT LINE: The “Subject” line of this email *must* read (exactly) **“SPR21 ECD1 Online Confirmation Email.”**
  - a. Please do not include the quotation marks in your subject line. The quotation marks are given in the example above to indicate the exact words the student must use for the Subject Line of the email.
  - b. Moreover, please use spaces between words, rather than hyphens, dashes, or underlining, when writing your Subject Lines and File Names.
  - c. Please follow the guidelines for emails and naming files (see below) as it helps me organize the large number of student emails and files I receive each semester.
3. If the student has a question about the requirements for this course, the student should ask for clarification of any part of the course outline in the confirmation email.
4. **DUE DATE:** The due date for the Confirmation Email is **January 18, 2021.**

## 5. Biola Email Usage

- a. Use your Biola email account for all required communication for this course.
- b. As I may send notifications to the entire class via the Biola email system during the semester, the student must regularly check his or her Biola email account.
- c. Please treat your emails as formal communications. Use complete sentences. Do not use a “texting” style for your messages.
- d. Be certain to include your full name, course name, and the semester in which you are enrolled (e.g., Spring 2021) in each email you send.

## C. VIDEO LECTURES

1. Students shall view the Essential Christian Doctrine (ECD) lecture videos in accordance with the schedule provided for this course.
2. The lectures are based on and follow the ECD course syllabi (e.g., ECD Prolegomena Syllabus) which can be downloaded at [www.theolaw.org](http://www.theolaw.org).
3. The ECD lecture videos can be found on the professor’s Youtube channel (The Institute for Theology & Law) at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaDSLRpMvZwru7t3u-fzc3Q/videos>
4. A detailed schedule for viewing the ECD lecture videos with links to each video and the corresponding syllabi necessary to follow the lecture content will be posted on Canvas prior to the beginning of the course.

## D. READING

You will complete the assigned reading for the course as listed in the course schedule. You will also complete certain written assignments in connection with your reading. (See discussion of these assignments, *infra*.)<sup>2</sup>

## E. SHEDD EXAMS (DOGMATIC THEOLOGY TEXT)

### 1. Introduction

Before reading the general guidelines for this assignment, please read in their entirety the extended entries at the end of this course outline on choosing a systematic theology text and the nature of theological education at Biola University. These sections are entitled: “Theology Textbooks & Shedd” and “Teaching & Learning Theology at Biola.”

### 2. General Exam Guidelines

- a. The student must read the assigned pages of Shedd listed in the Shedd Exemplars.
- b. In connection with your reading of Shedd’s *Dogmatic Theology*, there are questions and answers provided in each section of the Shedd Exemplars for you to study for the two Shedd Exams.
- c. There will be a Shedd Exam Part 1 and a Shedd Exam Part 2 that the student will take online on Canvas by the assigned date.
- d. Note that the Shedd Exemplars are the study guide for the Shedd Exams, containing the questions and answers you will need to study for the Shedd Exams.

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<sup>2</sup> *Infra* is Latin for “below.” It is a common signal in scholarly works.

- e. The Shedd Exemplars are available for download from my Biola faculty website at <http://www.theolaw.org>. Please check to ensure you are downloading the correct versions of the Shedd Exemplars for this course.
- f. The Shedd Exams are open book and open note (e.g., Shedd Exemplar). They are also objective exams with True-False and Multiple Choice questions, based on the study questions and answers assigned for Shedd and provided in the Shedd Exemplar.

### F. REACTION PAPER (DUNCAN TEXT)

The student will write a reaction paper for the Duncan text. For the paper, please observe the following procedure:

#### 1. Guidelines

- a. The student must read the entire text. If there is a preface, introduction, or appendices, for the assigned text, the students must read these sections of the book.
- b. The word count for the paper should be 750 words (+ or – 50). Place the word count on the first page of your report.<sup>3</sup>
- c. Note that the student may elect to include or exclude the headers, footnotes, and student information in the reported word count.
- d. The paper must be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins, using a 12 point font. It must have page numbers at the bottom of each page.
- e. **Headers:** Use appropriate headers to make your paper's structure evident at a glance. This means each of the three sections of the paper should have a header.

#### f. Format

- (1) The student *must* submit papers in the format specified in this course outline.
- (2) At the top of the page, type the title of the assignment, your name, student number, course information (e.g., ECD I, *et al.*), and the word count (e.g., 750).
- (3) See the example, *infra*, for formatting details.

g. Spelling and grammar count. See the explanation, *infra*, for details.

#### h. Footnotes

Be certain to footnote your work. That is, when you directly quote or allude to any portion of the book, properly reference your material. Failure to properly footnote your points will result in a reduction of the paper grade.

#### 2. Substantive Content of the Reaction Paper – **Read Carefully Here!**

- a. Select the three (3) most important facts, truths, arguments, or principles you learned from reading the text. Here “important” can mean that they had the greatest impact on you or you thought they were the most important points the author made or, perhaps, they were the most helpful to you in some way.
  - b. For each of the three points:
    - (1) Describe and explain the author's point you selected.
    - (2) Explain why the point was helpful, important, or impactful to you.
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- c. Do not include either an Introduction or Conclusion section in this paper. Just write on the three selected points.
- d. Each of the three sections should be approximately 250 words. Give the word count for each of the three sections.
- e. See [the sample outline and example paper](#) at the end of this document for an example before writing and submitting your paper.

## **G. SUBMITTING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

### 1. *Required Information*

Students must have their student name, student number, course name, semester, title of the assignment, and any other required information on each submitted assignment.

### 2. *Submitting Assignments on Canvas*

- a. For all assignments, please submit them on Canvas on or before the due date.
- b. All assignments must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents.

### 3. **Required Labeling of Student Assignments [READ CAREFULLY HERE]**

Each assignment you send as a MS Word document must be properly labeled.

