



# THEO 101-01

INTRODUCTION TO  
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

FALL 2025

FISHER HALL 716  
12:15-1:30PM



# FACULTY

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Zoom Hours for Students: M, W: 9-12pm / F: 1-2pm (all by request)

Gregory D. Jones, Jr., Ph.D. is a Professor in the Theology Department at Duquesne University. He is in the process of publishing a book with McFarland & Company which examines how a play theology of religions navigates the dialogical problems of the interreligious encounter. Greg also published a related article in *Religions* journal, and contributed a chapter to *The World of Final Fantasy VII*. He holds a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Duquesne University, an M.A. in Theology from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and English from Virginia Tech, and two decades of experience in Broadcasting/Digital Communications, teaching Sunday School, and Youth Ministry. His top research interests involve exploring the theological value and meaning of play experiences, the interplay of religion, media, and popular culture, and interreligious relationality.

## Mask Professor

Who knows what insights lurk in the hearts of students? The Mask Professor knows! Who...or what...is this avatar of ASCII...braver of bandwidth...citizen of cyberspace...denizen of digitization...educator of electronica...friend of filenames...gentleman of gigabytes...and more?! The Mask Professor cannot be defined, but only experienced -- hopefully as the digital professor for your awesome class, with a mask!

Scan this QR  
Code to watch the  
Video Syllabus!





# COURSE INTRO

## 1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many people imagine themselves speaking for and against making God an important part of our human life. Yet, who has actually *seen* God? Who has actually *understood* God? Who can actually *explain* God's ways? Who can actually *describe* God's nature? There is a solid biblical foundation for saying that Christians believe in God, Whom they have not seen, do not understand, cannot explain, and will not fully describe. For these reasons, Christians depend on God continually making Godself recognizable in the Persons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. For these reasons, theology is commonly understood as ***faith seeking understanding***.

This class introduces students to theology and its history of getting God's help to understand God. Students will learn (1) the key vocabulary and concepts of Christian theology, (2) the habits of thinking theologically and integratively about the content of Christian faith, and (3) the relevancy of theology in the modern world.

## 2. COURSE PROCESS

Through the semester, this content will be taught through:

- 🗣️ in-class lectures/discussion which will summarize the main points of the corresponding sections of Daniel Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding*,
- 📖 readings assigned to enhance student observations about the defining traits of Christian theology in general, which will be connected to
- 🧐 examinations of student understandings of the key vocabulary and concepts of Christian theology. These learning opportunities will begin to enable students to think through, talk about, and live out the tough-to-express theological dimensions of their own lives, in a way that is informed by Christian theology.

## 3. COURSE GOALS

This course does not presume a religious background. The instruction received in this course will enable all students to:

- 🎓 Describe what is meant by the term "theology."
- 🎓 Recognize key sources, traits, developments, and people in theology, and
- 🎓 Understand and define the key theology vocabulary and concepts listed in Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding*

In addition to these Instructional Objectives (IO), this course will help students grow in their abilities to:

- ⚡ Think in systematic and integrative ways about the vocabulary and concepts of Christian theology
- ⚡ Use theological resources to connect with traditional Christian beliefs and engage new theological ideas, and
- ⚡ Better present and explain their own theological ideas in a way that is informed by – yet also distinct from – the insights of important academic, religious/spiritual, and cultural voices that they consult on a regular basis.
- ⚡ Use PowerPoint and similar presentation platforms to organize and express ideas in academic, team, and professional contexts.

Scan this QR Code to read about the Top Skills Employers Look for in College Graduates, all of which this class will help you to develop!





# COURSE INFO



## 4. COURSE TEXTS / MEDIA

(access to these and other readings are all found on Canvas, in the “Books and Readings” Module)

📖 Daniel Migliore. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (Fourth Edition)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2023.

If you need a print version of the book, please ask in person or via email at the start of the semester.



