

## **Christian Faith** NILI Spring Semester

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### **Catalog Description (from ONU):**

This course assists the students in moving toward thinking critically about matters of Christian faith/theology and in understanding that Christian faith is lived out and originates from living within specific denominational and theological traditions. Given our context, the course work will focus on the Wesleyan-holiness theological tradition. Included will be the critical reflection both on doctrinal matters and on matters of the church and Christian life/practice.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. To understand the nature and basis of Christian faith;
2. To distinguish the various sources of theology;
3. To learn the core doctrines of Christianity;
4. To appreciate the distinctive perspectives of Wesleyan theology;
5. To consider more deeply the practical dynamics of Christian living in their personal, corporate, and global contexts;
6. To compare the teachings of Christianity to those of other major world religions and different worldviews;
7. To better appreciate the role of reason in Christian thought and practice.

### **Transfer Credits:**

While the course is built on ONU's "Christian Faith" course, it will transfer to Southern Nazarene University as "Christian Thought." Those SNU students who have already taken Christian Thought may transfer it in as "Ministry, Church and Society" if they follow the alternate requirements listed at the end of this syllabus.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Attendance at all class sessions. After one absence your final grade may be reduced by up to 5%. With more than 3 absences, you may fail the course.
2. Reading Reflections on each reading assignment
3. Two exams. (Study guides will be given at least one class before.)
4. Two position papers
5. Essay: "How the NILI experience has affected my theology"
6. One book review

### **Texts:**

Gonzalez, Justo L. and Zaida Maldonado Perez. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*.

### **Class Dates**

Because of the nature of NILI with trips and different things (including partidos de futbol), our class will meet at various dates, seven Mondays, one Wednesday, six Thursdays and two Fridays. The course will meet from 2-5 in the afternoon with most afternoons having two 10-minute breaks to create three 50-minute sessions.

The following is a calendar of dates and assignments — subject, of course, to change.

Dates	Reading	Other Assignments
Wed., Jan. 21	Introduction to course (“Question of God” DVD in class)	
Fri., Jan 23	Gonzalez-Perez, chapter 1 plus “Authors cited” section in back	
Mon., Jan 26	Gonzalez-Perez, chapter 2	
Mon. Feb. 2	Gonzalez-Perez, chapter 3	
Mon. Feb. 9	Gonzalez-Perez, chapter 4	First position paper
Thurs., Feb. 12	Gonzalez-Perez, chapter 5	
Mon., Feb. 23	Gonzalez-Perez, chapters 6-7	
Mon., March 2	First Exam	
Mon., March 9	Wynkoop, chapter 1	
Thurs., March 12	Wynkoop, chapter 2	Second position paper
Thurs., March 19	Wynkoop, chapter 3	
Thurs., April 2	Wynkoop, chapter 4	
Thurs., April 9	Wynkoop, chapter 5	Book review
Thurs., April 16	Wynkoop, chapter 6	
Mon., April 20	Student presentations	Essay: “The effects on my theology”
Fri., April 24	Final exam	

### Assignments:

Unless otherwise announced, written assignments will be submitted as posts under discussion board topics in the course’s Facebook group. Do not use informal, chat or instant messaging style abbreviations in these posts.

1. *Reading reflections:* Read the assigned chapters of the textbooks (a chapter is due almost every class period) and post a 250-word (minimum) reflection.
2. *Position papers:* Select one of the questions below. Begin by looking in the textbooks for relevant material. Ask Stan to look through his library for relevant material. Get really bold and look through the campus Spanish library. Do some internet research. As you write your paper (500-800 words), build support for your answer to the question by including at least two quotes or paraphrased documented quotations from your reading. These can even be quotes with which you disagree. At the end of your report, on a separate bibliography page, list all the books, journals, online sites you consulted in your research. Here's how position papers will be graded:
  - Is the syllabus question given word for word in the paper? By the end of the paper, is that question clearly answered? (10 points)
  - Bibliography page and all references in correct form (10 points)
  - Are two quotes from outside sources used (15 points)
  - Grammar, sentence and paragraph construction (8 points)
  - How focussed the content is on the syllabus question (10 points)
  - Clarity and progression of thought, transitions and flow (10 points)
  - Use of sources in body of position paper (15 points)
  - Proof reading, spelling (7 points)
  - Opening and closing paragraphs of the paper (5 points)
  - Sparkle: style, readability, use of language (5 points)

A perfect paper in all these aspects would receive an A or 95 points. Creativity in a catchy title and extra reading will earn extra discretionary points.

### Question Choices for the two Position Papers

The essay should include Biblical references and must reflect course content and evidence of academic research on the topic. The essay must include a bibliography of resources consulted in your preparation.

- a. Can a Christian believe what Genesis says about divine creation and also accept what scientists say today about the origins and development of the universe?
- b. If Jesus Christ was a man like the Bible says, what do we mean by saying that He was fully God?
- c. Is falling short of absolute perfection always a sin, or can we define sin more narrowly as those acts of disobedience against God's known will?

