

Introduction to Theological Education (INT500-X)

Spring 2022 (online, fully asynchronous)

Instructor: G. Brooke Lester

Office Hours: TBA at the beginning of the semester

Revision: January 3, 2022

Course Description:

The first course taken in the curriculum, Introduction to Theological Education assists students to develop the writing and analytic skills for theological education, identify their role as interpreters of traditions and contexts, and gain critical self-awareness, with particular attention to how theological education addresses systemic evil, racism, and injustice.

Required Texts:

1. Eric Barreto, ed. *Reading Theologically*. Fortress, 2014. ISBN-10: 1451483422. ISBN-13: 978-1451483420. Amazon paperback \$19.00 as of November 5, 2021.
2. Eric Barreto, ed. *Writing Theologically*. Fortress, 2015. ISBN-10: 9781451483406. ISBN-13: 978-1451483406. Amazon paperback \$14.00 as of November 5, 2021.
3. Eric Barreto, ed. *Thinking Theologically*. Fortress, 2015. ISBN-10: 9781451483413. ISBN-13: 978-1451483413. Amazon paperback \$14.00 as of November 5, 2021.
4. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 4th ed. Norton, 2018. ISBN-10: 0393631672. ISBN-13: 978-0393631678. Amazon paperback \$30.00 as of November 5, 2021.

Our exercises will sometimes ask learners to work constructively with readings or writing that they are doing in their current course work. If any learner is not taking any other classes during this semester, the instructor will work with them to find reasonable and profitable substitutes.

Key Questions:

- What does it mean to be a critical thinker?
- Who are we as readers and interpreters of the church's theological traditions?
- What is the difference and relationship between academic and devotional, public and personal, pre-critical and critical study of Scripture and theology?
- How do we represent and communicate the church's and our own theological perspectives and insights?

Terminal Learning goals: What will students learn or achieve in general through the course?

- Transition from pre-critical to critical understandings of Scripture, tradition, and history - recognize that as interpreters they come from interpretive traditions and need to locate themselves within a spectrum of interpretation
- Become critical thinkers with a sense of their own hermeneutical and theological perspectives - understand what a theological curriculum can help them do as Christian leaders

- Begin to develop the critical tools needed to analyze evil, injustice and racism -sharpen academic writing skills

Skill development: Through this course students will develop the following skills:

- Critical thinking, including: the ability to distinguish sound from unsound arguments; to recognize and identify presuppositions and assumptions; and to detect, distinguish, and place hermeneutical and theological perspectives
- To concisely explain the difference between the Bible as book of study and as scripture
- To practice reading and understanding primary vs. secondary literature in biblical studies, church history, theology
- To communicate with others in writing and orally
- To explain, describe, define, argue, etc.
- To accurately use the Turabian citation mechanism
- Begin to transfer/apply ideas and perspectives from one context to another context

Dispositions developed in the course: What will be key values, attitudes, habits and/or commitments promote in the course for faithful and righteous Christian learning, living, leadership and/or service?

- Become a community of learners committed to the work of theological education
- Develop an honest openness to others that is both irenic and critical
- Be open to transformation through theological education
- Have a critical self-awareness that both affirms and corrects/develops a theological perspective -represent themselves and their traditions
- Develop habits supporting integration, connection, and coherence across disciplines and interpretive frameworks

Course Requirements:

A two-credit-hour course will normally require 6-8 hours of time weekly. (For many learners, it will take less; for some, it may take more.) Learners must expect to spend 6-8 hours weekly on this course. *If you spend this time, and are not getting the results you want, please contact the instructor for office hours; we can often be quite helpful!*

This course involves weekly readings with corresponding weekly exercises. There is no final/cumulative project.

Readings average less than 50 pages per week, or somewhat under 15,000 words. At a typical reading rate of 125 words per minute, this will come to about 120 minutes for many readers. You may find that you require less time than this; you may find that you require more. *For everybody, reading is best accomplished in multiple sessions, rather than one weekly "death march."*

Work is published on the course Moodle site or on linked shared documents.

The weekly exercise will typically be in three short parts:

1. A short exercise modified from Graff & Birkenstein *They Say / I Say*.
2. A "Muddiest Point" response to one of the Barreto (Ed.) essays.
3. Response and evaluation to 2-3 small-group peers.

Basis for Course Grade:

This course is Pass/Fail. Learners will offer suggested peer evaluations in small groups. If one's peers evaluate one's exercise as non-passing, please contact the instructor for a revision conference in order to revise the exercise to passing status.

Evaluation rubrics for weekly exercises will be available on the course Moodle site on the first day of the semester.

Schedule:

Week 01: January 31 - February 06:

Read *TSIS* Introduction and Chapter One (1-31)
 Read *RT* "Introduction" (9-13)
 Read *TT* "Introduction" (1-5)
 Read *WT* "Introduction" (1-4)
 Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 02: February 07 - February 13:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Two (32-46)
 Read *RT* "Reading Basically" (15-29)
 Read *TT* "Thinking Mindfully" (7-22)
 Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 03: February 14 - February 20:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Three (47-56)
 Read *RT* "Reading Meaningfully" (31-48)
 Read *RT* "Reading Generously" (65-74)
 Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 04: February 21 - February 27:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Four (57-71)
 Read *RT* "Reading Critically" (75-94)
 Read *RT* "Reading Differently" (95-108)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 05: February 28 - March 06:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Five (72-81)

Read *WT* "Writing Basically" (5-20)

Read *WT* "Writing Persuasively" (21-32)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 06: March 07 - March 13:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Six (82-95)

Read *WT* "Writing for the Ear" (33-44)

Read *WT* "Writing Briefly" (45-58)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 07: March 14 - March 20:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Seven (96-106)

Read *WT* "Writing Creatively" (59-72)

Read *WT* "Writing Publicly" (73-86)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

(Spring Break: March 21-25)

Week 08: March 28 - April 03:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Eight (107-122)

Read *WT* "Writing Purposefully" (103-118)

Read *WT* "Writing Personally" (119-130)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 09: April 04 - April 10:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Nine (123-137)

Read *RT* "Reading Biblically" (49-64)

Read *TT* "Thinking Biblically" (51-62)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 10: April 11 - April 17:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Ten (138-148)

Read *TT* "Thinking Bodily" (23-34)

Read *TT* "Thinking Ethically" (95-106)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 11: April 18 - April 24:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Eleven (149-171)

Read *TT* "Thinking Socially" (107-118)

Read *TT* "Thinking Pastorally" (35-50)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 12: April 25 - May 01:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Fourteen (187-202)

Read *TT* "Thinking Systematically" (79)

Read *TT* "Thinking Historically" (63)

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Week 13: May 02 - May 09:

Read *TSIS* Chapter Sixteen (232-249)

Reading TBD

Accomplish weekly exercise (*TSIS*, Muddiest Point, Peer Evaluation)

Additional 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:

Writing

- Academic integrity and plagiarism: (See 19-20 Handbook, 12, 78-83) 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. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- 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

- Inclusion/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.

(See 19-20 Handbook, 9)

- 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. (19-20 Handbook, 19)
- Some faculty may limit on the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session.

Academic Accommodations

- Student accommodations for documented conditions should be developed and requested before the beginning of the semester. See the *Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities* policy and process set out in the Academic Handbook (19-20 Handbook, 12). Such accommodations are developed in consultation with the Registrar.
- 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. (19-20 Handbook, 20)