- a. The file name shall contain the following information:

- (1) Semester
- (2) Course Name
- (3) Assignment Name
- (4) Full Student Name (last name first name)

#### b. *Reaction Paper File Name*

- (1) File Name: "SPR21 ECD1 M Duncan Last Name First Name"
- (2) Example: SPR21 ECD1 M Duncan Lewis Kevin

#### c. *Naming Clarification*

- (1) Please do not include quotation marks, hyphens, or underlining in your subject line or file names.
- (2) In sum, please use spaces between words, rather than hyphens, dashes, or underlining, when writing your Subject Lines and File Names.
- (3) Please follow the guidelines for emails and naming files as it helps me organize the large number of student emails and files I receive each semester.



## H. ONLINE DISCUSSION & PARTICIPATION

1. DISCUSSION DATES: **January 11, 2021 – February 27, 2021**
2. **Materials for Online Discussion**
  - a. All student posts must be in agreement with Biola's Articles of Faith and Theological Distinctives. I will further clarify this requirement when we begin our discussions. See <https://www.biola.edu/about/theological-positions>
  - b. The student must limit the discussion to the materials assigned for the ECD course.
  - c. The student must view all of the video lectures and read the ECD Syllabi and other written materials assigned for that week's discussion.
  - d. The discussion is not an open forum to discuss any topic of interest. Posts that discuss materials and topics that were not assigned for the discussion will not be counted toward the final grade.
  - e. For example, if the assigned reading topic is the doctrine of divine attributes in Shedd, the lectures, and the ECD course syllabus, the student must discuss these concepts and *then*, if he or she desires, the student may discuss related ideas, such as, the difference between Shedd, Mueller, Miley, Turretin, Berkhof, Hodge, or Aquinas on the topic. Or, after discussing the assigned readings, the student may discuss how the topic relates to Christian living or Apologetics.
  - f. Note that I will have a *Personal Chat Room Thread* and an *Off Topic Thread* on Canvas for personal and off topic student discussions. Note that these posts will not count towards your grade.
3. **Required Readings and Topics for the Spring 2021 ECD1 Online Course**
  - a. **Week #1: Theological Prolegomena**
    - (1) Discussion from **January 11 through January 17**
    - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
      - (a) Shedd Readings & Questions (pp. 46-75)
      - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on Prolegomena
    - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on Prolegomena
  - b. **Week #2: Theology Proper I: Definition, Names, Deficient Views, & Existence of God**
    - (1) Discussion from **January 18 through January 24**
    - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
      - (a) Shedd Readings & Questions (pp. 153-216)
      - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on Theology Proper I
    - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on Theology Proper I

- c. **Week #3: Theology Proper II: Distinctions, Ontology, Divine Attributes & Presence**
- (1) Discussion from **January 25 through January 31**
  - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
    - (a) Shedd Readings and Questions (pp. 274-308)
    - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on Theology Proper II  
(Note: The emphasis this week is on all the divine attributes. While related, divine omniscience and the free choice issues are more thoroughly discussed in the Divine Decree section.)
  - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on Theology Proper II
- d. **Week #4: Theology Proper III: The Trinity**
- (1) Discussion from **February 1 through February 7**
  - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
    - (a) Shedd Readings & Questions (pp. 219-271)
    - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on the Trinity (Defective views and Ontological Trinity)
  - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on the Trinity
- e. **Week #5: Theology Proper: The Works of the Triune God and the Decree**
- (1) Discussion from **February 8 through February 14**
  - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
    - (a) Shedd Readings & Questions (pp. 311-352)
    - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on the Trinity (Works of the Trinity)
    - (c) *ECD Course Syllabus* on the Decree
  - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on the Works of the Trinity & the Decree
- f. **Week #6: Theology Proper: Creation Ex Nihilo**
- (1) Discussion from **February 15 through February 21**
  - (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
    - (a) Shedd Readings & Questions (pp. 366-402)
    - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on Creation *Ex Nihilo*
    - (c) The Duncan text (Entire Book).
  - (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on Creation *Ex Nihilo*

g. ***Week #7: Theology Proper: Divine Providence & Miracles***

- (1) Discussion from **February 22 through February 27**
- (2) Required Readings to Discuss:
  - (a) Shedd Readings and Questions (pp. 412-423)
  - (b) *ECD Course Syllabus* on Providence and Miracles
  - (c) *ECD Course Syllabi* on Angelology, Satanology, Demonology, the Occult, and the Occult ABCs in their relation to the topic of False Miracles
- (3) ECD1 Video Lectures on Providence and Miracles

4. ***Nature & Role of the Course Syllabus in the Discussions***

- a. Note that the *ECD Course Syllabus* is not a textbook, nor is it designed to be a textbook or comprehensive set of notes.
- b. The course syllabus is a minimal outline of basic notes and definitions for discussion and lecture.
- c. My lectures are based on and follow the ECD Course Syllabi. Please download and open the relevant syllabus while viewing the lectures.
- d. As a Systematic, Polemical, Elenctic Theology class, the syllabus, lectures and discussions will focus on arguing for true doctrine and refuting those who contradict (Titus 1:9).

5. ***Criteria & Guidelines for the Online Discussions & Debates***

a. ***Importance of the Online Discussions***

- (1) The online discussions and debates are essential elements of the Modular ECD courses.
- (2) Therefore, it is imperative that students complete the readings prior to each discussion and debate and actively participate throughout the semester.

b. ***Purpose of the Online Discussions***

- (1) The assigned readings are designed to inform students about particular theological topics, guide thinking, and provoke thought.
- (2) The reading should be done actively, not passively. If this is done, three things are likely to occur:
  - (a) Request Clarification: Sometimes students will not fully understand the material and will need clarification;
  - (b) Disagree with the Author: Students will sometimes disagree with the author's view; and
  - (c) Provoke Thought: The reading will provoke thought in new directions and lead to applications beyond those described by an author.

