

THST 616 Doctrine of God

Summer 2024

Davide Sciarabba (Ph.D.c.)

This course instructs participants on areas of the doctrine of God such as: 1) The Godhead, 2) God the Father, 3) God the Son, 4) God the Holy Spirit.

CLASS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Class location: Columbia Union: North American Division, 9705 Patuxent

Woods Dr. Columbia, MD 21046

Class meeting dates: July 21-25, 2023

Class meeting times: Monday-Thursday 8am-12pm; 1-6 pm.

Zoom Meeting ID: 471 606 1916 **Course Website:** LearningHub **Instructor Tel.:** (269) 471-3187

Instructor Email: sciarabb@andrews.edu

Office location: Buller Hall 119, Andrews University
Office hours: By appointment, via Zoom or via Phone.

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

"Development of theological tradition, movement, doctrine, or theme throughout the history of Judeo-Christian thought. A broad study of the Christian doctrine of God: A study of the nature and attributes of God and His relation to the world. Consideration of divine foreknowledge, predestination, and providence; the Trinity; God as person. Biblical, historical, ethical, and systematic considerations are intrinsic to this course. While the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of this doctrine constitutes the central focus of the study, other views are also acknowledged."

PROGRAM & COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This degree program seeks to help you achieve the **Program Learning Outcomes** basic to your chosen profession. The Learning Outcomes primarily addressed in the MAPM Program are:

- 1. Deliver effective biblically-based sermons.
- 2. Demonstrate proper biblical interpretation skills.
- 3. Understand the historical-theological development of the Adventist Church.
- 4. Capable of training church members for evangelism.
- 5. Demonstrate an understanding of how to empower church members for leadership.
- 6. Capable of reaching specific social groups.

The following **Course Learning Outcome** contribute to the overall Program Learning Outcomes by identifying the key learnings to be achieved by diligent work in **this course**:

- 1. Learn and have a good understanding of the key theological thoughts on the trinity in the history of the Christian thought and in Scripture.
- 2. Be familiar with a range of key theological and philosophical terms, which constitute a necessary technical theological vocabulary.
- 3. Intelligently and critically reflect on the theological positions of the textbook author.
- 4. Informatively and concisely share the information gained during this semester in a written form in a manner reflecting their status as graduate students.

Learning outcome CLO 1 benefits the most from this class.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course topics and assignments have been selected to contribute to learning and evaluating this Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) as follows:

Date	Торіс	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
07/21/24	Reading report due	30 hours from the required books below—Due two days prior to the intensive (30 points of the final grade). Six-point deduction for late submission of reading assignments.	CLO 1-4
07/22/24	 Knowing your colleagues and professor Syllabus review Course introduction The Language about God The names of God The Truth and God God: Idol or Icon? 	Devotional. Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students	CLO 1-4
07/23/24	 The Philosophical Influence on the Christian thought about God The Attributes of God The Actions of God 	Devotional. Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class.	CLO 1-4
07/24/24	 The Oneness of God The Godhead The Father The Son The Holy Spirit 	Devotional. Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class	CLO 1-4

Date	Торіс	Assignment Due	CLOs Addressed
07/25/24	 A Holistic Understanding of God God and the Problem of Evil 	Devotional. Small group discussions and collaborative learning sessions on the subjects selected by students the first day of class	CLO 1-4
10/23/24		Final project is due today (October 23, 2024). By midnight, this day (EST), students should post in the LearningHub a 20-page electronic MSW document with the final project to receive a grade up to an A. The project must follow AU Standards of Writing Work and will be graded according to the rubric included in this syllabus (60 points of the final grade).	
11/24/24		Late final-assignment submission receives no more than a B by midnight on this day (November 24, 2024).	
12/22/24		Late final-assignment submission receives no more than a C by midnight on this day (December 22, 2024).	
01/13/25		172 days from the first day of class. Students who have not completed all intensive requirements by January 13, 2025, will receive a F. This grade will negatively affect the overall GPA of the student, will stain the student's academic record, and may impede the pursue of postgraduate education.	

