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# DO 501 Basic Christian Doctrine

Thomas N. Buchan

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## Syllabus

**Course:** DO501 O1 (SP 2009)  
**Title:** Basic Christian Doctrine  
**Hours:** 3.00  
**Published:** Yes, on 01/13/2009  
**Prerequisites:**

*None*

**Department:** Doctrine  
**Faculty:** Dr. Thomas Buchan



Email: [thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu)  
 Office: FC  
 SPO:

### Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Thursday from 6: 15p to 9:00p in EXLEXL.

**Maximum Registration:** 40

**Catalog Description:** An introductory course that bases the theological formation of students upon biblical data as well as upon the classical Christian tradition, contemporary theology, and Wesleyan theological distinctives with a view to helping students grasp the importance of theology for the practice of ministry. ST501 is a recommended preparatory course.

## Objectives:

CH/DO 665

## DO 501 BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Asbury Theological Seminary  
 Section O1, Spring 2009

Thursdays 6:15 – 9:00 pm

Dr. Thomas N. Buchan III  
 Faculty Office 224  
 407 – 482 – 7649

[thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:thomas.buchan@asburyseminary.edu)

### I. PURPOSE

This course is designed to introduce students to the vocabulary, method, and subject of Christian Theology. We will consider major topics and themes of Christian doctrine by means of interaction with Scripture and Christian tradition. We will also consider and ascertain the relevance and value of theological reflection in the Christian tradition for daily Christian life and ministry.

### II. OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students will:

1. develop a working theological vocabulary and grammar.
2. understand and engage in theological discourse.
3. be prepared for further study in theology and related disciplines.
4. be introduced to the classical Christian tradition of theological reflection.
5. understand the organization of systematic theological reflection through an introduction to major areas, topics, and themes of Christian theology.
6. be able to identify, understand, explain, and cultivate the vital interrelationships of the various sources of Christian theological reflection

(Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience).

7. recognize and integrate the personal and communal practical implications and value of theological reflection for daily Christian life and Christian ministry.

### III. TEXTS

T. Oden, *The Living God*, Systematic Theology: Volume One.

(ISBN: 1598560379 / ISBN-13: 9781598560374)

T. Oden, *The Word Of Life*, Systematic Theology: Volume Two.

(ISBN: 9781598560 / ISBN-13: 9781598560381)

T. Oden, *Life In The Spirit*, Systematic Theology: Volume Three.

(ISBN: 1598560395 / ISBN-13: 9781598560398)

**Three volume set of Oden:**

(ISBN: 1598560360 / ISBN-13: 9781598560367)

### IV. REQUIREMENTS

#### A. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION – 20% (200 COURSE POINTS)

Regular, active, wakeful, and participatory attendance at class sessions is expected and required. Class sessions will contain a substantial lecture component, but time will also be set aside for questions, discussion, and questions I will have for you!

Your questions, whether they are questions you have had for a long time or new ones generated by your course reading or your recent experiences, are an essential component of this course. They are strongly encouraged and sincerely invited. **PLEASE** come to class with questions derived from the reading and be prepared to actively raise them as we make our way through each class session and through the semester. This form of participation—your active questioning—will profoundly enhance the dynamic of the course.

#### B. READING ASSIGNMENTS

Thorough and timely completion of all assigned class reading is expected and required. Moreover, disciplined and on time completion of the reading assignments is greatly in your interest and to your benefit! In a course of this kind, there is one vital word of advice that, if heeded, will qualitatively transform your experience: “Keep up with the reading schedule. Do not fall behind.”

There is only one required textbook for this course, Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology*. It is important to note, however, that this one textbook is composed of three volumes (Volume 1: *The Living God*, Volume 2: *The Word of Life*, Volume 3: *Life in the Spirit*). We will read all three volumes sequentially over the duration of the course. (YES, it *is* rather a lot of reading.)

#### C. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There are two kinds of written assignments in this course: 1) 4-Mat Reflections, and 2) the Theological Reflection Paper.

##### 1) 4-Mat Reflections – 50% (500 COURSE POINTS)

In response to the reading assignments, you will submit twelve 4-Mat Reflections **prior to class** each week. Overall, your twelve 4-Mat Reflections will be worth a total of 500 points. Four of your 4-Mats (the first and three others which will be randomly selected) will be graded on a 100 point scale (20 points for formatting, grammar, and mechanics, and 20 points per section for content and execution). Your remaining eight 4-Mats will be graded on a 10 point scale. The remaining 20 points will be awarded for the successful completion of all twelve 4-Mats.

