Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Biblical and Theological Foundations for Practical Theology (DM703)
FA 2026
(Asynchronous)

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course will assist students in becoming more critically aware of the biblical and theological constructs of faith and practice that undergird the work of ministry in the church and other vocational ministries. This critical awareness invites students to process their experience of the divine in the world in ways that are uplifting, decolonial, and de/reconstructive. By doing so, the course seeks to empower the students to write thorough, sensible, and critically reflective thesis projects.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Through reading, listening, discussing, reflecting, and writing, students – after successfully completing this course with a final course grade of B or above – will be able to:

- Identify and discuss current biblical and theological issues in regards to one's vocational ministry.
- Comprehend and recognize critical lenses as tools for ministry.
- Critically reflect upon one's biblical and theological perspectives.
- Synthesize self-reflexive arguments on select biblical and theological topics.

Required Reading Materials

1) The Bible: Please use your preferred translation.

2) All reading materials and links to the video clips are posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assessments

1) Analyzing my Biblical and Theological Foundation(s) (10%)

- **For Session #1,** please introduce yourself by sharing your biblical and theological foundation(s). These "foundation(s)" could be your geographical context(s), church (and/or other communities), influencers, mentors, (positive/negative) experiences, plants/animals/inanimate entities, training/education, and/or other foundations. Your self-introduction could be just on one

foundation or a combination of several. Moreover, please expound on your foundation(s) by engaging Norman Gottwald's article and Chimamanda Adichie's youtube clip.

- Please type your self-introduction in the **Canvas' Session One, Discussion** tab. The post should be around **2-3 paragraphs**.
- Then, please respond at least **twice** to each other's posts/comments.

- Grading Rubric:
  = Substantial and constructive introduction: 60%
    -> Exposition of one's foundation(s).
    -> Engagement with Norman Gottwald and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

  = At least **two** responses to other participants' posts: 20%
    -> Please respond with generosity, understanding, and compassion.

  = On-time submission: 20%
    -> Please note that on-time submission is crucial for online discussions and responding to each other's work/posts. Thus, each day of late submission will incur one point grade deduction. The maximum deduction will be 20% of the total grade.
    -> For the submission deadlines, please see the Course Schedule section.

* The self-introduction post is due by **Sept 11, 2026, 11:59pm CST**.
* The two responses are due by **Sept 18, 2026, 11:59pm CST**.

2) **Four Critical Reflection Essays** (20% each) – submitted through the Canvas' "Critical Reflection Essay" tab for each session

- Two (2) pages, Times New Roman font, font size 12, single-spaced.
- **For sessions #2 to #5**, please write a critical reflection essay for each session.

- Critical reflection essay **must** engage the topic/session's required materials. Please write this essay in bullet point form by responding to these two inquiries:
  = First, please write your thoughts on the required materials. "Your thoughts" is not just "I agree or disagree". Please say why you agree or not. Make connections, or better, find ways how it disrupts the assumed narratives. How is the topic supporting or challenging your biblical and theological assumptions? See also the approaches below for writing assistance:

  -> *Agree or disagree* with some key statements and explain why
  -> *Identify* something the author is implying or overlooking
  -> *Compare* and *contrast* this author with other ideas/persons
  -> *Offer* your own thoughts relative to the subject matter

  = Second, please put the required materials in conversation with your context/ministry. What are the struggles, the joys, and/or points of conversation that would arise when you bring this topic up in your context/ministry? How are they helpful or not? What does the topic/reading materials invite you to do/think of?
  = Third, in-text citation is enough: name, page number (ex: Kim, 57).

- Grading Rubric:
  = Substantial, constructive, and critical reflection essays: 60%
    -> Substantial means close to the end of (2) pages; constructive means the essay must have the two elements mentioned above.
  = Grammar, syntax, spelling: 20%
    -> No point(s) deducted until the third error. After the third error, one error incurs one point deduction.
  = On-time submission: 20%
    -> Please note that on-time submission is crucial for online discussions and responding to each other's work/posts. Thus, each day of late submission will incur one point grade deduction. The maximum deduction will be 20% of the total grade.
    -> For the submission deadlines, please see the Course Schedule section.

- Quoting Biblical Passages is due by **Sept 25, 2026, 11:59pm CST**.
- Understanding Jewishness is due by **Oct 9, 2026, 11:59pm CST.**
- Dismantling Colonial Reading of the Bible (1) is due by **Oct 23, 2026, 11:59pm CST**.
- Dismantling Colonial Reading of the Bible (2) is due by **Nov 6, 2026, 11:59pm CST.**

3) **Engaging the "Difficult Question" Forum Post** (10%)