- (3) The online discussions are intended to be an opportunity to receive and give clarification, express disagreement, and explore the implications of what has been learned.

c. **Disagreements**

- (1) Students may express disagreement with the readings and with other students. Students may not, however, argue against Biola's Articles of Faith and Theological Distinctives.
- (2) The manner of disagreement must remain irenic at all times.
- (3) If a student violates this rule, the professor may:
  - (a) End a particular discussion thread;
  - (b) Prevent offending students from further participation in that discussion thread;
  - (c) Pursue additional disciplinary actions if warranted.

d. **Canvas – Discussion Board**

- (1) The venue for the online discussions will be the Canvas Discussion Board on Biola University's Canvas website at <https://canvas.biola.edu>
- (2) The Apologetics Department should have provided information to each student regarding how to use Canvas. If not, contact the department secretary.

e. **Grading Criteria for Online Discussions & Debates – READ CAREFULLY!**

- (1) **Posts Based on Readings:** Students must discuss in their posts the materials and issues raised in the required course readings. Off-Topic Discussions will not count toward your discussion grade. Off Topic Posts will be deleted from the forum.
- (2) **Number of Posts: Three (3) Substantial Posts Per Week (Minimum)**
  - (a) The student shall submit a *minimum* of three (3) substantial posts for each discussion week. Thus, each student shall have posted a *minimum* of twenty-one (21) substantive posts during the course discussions.
  - (b) Note that each discussion week is a separate grading unit. The student must fulfill the criteria (e.g., number of posts, quality of posts) for each discussion week.
  - (c) Note that the Discussion Board is an Academic Forum. As such, the student should refrain from posting comments of a personal nature and comments not related to the course discussions.
- (3) **Quality of Posts: Read Carefully Here!!!**
  - (a) A substantive post will be two to three (2-3) well developed paragraphs in length.
  - (b) The preferred substantive post would be in the form of an *argument* for your view, an *argument* (or refutation) against another viewpoint, or *analysis and application* of the assigned material. Your goal is to *prove* the truth of the Christian Religion. Mere unsupported assertions of opinion will not be

considered as a substantive post. As Christian Apologists and Polemicists it is essential that you learn to argue your points, rather than merely assert them.

- (c) Other types of substantive posts should be thoughtful, carefully reasoned, thought provoking and contain keen observations about the subject matter.
- (d) Note that this is a graduate level discussion forum. Thus, the quality of the posts should reflect the student's commitment to graduate level study with *excellence*.
- (e) EXAMPLES: See the examples of high quality student posts at the end of this course outline.

(4) **Timing of Posts** *Read Carefully Here!!!*

- (a) While the student does not need to submit a post on each day of the discussion week, the student must not wait until the end of the discussion period to engage in discussion with other students.
- (b) The purpose of the discussion assignment is to engage other students in meaningful discussion and debate. This task cannot be accomplished if the student submits all posts on the last day or two of the discussion period.
- (c) Note that students who fail to engage in discussion throughout the period will have their grades reduced accordingly.
- (d) Students must have their first substantive discussion post submitted on Canvas by the end of the 2nd day of the discussion period to avoid a grade penalty. If the student is late in posting, the penalties for late work will apply.

f. ***Student Initiative***

- (1) Students must take the initiative to generate good discussion of the reading material and the topics covered in a given week. This does not mean that the student must start a new discussion thread to receive credit.
- (2) This may be done by posting arguments, refutations, rebuttals, observations, disagreements or questions of a clarifying, provocative or even controversial nature—provided the questions serve to assist students to better understand the issues. Students may then reply to each other's questions and responses.

6. ***Professor's Role in the Discussions***

- a. The Professor will monitor the discussion groups and will respond to questions directly posed to him—if a response is warranted.
- b. Also, when warranted, the professor will proffer questions or comments to help students grapple with key issues or provoke thought.

## XII. IMPORTANT DUE DATES

Date	Events & Assignments Due
1/11	Week #1 Discussion Begins
1/18	Confirmation Email Due
1/18	Week #2 Discussion Begins
1/25	Week #3 Discussion Begins
2/1	Week #4 Discussion Begins
2/8	Week #5 Discussion Begins
2/15	Week #6 Discussion Begins
2/22	Week #7 Discussion Begins
2/27	Duncan Paper Due
2/27	Shedd Exams Due

## XIII. ASSESSMENT (GRADING)

### A. GRADING CHART (ASSIGNMENT WEIGHT)

The value of each assignment as it relates to your final grade can be seen in the following scale:

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Duncan Paper	35%
Shedd Exam Part 1	20%
Shedd Exam Part 2	20%
Online Discussion	25%

### B. GRADING CRITERIA

#### 1. Quality of Student Work [Read Carefully Here]

- a. In order for a student to receive an “A” grade on any assignment, the student must do *outstanding*, graduate level work.
- b. If the student submits *failing*, *below average*, *average*, or *above average* graduate level work, the assigned letter grade will reflect the quality of the work submitted.

#### 2. Grading Standards for All Written Work

Whereas Biola University desires to maintain the highest standards with respect to the composition of all written work, any student paper exhibiting poor grammar, spelling errors, typographical errors, or other substandard academic expression shall have the overall grade for that paper reduced accordingly. Generally, a paper will be deemed substandard and ineligible to receive an “A” grade when it averages three or more compositional errors per page. Moreover, at the discretion of the professor, the substandard paper may be returned to the student for correction and resubmission with appropriate grade penalties. Graduate papers are expected to demonstrate a higher level of academic expression than undergraduate papers. Students deficient in writing skills may seek assistance at the Biola Writing Center.

### 3. Formalities & Mechanics of Assignments

- a. **Format & Required Information:** At the top of the first page of all written assignments the student *must* have the:
  - (1) Title of the assignment,
  - (2) Student's name,
  - (3) Student's identification number,
  - (4) Title of the course,
  - (5) Date of the course (e.g., Spring 2021),
  - (6) Name of the professor, and
  - (7) SEE EXAMPLES:  
For any additional information requested for a specific assignment (e.g., word count), the student may examine the specific assignment criteria and the sample outline of the assignment given at the end of this Course Outline.
  