4-Mats must be completed and submitted in a timely fashion to be eligible for full credit. Points will be docked from incomplete 4-Mats for each incomplete section. Late 4-Mats will receive no more than half of the credit for which they are eligible (50 points or 5 points). 4-Mats left undone will receive no credit (0 points) and will also result in a forfeit of the 20 points awarded for completing the full slate of 12 4-Mats.

A 4-Mat reflection consists of two single-spaced typed pages (8.5 x 11) with all margins set to one inch and 12-point Times New Roman font. The first page contains an **Abstract Summary** of your reading, the second page contains **Concrete Stories/Memories Evoked** by the reading, **Reflection Expressed as Questions**, and a section on **Action: What Would This Look Like in Practice?**

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you complete your 4-Mat Reflections. (These guidelines are borrowed from Dr. Stephen Seamands who adapted them from Dr. Donald Joy.)

**ABSTRACT: Reader’s Digest Summary.** Summarize the content of the assigned reading *in your own words*. **DO NOT** engage in personal commentary or evaluations of the content of the materials; just summarize what the author says. Include as many of the key concepts and ideas as you can. Strive to be both comprehensive and intensive. Your summary should be written in stylistically correct, coherent, and clear prose (**not an outline!**). The abstract should be one single-spaced page in length.

The question here is “**WHAT** does the author have to say?” The task here is to take Oden’s text and make it meaningful by thinking through what he is saying and working to express the main ideas and concepts in your own words. This is more than “note-taking”; it requires identifying and communicating the essence of the text in your own language. An ideal 4-Mat Abstract will not rely on quoting the text. If you feel you must make quotations, make them **sparingly** and be sure to **use quotation marks!**

**CONCRETE STORIES: What Does This Say to You?** The reading material should bring to mind some of your personal experiences. In this section, please describe one or two. (Consider this your chance to be a storyteller.) Relate your experience(s) here in “first person,” describing action, and quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. Be as specific as you can, **BUT** make sure that your anecdotes are **clearly connected to the concepts** of the reading assignment. This section should be no longer than half a page.

The question here is “**WHY** (or why not?) do I find what the author has to say personally meaningful?” Connect what you are reading and hearing with what you have previously lived or observed, so as to experientially and critically integrate what you already know and what you are learning here. Connecting the course content with your own personal realities will help you to teach or use what you are learning with

conviction and effectiveness.

**QUESTIONS: How does this ‘work’? or Huh?** Do questions come to mind as you read? Keep a piece of paper at hand so you can write them down! Then list **three to five** of them in this section. Questions may be critical or grounded in spontaneous curiosity or naïve yearning for solutions, **BUT** make sure they **relate directly to the material content** of the reading, **NOT** to the experience(s) you have just described in the previous section. The QUESTIONS section should take up about one-fourth to one-third of a page.

The question here is “**HOW** am I to understand, apply, implement, or use the concepts and ideas presented in the reading?” Don’t outline a plan of action (that’s coming next!), but wrestle through the hard implications of the material. This is the place for comments, evaluation, requests for clarification, and the like. Does anything seem nonsensical, contradictory, unrealistic, or overly challenging? There might be a question lurking under that feeling...

**ACTION: What Can Be Done With This?** Ministry-related learning that can’t be translated into acts of ministry is incomplete. Here, describe what you might **DO** in keeping with what you have discovered by reading this material. Now is the time to formulate a modest plan of action. Make sure that it is **MAST** (**M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **S**pecific, and able to be accomplished within a given **T**ime frame). (For example, “For the next three weeks, during our family devotions, I will seek to briefly and simply talk with our children about the various attributes of God.”) Do not report reflective responses (for example, “I need to learn or read more or pray more about the attributes of God.”). This section should be one-fourth to one-third of a page.

The question here is “**IF** this is so, what must I, ought I, can I do with it?” Here is your chance to explore, to test, to put these ideas, concepts, and practices through their paces in experimental ways. Perhaps another way to think about this component is to ask “**WHAT IF** I try this?”

### 3) Theological Reflection Paper – 30% (300 COURSE POINTS)

The Theological Reflection Paper outlined below in the course schedule will provide you with an opportunity to reflect critically and experientially on one component of classical Christian theological reflection as it pertains to your own Christian experience. In formal Christian theology, the *ordo salutis*, or “order of salvation,” deals with the subjective or personal and experiential aspect of the salvation of humanity. Throughout the ages, Christians have reflected on the process whereby they have become aware of, responsive to, and transformed by God’s saving work in Jesus Christ. As a final paper in this course, and as a component of your Christian Formation Portfolio, you will complete a 5–7 page double-spaced reflection on your own journey of Christian faith. This paper will be graded on a 100 point scale, and will be due at the last class meeting during Finals Week.