- d. Does God's sanctifying work in us simply suppress our inherited sinful nature or can we say that entire sanctification cleanses our sinful nature?
  - e. With the passage of two thousand years since Christ promised to return, how can we keep preaching that His Second Coming is imminent?
  - f. How can the word "Trinity" be so important to us when it's never used in the Bible?
  - g. Is our relationship to God totally individualistic and independent of other believers or is our Christian life vitally related to the spiritual lives of other believers?
  - h. What should Christians believe about capital punishment?
  - i. What should Christians believe about war?
  - j. From a Christian point of view, can abortion ever be considered as a possible option?
  - k. Do Jesus' words in Mark 10:11-12 mean that divorced people who remarry always commit adultery?
3. *Book review.* Find an English book in Stan's library or one in the campus Spanish library that you wish you had time to fully digest. The book should, of course, have relevance to the content of this course. Skim through it, take notes on its content, take a look online to see if you can find critiques or reviews of it, and prepare an oral report for class. You will hand in the notes used for your report and they will be used in helping determine your grade for the assignment.
4. *How the NILI experience has affected my beliefs.* Write a 700-900 word paper on how this semester in Ecuador has affected one or more of the categories of your Christian belief system (God, human beings, sin, salvation, the church, Christian perfection, evil, eternal destiny, etc.)

**Grading:**

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Tests	100 pts each
Reading Reflections	15 pts each
Position Papers	50 pts each
Book review (oral with notes)	75 pts
NILI's effect on my beliefs	75 pts
Attendance	(See course requirements)

Letter grades will be assigned as follows: A = 94-100%, A- = 90-93%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80-83%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 74-76%, C- = 70-73%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 64-66%, D- = 60-63%, F = below 60%.

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**Adjustments for SNU students who have already had "Christian Thought" and who need credit for "Ministry, Church and Society"**

Material will be submitted via Moodle.

1. *Textbook reading.* Read chapters 5-6 from Gonzalez-Perez and write a 250-word minimum reflection on them. (Due Monday, January 26)
2. *Spiritual Gifts report.* Take two personal online Spiritual Gift evaluations and write a brief reflection on the results. (Due Friday, Jan. 23)
3. *"Lecture" readings.* Beginning Friday, January 23, there will be 12 excerpts from articles/books to be read. Those excerpts will be available in Moodle. Read that material and write 250-word minimum reflections on each reading.
4. *Interviews of two pastors or missionaries.* Get a definition of "the church" from two pastors and from one published source. Also ask the pastors/missionaries about the "best" and "worst" things about the church. Submit your 250-word minimum report which must include the pastors' names. (Due Monday, Feb. 2)
5. *Interview of lay volunteer.* Interview a local church volunteer worker. Ask about what they do, how they got involved, what brings them the greatest joy and satisfaction . . . Submit a 250-word minimum report. Be sure to identify the person as well as the church in which they serve. (Due Monday, March 2)
6. *Interview of two believers.* Interview two Christians (in English or Spanish). Find out how they came to Christ. What finally motivated them to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Submit a 250-word minimum

report. Be sure to identify the person as well as the church in which they are involved. (Due Thursday, April 2)

7. *Case study processing*: Read through and digest the following online cases. In the class period prior to the due date, ask the professor for the rationale for using that particular case study:

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/drinking.htm>

To drink or not to jdrink - a clash of worldviews (Due Monday, January 26)

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/stripper.htm>

Male stripper at youth sponsor's birthday party (Due Monday, February 9)

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/racism.htm>

Battling racism in a local church (Due Monday, February 23)

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/supper.htm>

Conflict at the Lord's Supper (Due Monday, March 9)

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/nora.htm>

Pastor under attack - dealing with a manipulative person who uses personal attacks (Due Thursday, March 19)

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/dereck.htm>

Walking away: a personal witnessing encounter at the workplace (Due Thursday, April 9)

Submit a 175-word minimum reflection on how you would counsel the persons involved to proceed. Include insights and thoughts from other components of this course.

8. *Weekly "laboratory" reports*. A 250-word (minimum) summary/reflection report of your participation that week in a worship or evangelistic service and/or ministries of a local congregation. Integrate what you are reading with what you experienced this week. Go to <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/lab.htm> for a series of "starter questions."
9. *Future Ministry Dreams paper: How I'd like the Lord to use me*. (Due Friday, April 24) In a 1000-word paper, do the following:
- Spell out some hopes and dreams for your future ministry both short-range (2-3 years) and longer-range (5-10 years).
  - Indicate which of your spiritual gifts will be used (based on the results of the online assessments).
  - Be specific about the tasks you expect to be involved in.
  - Your paper must include at least two properly documented quotations from published sources.
10. *Video reflections*: View three "streamed" online videos (available through links in Moodle) and write reflections. Before viewing each one, check with professor about the course objectives that will be met by the videos. Due dates in Moodle.
- Timofei's search for God (6 minutes)
  - Becoming a contagious Christian
  - The God Next Door