- Please post a reflection on your "difficult" question. Difficult question is a question that you have been struggling recently or for some time. Here, the point of the essay is not to resolve your difficult question. Rather, the intent of the essay is to further reflect upon it and find constructive ways to engage the difficult question in your thesis project. The length of the post should be about 2-3 paragraphs.
- Grading Rubric:
  = Engaging analysis of one's difficult question: 60%
    -> Engaging analysis means the essay should contain your arguments on why your difficult question has been a struggle to you and/or your context/ministry.
    -> **Please find one resource** that engage your difficult question. Then, please write your thoughts on how your resource helps you further develop/organize your thoughts/arguments. Please write the full citation reference of the resource in your post.
  = **Two** Responses to other posts: 20%
    -> Please respond to other persons' posts. Please respond at least twice in total. You do not have to respond to every person's post.
  = On-time submission: 20%
    -> Please note that on-time submission is crucial for online discussions and responding to each other's work/posts. Thus, each day of late submission will incur one point grade deduction. The maximum deduction will be 20% of the total grade.
    -> For the submission deadlines, please see the Course Schedule section.

- The Forum Post is due by **Dec 4, 2026, 11:59pm CST**
- The two responses are due by **Dec 11, 2026, 11:59pm CST**

Grading Scale:

A: 94-100
A-: 90-93.9
B+: 87-89.9
B: 84-86.9
B-: 80-83.9
C+: 77-79.9
C: 74-76.9
C-: 70-73.9
D: 60-69.9
F: below 60

Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

1) Writing

* Academic integrity and plagiarism: All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.

* Writing and citations: The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA).

* Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

* Attendance and Class Participation

Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed. All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues.

* Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class.

* Academic Accommodations

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact the Director of Academic Support and Student Thriving (melanie.baffes@garrett.edu or 847-866-3869) to get started with the established accommodation process. If you are a continuing student who has already established accommodations with Student Access, you should receive a copy of your access letter at the start of the semester when it is emailed to the faculty member of each course you are enrolled in. Please contact your instructors prior to the first class session so the instructor can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential under FERPA regulations, so no one other than the access coordinator, Academic Affairs staff, and your professors will see your accommodation letter (2425 Handbook, 13).
Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term.

2) AI Policy:

Not Allowed	Allowed with appropriate acknowledgment	Allowed and no acknowledgement needed
	Generative AI help with papers (generating topics, ideas, outlines, arguments) Generative AI help with writing (paraphrasing, summarizing, generating language for assignments) Generative AI help with reading (summarizing or outlining reading assignments) Language translation Language assistance for non-native English speakers Editing, polishing, or revising paper drafts Proofreading Presentation design Citation generation Research Note-taking	
You must consult the professor(s) for uses not mentioned above.		
To properly cite the use of AI in Chicago/Turabian style, access this link: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html.		

*** Course Schedule:**

Dates	Topics, Readings, and Assessments
Session One:	* Topics: **- Understanding my Biblical and Theological Foundation(s)** * Readings: - Norman Gottwald, "Framing Biblical Interpretation." - Watch: "The Danger of a Single Story" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg) * Assessments: - Discussion #1: Analyzing my Biblical and Theological Foundation(s) - due by Sept 11, 2026, 11:59pm CST. - The two responses are due by Sept 18, 2026, 11:59pm CST.
Session Two:	* Topic: **- Quoting Biblical Passages: The Politics of Citation** * Readings: - Rhiannon Graybill, "Where Are All the Women?" - Jacqueline M. Hidalgo, "Scripturalizing the Pandemic." - Wongi Park, "Multiracial Biblical Studies." - Angela Parker, "Re-thinking God, the Guild and Good Transformation: Introducing (Again) Womanist New Testament Interpretation." * Assessment: - Critical Reflection Session 2: due by Sept 25, 2026, 11:59pm CST.
Session Three	* Topic: **- Understanding Jewishness** * Readings: - Amy-Jill Levine, "Preaching and Teaching the Pharisees." - Daniel Boyarin, "The IOUDAIOI in John and the Prehistory of 'Judaism.'" * Assessment: - Critical Reflection Session 3: due by Oct 9, 2026, 11:59pm CST.
Session Four	* Topics: **- Special Topic #1: Minoritized Identities** * Readings:

	- Kwok Pui-lan, "Reading the Christian New Testament in the Contemporary World." - R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Biblical Studies After the Empire." * Assessment: - Critical Reflection Session 4: due by Oct 23, 2026, 11:59pm CST.
Session Five:	* Topics: - **Special Topic #2: On Queer Identity** * Readings: - Heather R. White, "How Paul Became the Straight Word: Protestant Biblicism and the Twentieth-Century Invention of Biblical Heteronormativity" - Pamela Lightsey, "Imago Dei: We Flesh That Needs Lovin'" * Assessment: - Critical Reflection Session 5: due by Nov 6, 2026, 11:59pm CST.
Session Six:	* Topics: - **Engaging the Bible Contextually** * Readings: - Your own choice. Please write on your Discussion post your resource's full reference. * Assessment: - Discussion #2: My Difficult Question(s) - due by Dec 4, 2026, 11:59pm CST. - The two responses are due by Dec 11, 2026, 11:59pm CST.

Bibliography

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