## V. GRADING

**Percentages Assigned** to each mode of assessment:

Attendance and Participation	20%
4-Mat Reflections	50%
Theological Reflection Paper	30%

**Grading Scale** (from the ATS Catalog):

<b>A</b>	= 95-100%	Unusually high quality, exceptional work
<b>A-</b>	= 90-94%	Far above average, fine work
<b>B+</b>	= 87-89%	Above average for graduate work
<b>B</b>	= 83-86%	Very good, average for graduate work
<b>B-</b>	= 80-82%	Slightly below average for graduate work
<b>C+</b>	= 77-79%	Meets requirements, but noticeable inadequacies for graduate work
<b>C</b>	= 73-76%	Meets requirements, but with significant gaps for graduate work
<b>C-</b>	= 70-72%	Meets requirements, but serious gaps
<b>D+</b>	= 67-69%	Minimal work
<b>D</b>	= 63-66%	Barely acceptable
<b>D-</b>	= 60-62%	Inadequate work
<b>F</b>	= 59%-0%	Failure

**Policy Governing Incomplete Work** (from the ATS Catalog):

The official end of each term is 5 pm on the last day of the final exam week. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline, but not a later deadline, for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the Registrar and the faculty person involved for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. The petition must be received before 5 pm on the last day of the term.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to **an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment**. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

**What Makes a 4-Mat Reflection or a Paper Exceptional?**

**Evaluation of 4-Mat Reflections**

- Abstract Summary:
  - Written from textbook author’s point of view. Student gives no commentary, no evaluation of content. Clear, concise, linguistically and stylistically correct, coherent.
  - Includes the key concepts in the assigned material.

- Summarizes *all* the various parts of assigned material appropriately.
- 2. Concrete Stories/Memories Evoked:
  - Anecdotal reporting of *specific* people, places, words spoken, feelings evoked.
  - Clearly grounded in the concepts of the reading assignment.
  - Personal experience or observed action.
- 3. Reflections Expressed as Questions:
  - Honest interrogation of conceptual or factual material. (May be critical or grounded in spontaneous curiosity or naïve yearning for solutions.)
  - Related to *content of material*, **not** previously described concrete experiences.
  - Must be stated in form of questions.
- 4. Action:
  - Detailed report of something you have already done or need to do if you are to integrate the insight or truth that you have encountered.
  - Do not report reflective responses such as further thought or more reading.
  - Actions should be specific and “measurable.”

#### Evaluation of Papers:

An exceptional paper (A) will

- reflect a thorough and careful reading of assigned text
- manifest deep sensitivity to the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek and make significant connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in all matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** argue persuasively in student’s own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate a strong awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

A good paper (B) will

- reflect a careful reading of assigned text
- manifest understanding of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek and make some connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** argue in student’s own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate significant awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

An acceptable paper (C) will

- reflect a reading of assigned text
- manifest awareness of the meaning of some of the key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- seek connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus, **AND** present perspective in student’s own words and style or idiom
- demonstrate basic awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

A marginal paper (D) will

- reflect a superficial reading of assigned text
- manifest little awareness of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- make little comment on connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus
- demonstrate inadequate awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

An unacceptable paper (F) will

- reflect a poor reading or a misreading of assigned text
- miss or manifest no awareness of the meaning of key terms, concepts, and phrasing
- omit any consideration of connections between material and broader social, cultural, historical issues
- fail to conform to instructions in matters of form and style, follow instructions in syllabus
- demonstrate no awareness of ministerial, homiletical, devotional, or other practical value of themes and issues raised in the study of the text

## VI. COURSE OUTLINE

February 12: Class Meeting 01
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#### AGENDA:

- Introductions
- Review Syllabus
- Faith and Practice: The Apostles’ Creed

#### READING ASSIGNMENT:

OPTIONAL!

T. Oden, *The Living God*, 1-14

(This reading is *recommended*, but not *required* prior to class.)

