COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will employ the methods of biblical theology in order to pursue a systematic treatment of knowledge in the Christian tradition. We will pay particular attention to the core narratives (i.e. Pentateuch and Gospels) as epistemological patterns unfold in those stories. Contemporary attempts to reconcile a "Christian epistemology" to theology will be critically assessed in light of our exegetical findings, especially those in current discussions in philosophy of religion (e.g. Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology). Since systematic theology entails prolegomena, this course will prepare the student to forge into the study of systematics with a biblical-informed understanding of knowledge. Implications for the life of the church and the theological enterprise will be regularly assessed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to practice biblical theological method through the lens of covenant participation and its relationship to epistemology. This will be accomplished by:
1. gaining a canonical orientation toward the philosophical content of Scripture.
2. discussing the epistemological constructs in the Biblical narratives and their obligations.
3. critiquing contemporary epistemology, including Christian attempts in philosophy of religion.
4. exploring the role of sacramental theology in a biblical epistemology.

COURSE TEXTS


Selected Chapters and Articles on Portal:

COURSE GRADING

30% Class Participation / Reading Responses
35% Exegetical Theology Essay
35% Critical Essay
100% Total

A. Class Participation / Reading Responses (30%, 13 reading responses total)
   Class participation will consist of BOTH attendance and participation in the seminar and 150
   words (+/- 50) written response to the weekly reading. These responses will be uploaded to
   Turnitin.com by midnight on the Sunday before each class. Late assignments will be accepted
   with a significant deduction after 5pm on Tuesdays. After midnight, papers will not be accepted
   for credit.

B. Exegetical Theology Essay (35%)
   This essay will concentrate on a biblical text or corpus in order to develop a focused
   understanding of knowledge in that text/corpus. See "Exegetical Essay Guide" posted on the

D. Critical Essay (35%)
   This essay will be a thesis paper written as a critique of a theologian or theological topic from
   a distinctly biblical position and its implications for the study and practice of theology. See

COURSE PROTOCOLS

A. Late & Missing Assignments, Tardiness, and Exams
   Written assignments are not optional. Failing to turn in a written assignment without
   notifying the professor IN ADVANCE is grounds for failure of the course. Late written
   assignments will generally not be accepted. Assignment must be uploaded and digital
   confirmation (i.e., and email from Turnitin.com) must be received before the time and day it
   is due.
   
   Turnitin Course ID: XXXXXXXXXX
   Turnitin Course PW: XXXXXXXXXX

C. Course Attendance
   Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If a student arrives late or leaves early
   that student will be counted as absent. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the notes or
   additional handouts from the missed class. Students who miss 25% (i.e., more than 3 class
   periods) of their class sessions for any reason are administratively withdrawn from the course
   with an Administrative Withdraw (AW) grade recorded on the transcript (calculated as an F in
   the GPA). Note: In classes that meet only once a week the maximum number of days one can be
   absent for any reason is three.

D. Digital Citizenship
   It is both true that a) this is the 21st century AND b) you are a college student. This means
   that your multiple responsibilities as a student also correspond to the technologies de jure. The
   loss of work due to computer malfunction is never an excuse. Backing up work in different
   physical locations (i.e., portable drives, TKC drives, cloud storage services, etc.) is a requirement
   for all digital work, both inside and outside this university. If you do not know how to digitally
safeguard and back up your work, please speak to myself or IT. As well, failing to acquire a
digital confirmation for work submitted via turnitin.com is not the professor's problem. Make all
the necessary arrangements to save and promptly submit your work in this new fandangled
world of digital publishing.