## 5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

You need certain hardware/software for this course. Please reach out to your Advisor or contact Gumberg Library if you need help accessing...

- Devices for recording audio and video in MOV, MP4, M4V, WEBM format (tablet, computer, laptop, smartphone).
- Apps for creating and recording presentations (PowerPoint, Keynote, VoiceThread, Canva, Prezi, etc.).
- A reliable Internet connection for accessing Canvas and successfully uploading weekly assignments on Canvas.

Technical difficulties do not excuse you from completing Quizzes/Paths on time (see Course Conduct). If tech difficulties occur while turning in Paths, please Chat with [Canvas Support \(Student Only\)](#) or contact the IT Service Department first (if you contact IT, please include my email address to the ticket as well).

Chat with Canvas Support (Student Only): <https://cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat?chattype=student&sfid=Lt0QBBmk9fVta5yNgrKme8oijRgc9gUZSdYykMZV>

Canvas Support Hotline: 412-385-2323

Gumberg Library Phone: (412) 396-6130

Gumberg Library Email: [ask@duq.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@duq.libanswers.com)

IT Service Desk Contacts: <https://www.duq.edu/about/departments-and-offices/cts/contact-the-it-service-desk.php>

Please do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments!

- Once the due date passes, assignments are locked in Canvas
- Contributions sent through the comment box, through links (no Google Drive files!) or email are not accepted.



# 6. COURSE ACTIVITIES

All students start at zero and build points toward their grade, rather than start with a perfect score and lose points for mistakes. This approach emphasizes the paths to improving and learning, rather than emphasizing perfection or mistakes.

Here is the list of the activities that you can do to earn points towards your ultimate grade. *Please note that the point totals shown for each activity are the maximum points possible; you don't automatically get all the points just for turning something in or "giving a good effort;" please read through each activity's description to see how to earn the maximum points!*

Attendance	27pts (27 classes x 1pt)
Path 1: Quiz-Taking	96pts (12 quizzes x 8pts)
Path 2: Learning Log	156pts (12 logs x 13 pts)
Midterm Vocabulary Exam	80pts (1 midterm x 80pts)
Final Vocabulary Exam	80pts (1 final x 80pts)
Total Pts Offered	343 pts
<b>PTS NEEDED FOR AN "A"</b>	<b>325 points</b>

The following is the Grading Scale, with the Grades Explained:

**Student exceeded expectations:**

325+ points A  
324-300 points A-

**Student skillfully met expectations:**

299-275 points B+  
274-250 points B  
249-225 points B-

**Student adequately met expectations:**

224-200 points C+  
199-175 points C

**Student fell below expectations / Minimum Points needed to pass:**

174-160 points D

**Student did not meet expectations:**

159-0 points F

This is how your Total Points may appear on Canvas. Please only pay attention to number that is **circled** in this image (the number will not be circled on Canvas).

**! Crucial detail: When looking at your grade on Canvas, please only look at your Total Points, NOT the calculated grade.**

## 6.1 ATTENDANCE

Each time you attend class, you earn 1 point. You can earn 27 Attendance Points. You are expected to attend all classes. You will maximize your learning by attending every class. Yet, it is understood that there can be things outside of one's control or extracurricular commitments which keep you from coming to class. If you have to miss class due to a university-sponsored activity (sports, band, etc.), serious family emergency, and serious illnesses/injuries which require long-term hospitalization, please let me know via email. Meanwhile, if you need to miss class due to short-term episodes (allergies, digestion issues, temporary pains, traffic issues, tiredness due to lack of sleep, personal/family travel plans, routine dentist/medical appointments, home repairs, rent/job issues, etc.), please try not to be too discouraged about not being able to earn Attendance Points. Please prioritize your health and well-being, and take care of yourselves. **Be careful: you want to do everything possible to avoid falling into the habit of missing classes!** These Attendance points are the way that your overall Point Total is "rounded up" at the end of the course.