- b. **Following Instructions & Grade Penalties**
  - (1) The grade for all student assignments will be reduced if the student fails to follow the directions listed in this course outline. Please consult the course outline when completing your assignments.
  - (2) Note that the grade for all assignments will be *reduced one point* for each instance of a failure to conform to the guidelines.
  - (3) Note that all of the requirements listed in the course outline are *mandatory*, not *discretionary*, for students. All assignments will be graded according to the criteria listed in this course outline.
  - (4) Please check your work carefully before you submit it for grading.

### 4. Late Work

- a. All assignments, including Confirmation Emails and Reading Reports, must be submitted on time. All late assignments will *be reduced one percentage point* for each calendar day they are tardy.
- b. Written assignments must be emailed on or before the due date.
- c. Only in the case of *unanticipated* emergencies will an exception to this policy be granted. If you believe you meet the requirement for an exception, submit a detailed explanation to the professor via email.

### 5. Guidelines for Citations in Written Assignments

- a. The student must cite the source (e.g., have a footnote) for any idea found in the student's paper that is not the student's original idea or a matter of common knowledge.

- b. Secondary source citations must be properly cited with reference to the primary text. Thus, if an author cites another author, the footnote must reflect this citation-in-a-citation relationship. See the footnote below for an example.<sup>4</sup>

## 6. Additional Grading Criteria for Written Work

The student must examine and employ the criteria listed in the Written Assignment Code Key when preparing written assignments. See the Code Key at the end of this course outline, *infra*. The quality of the written assignments will be measured by the applicable criteria in the Code Key.

## 7. “Incomplete” Grade

- a. A temporary mark of "IN" (Incomplete Grade) will be issued in special cases when approved by the Associate Provost of Academic Administration for undergraduate students or the dean of the respective graduate school. “IN” grades course assignments are normally completed no later than five weeks after the end of the term. In the event of the inability of a student to complete the coursework by the approved deadline, the Office of the Registrar will assign the grade which the student has earned by the end of term.
- b. To read more about Biola’s policies and procedures regarding absences, view [Biola’s Student Handbook](#).

## C. GRADING SCALE (LETTER GRADE CUT-OFFS)

Final grades will be awarded according to the following scale:

Graduate	Scale
A = 96-100 points (Excellent)	C = 78-80 points (Average)
A- = 93-95 points	C- = 75-77 points
B+ = 90-92 points	D+ = 73-74 points
B = 87-89 points (Above Average)	D = 71-72 points (Below Average)
B- = 84-86 points	D- = 69-70 points
C+ = 81-83 points	F = 0-68 points (Fail)

## D. THE PRIVACY ACT

In order to comply with the Privacy Act, professors are not able to leave graded papers and exams in offices or designated areas for the purpose of returning those items to students.

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, first ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 109, cited in Walter Martin, *The Maze of Mormonism*, revised and enlarged edition (Ventura: Regal Books, 1978), 178-179. [Example of a secondary source citation]



## **XIV. GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION & PROFESSOR POLICIES**

### **A. DOCTRINAL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS: BIOLA'S ARTICLES OF FAITH & STATEMENT OF BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES**

1. Since its inception, Biola has been a conservative evangelical protestant institution. Biola's theological views are affirmed in its Articles of Faith & Statement of Biblical Principles (AFSBP), which function as the doctrinal standard for the university. This course is taught with a presumption that these doctrines are true. As such, students may not actively argue against Biola's doctrinal views in this course. Biola's AFSBP can be viewed at <http://www.biola.edu/about/doctrinal-statement/>.
2. Since Biola's AFSBP does not address every possible theological issue, the university permits a diversity of opinion on issues not covered by the AFSBP, such as the doctrines involved in the Calvinism-Arminianism debate.
3. Finally, note that this expectation is not intended to hinder important reflection, discussion, or queries on these matters. Students are encouraged to engage in candid discussions, ask questions about any theological issue, raise counterarguments they have encountered, or even express genuine doubts or confusion about these items. The goal is to foster genuine camaraderie, unity, and *koinonia* among students as fellow travelers in their theological education.

### **B. LECTURES, SYLLABUS & COPYRIGHT**

1. The course syllabus, handouts, Power Point presentations, and class lectures are the intellectual property of the professor. As such they are subject to the protections of Federal Copyright Law (Title 17 of the United States Code).
2. Students desiring to copy course materials, printed or electronic, or record lectures must first obtain permission from the professor. The professor reserves all rights unless explicitly waived.

### **C. MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES**

1. *Fairness to All Students*
  - a. Please do not request an exemption from the rules or to have a deadline extended unless there is an unanticipated emergency. It is presumed that all students and faculty are busy with jobs, church, family and other issues. Students must adjust their schedules to meet the deadlines. If not, they will receive the appropriate grade penalty.
  - b. Please do not ask me to change your grade unless I have made an error in calculating the grade. There is a single grading standard for all students. I will not create a different grading standard for any individual student.

**2. *Email Etiquette***

- a. Use your Biola email account for all communications for this course.
- b. Please treat your emails as formal communications. Use complete sentences. Do not use a “texting” style for your messages.
- c. Be certain to include your full name and the course name in each email until I direct you to do otherwise.
- d. Be certain to include the program in which you are enrolled such as Talbot, or the M.A. Apologetics Program.

**XV. M.A. APOLOGETICS MISSION STATEMENT**

The primary purpose of the MA in Christian Apologetics program is to provide Christian men and women with the academic and personal preparation they need to intelligently proclaim and defend the historic doctrines of the Christian faith and the Christian worldview at a time when challenges on all levels continue to increase.