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE:**

February 19: Class Meeting 02

**AGENDA:**

The Living God:  
Divine Names  
Divine Nature  
Divine Attributes

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Living God*, 17-130

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 2/17):**

4-Mat Reflection 01

February 26: Class Meeting 03

**AGENDA:**

The Reality of God:  
Arguments for God's Existence  
The Doctrine of the Trinity

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Living God*, 133-224

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 2/24):**

4-Mat Reflection 02

March 5: Class Meeting 04

**AGENDA:**

The Work of God:  
The Doctrine of Creation  
The Doctrine of Providence

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Living God*, 227-315

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 3/3):**

4-Mat Reflection 03

March 12: Class Meeting 05

**AGENDA:**

The Study of God:  
Theological Method

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Living God*, 317-404

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 3/10):**

4-Mat Reflection 04

March 19: Class Meeting 06

**AGENDA:**

Word Made Flesh:  
The Person of Christ  
The Doctrine of the Incarnation

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Word of Life*, 1-194

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 3/17):**

4-Mat Reflection 05

March 26: Class Meeting 07

**AGENDA:**

Our Lord's Earthly Life:  
Ministry of Jesus  
The Work of Christ

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Word of Life*, 197-314

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 3/24):**

4-Mat Reflection 06

## SPRING READING WEEK – NO CLASS MEETING APRIL 2

April 9: Class Meeting 08

**AGENDA:**

He Died For Our Sins:  
The Death of Jesus  
The Doctrine of the Atonement

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Word of Life*, 317-425

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (DUE 4/7):**

4-Mat Reflection 07

April 16: Class Meeting 09

**AGENDA:**

Exalted Lord:  
The Victory of Christ  
The Resurrection  
Ascension and Session

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *The Word of Life*, 429-525

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 4/14):**

4-Mat Reflection 08

April 23: Class Meeting 10

**AGENDA:**

The Holy Spirit:  
The Person of the Holy Spirit  
The Work of the Holy Spirit

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 1-75

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 4/21):**

4-Mat Reflection 09

April 30: Class Meeting 11

**AGENDA:**

Salvation:  
Repentance  
Justification  
Baptism of the Spirit  
Sanctification

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 79-257

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 4/28):**

4-Mat Reflection 10

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION PAPER – DUE FINALS WEEK

Consider your own theological journey in light of the Order of Salvation that Oden discusses in pages 79-257 of *Life in the Spirit*. How does the Order of Salvation parallel your own experience? Are there aspects of your experience that don't fit the Order of Salvation Oden describes? Are there aspects of your experience that are hard to place within that Order? (This paper will become a part of the student's Christian Formation Portfolio.)  
[5–7 pages double-spaced]

May 7: Class Meeting 12

**AGENDA:**

The Church:  
Ecclesiology  
Marks of Unity, Holiness, Catholicity, Apostolicity

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 261-365

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 5/5):**

## 4-Mat Reflection 11

May 14: Class Meeting 13
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**AGENDA:**

Human Destiny:  
 Death and Afterlife  
 Resurrection and Judgment  
 The Communion of Saints and the Life Everlasting

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

T. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 369-468

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (DUE 5/12):**

4-Mat Reflection 12

**DO 501 O1 WRITTEN COURSE REQUIREMENT COMPLETION CHECKLIST****4-MAT**

ð	4-Mat 01, Oden, Vol. 1, pp. 17 – 130	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 2/17	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 02, Oden, Vol. 1, pp. 133 – 224	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 2/24	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 03, Oden, Vol. 1, pp. 227 – 315	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 3/3	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 04, Oden, Vol. 1, pp. 317 – 404	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 3/10	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 05, Oden, Vol. 2, pp. 1 – 194	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 3/17	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 06, Oden, Vol. 2, pp. 197 – 314	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 3/24	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 07, Oden, Vol. 2, pp. 317 – 425	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 4/7	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 08, Oden, Vol. 2, pp. 429 – 525	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 4/14	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 09, Oden, Vol. 3, pp. 1 – 75	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 4/21	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 10, Oden, Vol. 3, pp. 79 – 257	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 4/28	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 11, Oden, Vol. 3, pp. 261 – 365	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 5/5	11:59 pm EST
ð	4-Mat 12, Oden, Vol. 3, pp. 369 – 468	<b>DUE</b>	Tues. 5/12	11:59 pm EST

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION PAPER**

ð	Due During Finals Week	<b>DUE</b>	Thurs. 5/21	11:59 pm EST
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**Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines**

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://one.asburyseminary.edu> and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

- The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
  - Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
  - Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
  - To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
  - Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
  - Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
  - Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.
- Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.



## Virtual Support Contact Information

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media** contact Information Commons:  
[Info\\_Commons@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program**, contact Dale Hale:  
[ExL\\_Office@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2393

## Accessing Information Commons Materials

### 1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm>

### 2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:  
<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

### 3. Research Questions:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

### 4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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