## 6.2 PATHS - Point Activities to Help Students

**! Crucial Explanations About Taking Your One Path: Please do not try to take both Paths each week. Please choose one, and only one, Path each week. If you take more than one Path in one week, only the first completed Path earns points – all others will earn 0 points.**

You can take one different Path each week. For example, you can do Quiz-Taking one week, Learning Log another week, Quiz-Taking after that, etc. Or, you can take the same Path, such as Quiz-Taking, each week (**NOTE: Quiz-Taking each week does not lead to an A**).

**This is the most important thing you will read in the Syllabus: The surest avenue to success is consistently striving to earn the most points possible on the Paths (particularly, taking Path 2) each week, as healthily and realistically as you can.**

Descriptions of each Path are listed below (See Canvas for more information).

**PATH 1: QUIZ-TAKING (up to 8 points):** Take open book/note quizzes to show what you learned from the Reading Material and Class Lectures/Discussions. For each quiz, you have a week to keep taking it until you get all the points.

**PATH 2: LEARNING LOG (up to 13 points):**

The purpose of contributing the Weekly Learning Log is to consistently guide and express how you are learning the course content, using the resources of the Reading Material, in-class discussion, and a Large Language Model (LLM). Each week, you will make a 1-5 minute audio-video recording in which you will respond to an LLM's description of the key topic(s) by talking out what you are learning. To ensure that you are learning the most that you can in this course, please complete five parts:

- 1) In 1-2 sentences, describe the Key Topic(s) in this week's Reading Material in your own words (this part may sound like this: "For me, The Task of Theology is the phrase to describe what we do to explain what we believe and why...")
- 2) Read/display 2-3 statements from the Reading Material which support your description, with citations.
- 3) Talk about one statement, either from the Lecture or Group Discussion portions of this week's classes, that helped you to understand the Key Topic(s) of the Week. (this part may sound like this: "I really started to understand what the "Task of Theology" means when Dr. Jones said..."OR "My Group helped me to understand what the "Task of Theology" is when one of them talked about..."
- 4) Define one of this week's key vocabulary words (the words are listed in Canvas)
- 5) Based on what you've read in the Reading Material and learned in the Class Discussion, say what you trust and do not trust about the AI's description of the week's Key Topic(s) (the AI descriptions are shown in the Modules in Canvas).

Please turn each Learning Log as a MOV, .MP4, .M4V, or .WEBM by Sunday 11:59pm in each week's "Learning Log" Module.

Successfully turning in one Learning Log on Canvas = up to 13 points

12 Weeks of Learning-Logging = up to 156 points

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- Learning Logs need to be longer than 1 minute, and shorter than 5 minutes.
- There's a "Learning Log Template" Module on Canvas to help make your Logs.
- The "Learning Log Recording Checklist and Guides" Module helps you record your Logs.

**SCORING EXPLANATION:**

Turning in the Learning Log on Canvas/On Time = 9 Standard Points

+1 DIRECTIONS for including everything requested in the directions

+1 TIME for keeping your Learning Log between 2-3 minutes.

+1 CREATIVITY for recording your audio-visual answer as a presentation (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, Canva, etc.) with multiple slides containing pictures/graphics, movie clips, music, etc.

+1 HUMANITY for actually appearing on-screen

= YOUR TOTAL POINTS

**MIDTERM VOCABULARY EXAM (up to 80 points)**

This in-person exam covers Week 1-7's key vocabulary words, defined in the back of *Faith Seeking Understanding* on **OCTOBER 16, during the normal class time.**

**FINAL VOCABULARY EXAM (up to 80 points)**

This in-person exam covers all key vocabulary words, defined in the back of *Faith Seeking Understanding* on **DECEMBER 16, 11-1PM: the University Scheduled Final Exam Time.**

There are no Exam make-ups except for the following reasons: important college sports events (with supporting official request from the athlete's college supervisor), very serious health conditions or death in student's family (both with official notice from your Advisor). It is the student's responsibility to communicate any of these reasons to the professor **before** the due date of the exam. If you need to take an Exam in the Office of Disability Services, please make the request as soon as possible. A Test Request Form must be entirely completed and turned into the office at least 3 days prior to the Final Exam.