## XVI. EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

### A. SAMPLE STUDENT REACTION PAPER (NOTE: THIS IS AN A+ PAPER.)

#### *CIVIL GOVERNMENT*

By Robert Culver

Student Name: Luther Martin

Student Number: 103117

Theology of Civil Government

Fall 1517 – Professor Kevin Lewis

Culver Reaction Paper

Word Count (Excluding Headers, Footnotes, and Student Information): 799

#### **Fact #1: Paul Was a Shrewd Evangelist in Deciding Where to Travel (Word Count: 274)**

**1. Issue.** Culver’s explanation of the four levels of Roman society—slave, *peregrinus*, *Latinus*, and *civitas*—and their corresponding legal rights was quite enlightening.<sup>5</sup> For example, it helped me to better understand why Paul, a full citizen (*civitas*), was exempt from crucifixion and therefore beheaded, while Peter, a free man but only a provincial *peregrine*, was crucified.<sup>6</sup>

Even more fascinating, however, was Culver’s observation that “Paul was careful to move not only within the bounds of the empire (long observed), but within certain administrative districts and municipalities. . . . [W]herever Christianity had been preached, Roman authorities had come forward to restrain the evil forces seeking to destroy it.”<sup>7</sup> I was unaware that Paul concentrated his ministry on the most fully “Romanized” elements in the population of the cities he visited.<sup>8</sup> I was also unaware that Paul intentionally *avoided* particular cities during his travels

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<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Culver, *Civil Government: A Biblical View* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 212.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 220, 239.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 221.

(e.g., Commagene), specifically those where the Roman rule of law was less likely to be followed, and that he targeted Roman cities where his legal rights would be upheld.<sup>9</sup>

**2. Importance.** It was instructive to see the shrewd manner in which Paul made use of the legal rights and protections granted to him by the Roman government.<sup>10</sup> Given Jesus' execution at the hands of Pontius Pilate and Nero's brutal persecution, I was surprised to learn that Rome's system of religious tolerance, due process of law, and orderly civil government was the church's *ally* during its early decades. Sadly, these same religious liberties that faded in the first century are now beginning to fade in the West. Nevertheless, I came away with some practical biblical guidance for utilizing secular legal protections when conducting ministry.

**Fact #2: Romans 13:1–7 Can Be Squared with the American Revolution (Word Count: 268)**

**1. Issue.** Culver states that Romans 13:1–7 is the most important text for understanding “the subject of the place of human civil government in the providence of God.”<sup>11</sup> Culver interprets this passage as “a strong demand that every Christian must obey the *de facto* government”<sup>12</sup> in the region where he lives, because “resistance to constituted government is resistance to God's ordinance.”<sup>13</sup>

What then of the American Revolution? As Englishmen, the American colonists still retained a number of legal rights and freedoms.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, King George III never demanded from his subjects the devotion that belongs to God alone. Nevertheless, American ministers were essential in convincing the American population to support independence. As William

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>14</sup> “[T]he American colonists fought for freedom as some of the freest and most prosperous people of their time.” Os Guinness, *A Free People's Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 45.

McLoughlin observes, the American Revolution was “a Religious Revival,”<sup>15</sup> and among Protestant sermons “religious motives were paramount.”<sup>16</sup> How is this consistent with Romans 13:1–7?

Culver offers a clue in his earlier chapter on Messianic expectations: “[T]he American Revolution [was] [a] conservative revolution[], not [a] radical one[]. . . [It was] the act[] of official civil authorities who thought of themselves as acting in the interests of and as agents of orderly, legal government[.]”<sup>17</sup>

**2. Helpfulness.** What stands out to me is the distinction between *forceful resistance* to legitimate government, such as the *coup d'état* of the Bolshevik revolution, and peaceful civil disobedience. Those who signed the Declaration of Independence took up arms *after* the British attacked, not before, and sought “to preserve the values and established order of the past rather than to destroy them.”<sup>18</sup> It seems that the Founders launched the *right kind* of revolution, and in doing so they acted consistently with Romans 13:1–7.

### **Fact #3: Rehabilitation Theories of Criminal Punishment Are Flawed (Word Count: 257)**

**1. Issue.** One of my legal casebooks remarks that “utilitarian ideas [such as rehabilitation] were absorbed into a religiously inspired humanitarian reform movement that identified punishment with penance and spiritual redemption.”<sup>19</sup> As Culver notes, this thinking is deeply misguided: “The state is not to shape [men’s] opinions. Nor should the state forgive their crimes. This is God’s prerogative. . . . Civil government by itself cannot reform individuals.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 109, citing William G. McLoughlin, “The American Revolution as a Religious Revival,” *New England Quarterly* 40 (March 1967): 99–110.

<sup>16</sup> Culver, *Civil Government*, 109, citing Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), x, 668.

<sup>17</sup> Culver, *Civil Government*, 108.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> John Kaplan, Robert Weisberg, and Guyora Binder, *Criminal Law: Cases and Materials*, 6th ed. (New York: Aspen Publishers, 2008), 32.

<sup>20</sup> Culver, *Civil Government*, 275.

**2. Helpfulness.** I thought Culver did an excellent job of marshalling the biblical data to demonstrate that the government has no legitimate role in *reforming* criminals. Culver's warning that "government cannot make [men] industrious, wise, or good, for government powers cannot touch the heart of man wherein lie the springs of emotion"<sup>21</sup> is a sound one. Consequently, I agree that the government "should never be in direct charge of moral instruction."<sup>22</sup> While we should expect the government to restrain violent men and provide legal protections for life and property, only the church and families can serve as reformatory agents for criminals, for these are God's intended vehicles of transformative grace.<sup>23</sup>

Culver's theology of civil government therefore has significant implications for prosecutors, defense counsel, criminal jurisprudence, prison reform, sentencing guidelines, and the like. Government efforts at rehabilitation are not noble; they wrongly blend criminal justice with spiritual redemption in an act of secular hubris that is doomed to fail. Should I ever find myself in a position to shape public policy, Culver has provided me with sound reasons for advocating retributive theories of justice that reflect the proper relationship between God, man, and state.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 275–76.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

**B. EXAMPLE OF FORMAT FOR CREATION REACTION PAPER*****THE GENESIS DEBATE***

By J. Lingon Duncan, *et al.*

Student Name: Student Name  
Student Number: Student ID #  
Essential Christian Doctrine I  
Spring 2021– Lewis  
Word Count (Total): *e.g.*, 750

**A. Argument/Point/Truth/Etc. One: Title (Word Count: 247)**

This section will be a brilliant, but concise summary of one of your selected best arguments, *etc.* followed by the reasons why you believe it was a persuasive and helpful argument.