**OUTLINE OF CLASSES AND READINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Philosophical Epistemology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Theological Epistemology</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong> – (Aug. 31)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syllabus Review</td>
<td>Respond to: Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, Part I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief History of and Introduction to Epistemology</td>
<td>Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, chs. 8-9</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong> – Labor Day, NO CLASS******</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> – (Sept. 14) Analytic Approaches to Knowledge</td>
<td><strong>Week 11</strong> – (Nov. 16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gericke, &quot;Hebrew Bible in Philosophy …&quot; †</td>
<td>Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, chs. 8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong> – (Sept. 21) Rationality, Psychology, &amp; Epistemology</td>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong> – (Nov. 23) NO CLASS (Society of Biblical Literature/American Academy of Religion annual meetings)******</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to: Feldman, <em>Epistemology</em>. chs. 4-6.</td>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong> – (Nov. 30)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong> – (Oct. 5) Scientific Epistemology</td>
<td>Respond to: Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, Part II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kornblith, &quot;What is Naturalistic …&quot; †</td>
<td>Torrance, &quot;The Framework …&quot; †</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong> – Columbus Day, NO CLASS******</td>
<td>Newbiggin, &quot;Faith as a Way …&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong> – (Oct. 19)</td>
<td><strong>Week 14</strong> – (Dec. 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to: Johnson, <em>Biblical Knowing</em>, chs. 6-7</td>
<td>Respond to: Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, Part III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, &quot;Scientific Use of Ritual&quot; †</td>
<td>Torrance, &quot;The Framework …&quot; †</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson, &quot;Centrality of the Body&quot; †</td>
<td>Newbiggin, &quot;Faith as a Way …&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong> – (Oct. 26) Introduction to Biblical Knowledge</td>
<td><strong>Week 15</strong> – (Dec. 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to: Johnson, <em>Biblical Knowing</em>, Intro., ch. 3</td>
<td>Respond to: Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, Part IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson, &quot;Biblical Idea of 'Truth'&quot; †</td>
<td>Johnson, &quot;Ritual as Ethical Process&quot; †</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Johnson, &quot;Knowledge as a Subset of Ethics&quot; †</td>
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<td><strong>Week 16</strong> – (Dec. 14)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respond to: Meek, <em>Longing to Know</em>, Part IV</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em><strong>Paper presentations</strong></em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Document can be found on the course portal.
COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (abbreviated)

Biblical Philosophy


Biblical/Christian Epistemology


Meek, Esther Lightcap. *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People*, Grand


**General Prolegomena & Biblical Theology**


**Philosophical Epistemology**


Appendix:
Critical Essay Guide

The purpose of this essay is to take the biblical view of epistemology that we have developed so far in this course and shape an approach to theology with it. There are several ways in which this could be done, but below I will outline the minimum interactions that I would expect to see in your papers and leave it to you to work out the exact approach you will take to the topic.

In general, you will select a topic in systematic, biblical, or pastoral theology and offer a critique from some aspect of the epistemology that we find operative in the Scriptures. **This will not be a compare and contrast paper.** You must come to decisive conclusions, which means that your thesis will have to take a position. Critique does not mean "be negative" or "find out what is wrong". It simply means that you should critically engage these contemporary views to see how they fit with the biblical view.

**Structure & Format**

*Structure*

This is a thesis paper, **so I expect a very clearly stated thesis in the first paragraph of the essay.** From there, the reader should have a clear picture of what the range of the essay is: what you will address and in what order. The range should include a discussion of the contemporary epistemology that you will be engaging and the aspect of biblical epistemology which you will be employing. I would then expect a section describing the contemporary view and a section focusing on the biblical view. As we said above, this is not a comparison paper, so your arguments should be pointed and ultimately decisive. Conclusions should follow from the thesis and discussion section of the paper.

*Format:*

1. 2500 word essay (+/- 500 words).
2. Chicago/Turabian footnoting preferred.
3. **No** title page is necessary, but please include a bibliography of all works consulted.
4. Upload to Turnitin.com and receive confirmation email (You did not submit it without the confirmation email).
Essay Grading Criteria

Essay Format:
• Does the essay follow Chicago/Turabian citation?
• Is the essay within the word limits or well outside of it?

Style & Mechanics:
• Do misspellings, punctuation, and/or grammatical errors inhibit reading?
• Does the flow ease the reader into the essay or does it proceed stiltedly?
• Is the writing efficient, not too terse nor excessively wordy?
• Is there limited use of quotation for efficient writing or does the author rely on extended quotes to fill space instead of pithy paraphrase?
• Does the essay exhibit the appropriate tone?

Structure:
• Does the essay have a compelling introduction to the topic?
• Does the essay clearly state a question that it intends to answer or a thesis it intends to explore?
• Does the essay follow its own stated objectives?
• Has the author showed progression of thought as opposed to merely listing ideas?
• Does the author persuasively argue from beginning to end?
• Does the author take a definitive position or vacillate without conclusion?

Content:
• Does the author evince a grasp of the biblical texts being employed in their analysis?
• Does the essay demonstrate that the author read sources carefully and listened to the texts?
• Does the author use their sources equitably and honorably or are they mere data points in the argument?

Imaginative Realization:
• Has the author demonstrated the interpenetration of the ideas in their own thinking or does the essay reflect a narrow completion of an assignment?
• Is the author rehearsing statements learned in the course or offering fresh insight?
• Most subjectively, does the author seemed "gripped" by the topic or are they aloof and/or cavalier?