**REDEMPTION LOG!** If you mess up on one Learning Log, or if you want to earn extra credit, fully complete the Redemption Path for the corresponding week by the end of the semester. This will replace the lowest score you earned on one previous Log with 15 points. For example, if you earned a "0" on a previous Log, the 15 points will replace the 0. Likewise, if your lowest score is 10, the 15 points will replace the 10. The guide to completing the Redemption Path is available on Canvas, in the "Redemption Path" Module.

**Due by December 10, 11:59pm.**





## 7. COURSE POLICIES

Please pursue befitting class behaviors. Avoid behaviors unbefitting for the classroom environment.

### Befitting for a University Academic Environment

- 😊 Respect the subject matter and the beliefs of others
- 😊 Complete the readings and assignments for each class
- 😊 Pay attention to anyone speaking (professor or student)
- 😊 Thoughtfully participate in class discussion
- 😊 Arrive in class on time

### Unbefitting for a University Academic Environment

- 😞 Disrupting class by being disrespectful, distracting, or late
- 😞 Using electronic devices for non-educational purposes in class
- 😞 Cheating on assignments, quizzes, and exams
- 😞 Being non-responsive in class
- 😞 Texting in class

**"Blank" File Policy:** If a student turns in a blank file, a corrupted file where the audio or video freezes in places, a video that has no audio, a video that is an audio-only blank screen, the wrong file in the wrong place, an "unreadable file type," a Google Drive link (especially one that does not provide immediate access to the file) or does not succeed in successfully uploading a difficult or slow-to-load file on Canvas or an email that was scheduled to send but did not actually get delivered, and the right file isn't turned in before the due time, the student earns a "0" as a result.

**Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:** Students are required to adhere to the Duquesne University Academic Integrity Policy, as explained [here](#). If you plagiarize on a paper, submit material completed for a different course, or are caught cheating on a quiz or exam, you will receive a "0" for that grade. Offenders may also be reported to appropriate University personnel, such as the Office of the Dean or the Office of Student Conduct, who may take further disciplinary action. This includes:

- Plagiarism (copying someone else's work) or asking someone else to do your work for you is prohibited.
- Using AI text generators (such as ChatGPT) to produce text/video counts as plagiarism by the standards of this course.
- "Spinning" existing text by running it through translation or thesaurus software also counts as plagiarism.

**Communication:** Please use the [Student Question Form](#) to send me your questions or concerns. If you have to email me directly, I gently request that you follow the Email Guide on Canvas. **Any emails inquiring about university business must originate from a duq.edu email address.**

**Grade Grubbing:** Please do not do this, as explained [here](#) (from Dr. Mark Tomforde, U of Colorado at Colorado Springs).

**Late Policy and Lifelines:** Any Path turned in past the due time earns 0 points. Yet, everyone has three "lifelines" to use during difficulties in turning things in. Lifelines are only for Learning Logs, not Quizzes, Exams, or the Redemption Path.

**Lifeline 1: Extension Request:** this grants 24 hours to turn in a Learning Log past the due time. You must email the extension request to [jonesg3@duq.edu](mailto:jonesg3@duq.edu) **before** – and not after -- the due time.

**Lifeline 2: Office Hours Re-Do Request:** if you get an error message while turning in the Learning Log and the problem cannot be resolved before it is due, this grants an opportunity to present it before Tuesday's class, over Zoom, during Office Hours. You must email this re-do request, with a copy of your email to the IT Department and image of the error message, by 12pm Monday, **after** the due time.