1. *Summary of the Argument*
2. *Reasons Why the Argument was Persuasive*

**B. Argument/Point/Truth/Etc. Two: Title (Word Count: 253)**

This section will be a brilliant, but concise summary of one of your selected best arguments, *etc.* followed by the reasons why you believe it was a persuasive and helpful argument.

1. *Summary of the Argument*
2. *Reasons Why the Argument was Persuasive*

**C. Argument/Point/Truth/Etc. Three: Title (Word Count: 249)**

This section will be a brilliant, but concise summary of one of your selected best arguments, *etc.* followed by the reasons why you believe it was a persuasive and helpful argument.

1. *Summary of the Argument*
2. *Reasons Why the Argument was Persuasive*

## **XVII. EXAMPLES OF HIGH QUALITY, SUBSTANTIVE STUDENT POSTS FOR CANVAS DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. RESPONSE-QUESTION TYPE POST**

#### **Thread: The Apollinarian & Monothelite Heresies**

I echo what Albus says. As apologists, we should ardently defend both the full humanity of Christ as well as the full divinity of Christ because in order for Christ to save us wretched sinners, He HAS to be both! Being all God isn't good enough. He also has to be fully man in order for the atonement to fly because if He isn't fully man, then he can't represent mankind on the cross.

Also, you asked, "*Why is it that the church universal in A.D. 451 thought it was essential to declare Christ "consubstantial" with us with a "rational soul," yet without sin? It is this aspect of biblical Christology that is affected by the Apollinarian and Monothelite heresies.*"

The reason they felt it necessary to declare "Christ 'consubstantial' with us with a rational soul" was to combat Apollinarianism which maintained that the Logos replaced "the rational spirit of the man Jesus" (*Approaches to Christology*, K.L. Lewis). If true, then Jesus' soul was not human, but rather was divine.

This is a problem because Jesus having a divine soul does not represent our humanity because mankind does not have a divine soul, mankind has a human soul. Therefore, the claim of Apollinarianism disqualifies Jesus from being able to act as a true representative for mankind on the cross, because in order for Jesus to do the redemptive work for mankind, He must be fully human in BOTH body and soul/spirit - in body isn't good enough.

The same holds true of Monothelitism which claims that Christ only had one will which according to the handout *Approaches to Christology* means soul. Same problem here. Again, it is not sufficient for Christ to just have one soul. He must be both fully God and fully man which means He MUST have two wills or souls, the divine and the human, in order to represent mankind on the cross.

### **B. BOOK RELATED SUMMARY & ANALYSIS**

#### **Thread: Slavery in the Old Testament**

In Chapter 12, Culver addresses property and slavery in the Mosaic commonwealth. In particular, I think his discussion about slavery is pertinent to a certain kind of challenge we will face as apologists. "The Bible (OT) doesn't condemn slavery and even has rules about it, so therefore God condones slavery" or "The Bible is obviously merely a product of an Ancient Near East culture and morally inferior to our standards today, because it endorses slavery - or at least doesn't condemn it" are often used as challenges to Christianity in general and the Bible in particular. What does Culver note that can help us answer these challenges?

First, modern criticisms of the regulation rather than abolition of slavery in the Bible arise out of a very narrow understanding of what constitutes slavery. What was called "slavery" in the ancient world does indeed have modern counterparts in our country, such as those forcibly detained in jails and prisons, or the contractual relation of what used to be called "indentured servitude." Moreover, our penal system imprisons people for destruction of property or



embezzlement; the ancients rather made them work to pay for their crimes, so the argument can be made that there was less involuntary servitude than today. Slavery in the ancient world served society then in the same way as our prisons (whether domestic or of war) do today.

Second, the Mosaic law was for a specific time, and as such not only acknowledged slavery but *regulated* it in such a way as to protect the rights of all parties. The culture of the time viewed hired service as being just as incompatible with freedom as slavery, but neither was regarded as degrading. A permanent state of slavery under the Mosaic law was wholly voluntary.

Third, there were only a few circumstances under which an Israelite could become the slave of another under the law: to sell oneself voluntarily to gain financial security for his family or pay a debt, etc. (creditors could not seize him or his children and sell them into slavery); for restitution of theft; or a daughter could be sold by her father to another (much like a dowry) and that man then had an obligation to raise her as a daughter, protecting her chastity and providing for her physical welfare. It was a capital crime to kidnap persons for later sale as slaves, and so it is improper to draw exact parallels between humane and merciful slavery in the Bible and the African slavery that more easily comes to mind. The law, if followed, ensured that a slave's treatment would be humane and just. Hence there was little social stigma attached to slavery in ancient Israel, nor was it considered degrading to be a slave or own them.

Also, though, Culver doesn't mention this, it is important to remember that the objector here is making a moral objection, and he must account for that. Why is slavery wrong? Aside from the issue that there is often equivocation here - slavery then was not the same as slavery now, and it fulfilled certain social needs for which we now use prisons - the objector has to account for the moral law that makes slavery (in the sense they usually think of it today) bad.

### C. REACTION & ANALYSIS OF READING AND LECTURES

**Thread: Release from penalty leads to freedom in Christ [Note: This one is long, but good!]**

I have known for a long time that there's been a disconnect between my cerebral knowledge of Christ and my personal relationship with Him. I've recognized that God has become more of an abstract concept to me than someone with whom I am intimately involved. I've also known why this has happened, namely that I hold false beliefs about God (misconceptions of His real character), and therefore do not trust Him. As much as I'd like to trust Him, I can't, because I don't (or at least I didn't prior to this discussion) *really* believe He loves me, delights in me, or wants what's best for me. How could He, when I've sinned such as I have? While I could say with absolute confidence that God sent His son to die for me, this truth did not manifest itself in feelings of peace and freedom in Christ. It was head knowledge that did not translate into my daily Christian living. My relationship to the Trinity has been one of fear and expectation of punishment.

And then I discovered the doctrine of the atonement.