**Lifeline 3: Handwriting Request:** if you get an error message while turning in the Learning Log and the problem cannot be resolved before it is due, this grants you the opportunity to turn in the legible transcript of your Learning Log, written by hand, with pencil or pen, on 8.5in by 11in paper, at the start of class on Tuesday, for a maximum of 10 points. You must email the handwriting request, with a copy of your email to the IT Department and an image of the error message, by 12pm Monday, **after** the due time.

*Please feel free to use the format below for your own lifeline request, with the Subject Line: "ITCT25 Lifeline Request."*

Dear Dr. Jones,

*I am using [insert the Lifeline you are using here] to complete this week's Learning Log. I understand that using Lifeline 1 means that it is now due at 11:59pm on Monday, using Lifeline 2 means that I will present it before Tuesday's class, over Zoom, during Office Hours, and using Lifeline 3 means that I will turn in the legible transcript of my Learning Log that is written out by hand, with pencil or pen, on paper, by the start of Tuesday's class, for a maximum of 10 points. I also understand that after using my third and final lifeline, I can only ask for an extension due to important college sports events (with supporting official request from the athlete's college supervisor), very serious health conditions (with official notification from your Advisor) or death in my family (with official notification from your Advisor). I will communicate any of these reasons to you before that due time.*

Thank you,

[Your Name]

**Student Concerns:** Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. Please contact the Office of Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412.396.6658) to register for such accommodations. After receiving official notification from that university office, accommodations will be arranged. These accommodations will not be granted retrospectively.


**Tying it All Together:** Read through each week's Reading Material, so that you are prepared to make good contributions to the Group Discussions during our class sessions. Keep regularly attending to the class lectures and learning from your fellow classmates, so that you can engage the weekly Paths skillfully and creatively, with your unique words and ideas. The Paths (especially Path 2) will help you build experience in audibly and visually presenting your knowledge in an organized way, to prepare you for your Vocabulary Exams. The Paths and the Exams also ensure that you will have content from this class to carry with you, beyond this semester, across college, and throughout your lives.



Our class sessions occur over 16 Tuesdays (T) and 17 Thursdays (Th), 12:15-1:30pm, from August 25 to December 10. This covers just about 17 weeks and 27 class sessions (not including Midterm Exam and Final Exam).

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# CONCLUSION



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO TAKE THE  
BONUS SYLLABUS QUIZ!!!



## 9. YOU CAN DO MORE THAN GET A GOOD GRADE

Due to previous educational experiences, you may be inclined to think that being a student means finding a way to "get" a good grade by doing a bunch of stuff. Perhaps, this involves finding a way to get the best grade possible with the least amount of work. Some people call this "creating product." Believe it or not, college is about more than creating product. I do not ask students to think, read, write, and create because I want a good pile of papers/presentations. I ask students to do these things because important things happen to their brains when they go through the *process* of completing the course assignments -- their brains get exercised, similar to how your muscles do in a gym -- and your brains grow and develop, and you become better at understanding and talking out your own ideas. Please try to see your college experience in terms of the *process of earning your grade*, which is how you develop into a truer and deeper person -- mind, body, soul, and spirit!

In this course, you will develop good habits that are good to have in any area of life -- earning points and keeping track of them (like you will have to do with money), refining your abilities to undertake some projects while avoiding others, discerning what you can and cannot realistically accomplish due to time constraints, and finding ways to accomplish tasks despite initially unfamiliar instructions or an immense amount of information.

Your grades reflect your mastery of material and fulfillment of the instructions. Your contributions may involve lots of effort and diligence. The key is to understand that showing up, participation, and effort all open the way for you to make a contribution that earns a lot of points for showing that you have mastered the material and fulfilled the instructions, and not that you worked hard or spent a long time on it. This means I don't really "give" grades on anything; I just report what you *earned*. You are the players, I am the scorekeeper. As you progress through this course, please advance with this assurance -- you can do more than just get a good grade. You can go further, to develop into an ever-developing person, who can continually learn and grow throughout their entire lives!