#### JUSTICE AND MERCY

Shedd writes, "The rite of sacrifice under the Old Testament taught that God is both just and merciful: just, in that his law requires death for sin; merciful, in that he permits and provides a vicarious death for sin. In this way it deepened fear and inspired hope-fear of divine holiness and hope in divine mercy" (686). The fear of divine holiness permeated my life, but hope in His mercy eluded me. But I began to see that hope in God's mercy is valid when one considers,

*really* considers, the incredible ramifications of His sacrificial act. God, being moved by compassion for His creation, not only permitted a vicarious atonement to satisfy His wrath against sin, but also provided the sacrifice in Himself. But that's not all.

#### SUFFERING AND ATONEMENT

I was amazed to discover that the essential ingredient in atonement is suffering. In the Levitical system, a perfect ram would be used, and the priest would sacrifice it on the altar as a vicarious atonement for sin. I had assumed it was simply the blood and death of the animal that was necessary. But according to Shedd, the essential element is the suffering. Not only did the ram die in agonizing pain, but the participants suffered also since the death of the ram was a complete loss to them. They could derive no benefit from the sacrifice. The result of this infliction of suffering upon the sacrificial ram was that God's justice was satisfied, the sins of the offending party were "covered up" and hidden from God's sight since, and the sins of the offending party were forgiven.

The element of suffering in atonement radically transforms our understanding of what's at stake. In short, the infliction of suffering (the essence of atonement) is applied to the substitute rather than the guilty. This is profound for Christians since it means that Christ suffered for our sins so that we do not have to. Indeed, we will never have to pay the due penalty for our sins. We will never be inflicted with suffering by God in order to personally atone for our transgressions. For the believer, this is extraordinary news indeed, which we can embrace with confidence. After all, "divine mercy is seen more in the cause than in the effect, more in the 'atonement' for sin than in the 'remission' of sin, more in 'expiation' than in 'forgiveness,' more in the vicarious infliction than in the personal noninfliction" (698). Our temptation is to doubt that Christ's atonement was sufficient. But for God, the difficult part is in laying the foundation for the release of penalty. But if God's mercy is great enough to move Him to provide atonement for man's sin, it is certainly great enough to follow through on the consequences of such an act. As Shedd states, "If God's compassion is great enough to induce him to lay man's punishment upon his own Son, it is surely great enough to induce him not to lay it upon the believer" (699). If we are in Christ, we can be confident that our sins are forgiven. God is not "out to get us" or make us suffer in payment for our sins. Christ has already suffered on our behalf.

#### FEAR OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION

This understanding of Christ's atoning work revolutionizes my faith because I have lived in fear of divine retribution all my life. It's a human tendency to misunderstand the nature of God and expect His wrath instead of love. But perhaps this primary struggle in my Christian walk stems from my parental examples. Both of my parents, who divorced when I was three, were explosive in their anger. Where discipline is meant to be corrective, my childhood punishments produced shame, embarrassment, fear and distrust. And I have projected these things onto God. When I sin (as I am prone to do), I do not run to Him with confidence and boldness in childlike faith armed with the knowledge that He loves me and my sins are already forgiven. Rather, I withdraw and protect and wait for His explosive wrath, knowing that I deserve every bit of it. But all of this is misguided in light of a proper understanding of Christ's work of atonement.

#### FREEDOM AS A RESULT OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

The center of divine compassion and mercy is in Christ's work of atonement. Once vicarious atonement has occurred, forgiveness is easy to deliver. I need not fear that God will cause me to suffer to pay for my sins. Indeed, it would be unjust for Him to do so since Christ has already suffered on my behalf. But as Shedd points out, "The objective atonement is intended to be subjectively appropriated by the act of faith in it" (708). This is where lack of knowledge robbed me of freedom in Christ.

Since I had a faulty understanding of Christ's atoning work, I could not experience forgiveness for my sins. I continued to feel guilty and ashamed, unable to appropriate the freedom from suffering Christ provided. Shedd says, "The priestly work of Christ has an influence upon the human conscience similar to that which it has upon divine justice. Man's moral sense is pacified by Christ's atonement. Peace is everywhere in Scripture represented as the particular effect produced by faith in Christ's blood" (708). But if this is true, where was my peace? Why was I unable to experience the effect of peace as a result of Christ's satisfaction of justice? If peace is the evidence of faith in Christ, could it be that I'm not really saved? Or was this encounter part of my journey of sanctification? Scripture says, "they shall know the truth, and the truth shall set them free." I was not experiencing freedom because I did not really *know* this truth.

#### CHRIST PAID THE PENALTY, PERIOD.

Shedd writes, "What therefore God's justice demands, man's conscience demands" (708). This is indeed true. God demands payment for sin. Therefore, my conscience also demands it. But this is exactly why I live in absolute fear of punishment. I am intensely aware of my own sin nature (my sins are not covered from *my* eyes), and since the Holy Spirit lives in me, I naturally agree with God's demand for justice. Knowing I deserve to be punished, therefore, I anticipate God's wrath. However, I have failed to understand that this demand for justice has already been satisfied by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. My fear and expectation of suffering has been based on a lack of understanding regarding the doctrine of atonement. Now that I know the payment has been satisfied, I can be at peace with God. "The instant any individual man ... believes that divine justice is thus satisfied, his conscience is at rest" (709).

#### NEW CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

I have experienced a freedom in Christ that has never before been possible. By studying the doctrine of atonement, I have had new insight into God's great love and compassion for me. I can hold God's wrath and mercy at the same time without contradiction. And I can surrender my fears of divine retribution knowing that while I deserve to suffer for my sins, God in His goodness has spared me by providing a vicarious substitute in Christ. I understand now what Shedd means when he says, "The belief by which men obtain personal benefit, namely, mental peace and blessedness, from the fact of Christ's atonement involves trust and reliance upon Christ" (709). His self-sacrifice was sufficient. Praise be to God

## XVIII. THEOLOGY TEXTBOOKS & SHEDD

### A. WHY CHOOSE SHEDD AS A TEXTBOOK?

1. Students should note that Shedd is a Reformed (i.e., “Calvinist”) theologian. As such, *Dogmatic Theology* proffers a Reformed view on the respective doctrinal issues, such as election, and engages in polemic against contrasting views, such as types of Arminianism and Lutheranism. Students should also note that Shedd was selected as a textbook due to his extensive, detailed discussions of essential doctrines such as the Trinity, Deity of Christ, the Atonement, and his breadth and depth as a theologian, and *not* for his polemic against competing evangelical traditions.
2. Also, please note that selecting a systematic theology text for a school like Biola is difficult because it is an interdenominational-non-denominational school with a minimalist evangelical doctrinal statement. As such, at Biola we have 4 Point Calvinists (Amyraldians), 5 Point Calvinists, simple foreknowledge Arminians, Molinistic Arminians, Wesleyan Arminians, Charismatics, Cessationists, and so forth. As such, no single theology text will make everyone happy as there is no multi-denominational systematic theology that has been written. The closest book to a comparative systematic theology is F. E. Mayer’s, *The Religious Bodies of America*. This was published in 1961 by a Lutheran theologian. The basic information it gives on each theological group is accurate and helpful, but it is not a full systematic theology text.
3. I also understand that some of the vocabulary in Shedd is difficult for beginning theological students. However, every graduate discipline and profession, such as law or medicine, has its own technical vocabulary. It is no different for graduate level theology students. For this reason, I recommend Richard Muller’s *Dictionary of Latin & Greek Theological Terms* in the course outline. Muller was written for the purpose of helping graduate theology students understand technical terms in works like Shedd and Turretin.

### B. WHY NOT USE GRUDEM’S SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY?

1. Many students have asked me why I do not use a text like Grudem’s Systematic Theology, which is easier to understand.
2. I know many undergraduate professors and some graduate professors use Grudem as a text.
3. I heartily concur that Grudem is a clear and easy to read systematic theology text. It is one of the most popular texts around today. However, this text was intentionally written as a high school to undergraduate level text, even though Dr. Grudem, an excellent scholar and theologian, could have written it at a higher level. As such, I elect not to use it for a graduate level theology course.

### **C. SHEDD & ARMINIANISM**

1. One item students will read in Shedd that requires clarification is his use of the term “Semi-Pelagian” with respect to Arminianism. Regarding the accusation of Semi-Pelagianism, Monergists (including Calvinists), have often labeled Arminianism as a Semi-Pelagianism theological system because, (1) in some cases some popular “Arminians” (such as Charles Finney), crossed the theological line into the Semi-Pelagian, but were not explicitly rejected as Arminians by their fellow Arminians (generally) and (2) Monergists tend to reject the sufficiency of the explanations and distinctions proffered by Arminians against the charge of Semi-Pelagianism.
2. This is one area where Shedd needs to be more precise in his critique. Classic and Wesleyan Arminians and Calvinists both affirm human moral inability after Original Sin, the inability of the natural man in spiritual matters, and the absolute necessity for prevenient grace for salvation. And with the Calvinists, Arminians agree that apart from God’s grace no one would willingly come to Christ, which distinguishes the Classic and Wesleyan Arminian views from Semi-Pelagianism and Finneyism, both of which reject the absolute need for prevenient grace.
3. In sum, I disagree with Shedd’s use of the term “Semi-Pelagian” as applied to all Arminianism. Each Calvinistic, Lutheran, Arminian, Wesleyan Arminian, and Amyraldian theologian or student should be assessed as individuals according to the arguments they actually proffer, not on the basis of the group to which they belong.

## **XIX. TEACHING & LEARNING THEOLOGY AT BIOLA**

### **A. TEACHING & LEARNING THEOLOGY AT AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

1. Unlike other academic disciplines, there are inherent pedagogical difficulties associated with teaching theology at an interdenominational Christian university.
2. Unlike a Greek or Hebrew course, all students arrive at Biola holding a wide variety of ideas about Christian theology and what it ought to be. This is not true of most other disciplines. For example, most new NT Greek students will not have an opinion about whether New Testament Greek should have a 5 case or 8 case system, but just about everyone has an opinion on issues such as young or old earth creationism, charismatic gifts, or the Calvinism & Arminianism issue.
3. As such, it is common for Biola students to be in disagreement with each other and the professor on discretionary theological issues, that is, doctrinal topics not covered by the Biola Doctrinal Statement and Explanatory Notes.
4. The key for the Biola community is to be charitable towards other believers regarding discretionary theological matters permitted by the Biola doctrinal statement. See the ECD Course Outline on page 12 for doctrinal expectation for students.

**B. THIS IS A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY COURSE.**

1. This course is primarily a systematic theology course. It is not a philosophy, philosophy of religion, or general apologetics course.
2. As such, the methodology and substantive content of the course will reflect this fact. Other academic disciplines and methodologies, such as those employed in philosophy, will be considered and employed at the discretion of the professor.
3. The goal for this course is for the student to learn essential Christian doctrine.

**C. BIOLA IS A CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY.**

1. Biola is a conservative evangelical Protestant university.
2. As such, it is defined by the distinctives of the Protestant Reformation. These include, but are not limited to, the following doctrines:
  - a. Justification is by Grace alone (*Sola Gratia*),
  - b. through Faith alone (*Sola Fide*),
  - c. in Christ alone (*Solus Christus*),
  - d. to the Glory of God alone (*Soli Deo Gloria*); and
  - e. *Sola Scriptura*
    - (1) *Sola Scriptura* means the Sixty-Six Books of the Protestant Canon of Scripture are both necessary and sufficient for all matters pertaining to the Christian life.
    - (2) They are the final say on all matters they address (*Sola Scriptura*).
    - (3) The writings of the church fathers, creeds and confessions, and a ministerial use of philosophy can be helpful in the task of doing systematic theology, but they are secondary authorities.
3. Since the student has decided to enroll in this type of institution, that is, a conservative, evangelical Protestant institution, the expectation is that each student will reflect these and other relevant theological presumptions in their work.