List of suggested general topics for sermons and seminars

- 1. The trinity in the writings of Ellen White
- 2. The Trinity in the writings of a specific theologian.
- 3. The trinity in a book of Scripture

- 4. Nature of the Trinity
- 5. Relationship among the Trinity
- 6. Trinity and the Relationship with Creation.
- 7. Trinity in Salvation
- 8. Trinity in Creation
- 9. Is There Hierarchy in the Trinity?
- 10. God the Father
- 11. God the Son
- 12. God the Holy Spirit
- 13. The Divinity of Christ
- 14. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required at all classes and other academic appointments. When the total number of absences exceeds 10% of the total course appointments, the teacher may assign a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Textbooks:

Read 40 hours (400 pages) from at least two of the following books:

- 1. Gulley, Norman R. *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012.
- 2. Hill, Wesley. *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.
- 3. Letham, Robert. *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004.
- 4. Peckham, John C. *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2021.
- 5. Peckham, John C. *The Doctrine of God: Introducing the Big Questions*. New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2019.
- 6. Peckham, John C. *The Love of God: A Canonical Model*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015.
- 7. Peckham, John C. *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2018.
- 8. Scarone, Daniel. *El Dios que Adoramos*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 2012.
- 9. Whidden, Woodrow W, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships.* Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002.

Selected Bibliography:

Trinidad." Torah 2 (2015):107-126.

Baez, Enrique. "La unicidad y pluralidad de Dios en el Antiguo Testamento." <i>Torah</i> 2 (2015): 7 26.
"Leyendo Proverbios 8 a la luz de Juan 1." <i>Torah</i> 2 (2015): 27–49.
Burt, Merlin D. "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 125–139.
Canale, Fernando. "Doctrine of God." In Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology. Edited by Raoul Dederen. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
Basic Elements of Christian Theology. Berrien Springs, MI: Fernando Canale, 2005. Clouzet, Ron E. M. "The Personhood of the Holy Spirit and Why It Matters." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 11–32.
Davidson, Richard M. "Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 33–54.
Fortin, Denis. "God, the Trinity, and Adventism: An Introduction to the Issues." <i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i> , 17/1 (Spring 2006): 4–10.
Dederen, Raoul. "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity." <i>Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)</i> 8.1 (1970):1–22.
Gane, Erwin Roy. "The Arian or Anti-trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer." M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963.
Gulley, Norman. Systematic Theology: God as Trinity. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews Universit Press, 2011.
"Trinity in the Old Testament." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 80–97.
"A One-sided Trinity in Theology: Its Continuing Impact." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 16/1–2 (2005): 43–74.
Hernandez, Abner F. "Desde las Escrituras a Nicea: Una breve historia de la doctrina de la

Kaiser, Denis. "The Reception of Ellen G. White's Trinitarian Statements by Her Contemporaries, 1897–1915." Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS) 50.1 (2012): 25– 38. Lichtenwalter, Larry L. "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in the General Epistles and the Book of Hebrews." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 23/2 (2012): 72–111. Moon, Jerry. "The Adventist Trinity Debate. Part 1: Historical Overview." Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS) 41.1 (2003): 113–129. . "The Adventist Trinity Debate. Part 2: The Role of Ellen G. White." *Andrews University* Seminary Studies (AUSS) 41.2 (2003): 275–292. . "The Quest for a Biblical Trinity: Ellen Whites's 'Heavenly Trio' Compared to the Traditional Doctrine." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 140–20. Moskala, Jirí. "The Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Scriptures." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 24/2 (2013): 18-58. Mueller, Ekkehardt. "Christological Concepts in the Book of Revelation-Part 2: Christ's Divinity." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 22/1 (2011): 66–83. Peckham, John C. Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2021. . The Doctrine of God: Introducing the Big Questions. New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2019. . The Love of God: A Canonical Model. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015. . Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2018. Peterson, Paul and Robert K. McIver. Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity. Cooranbong, N.S.W.: Avondale Academic Press, 2014. Pfandl, Gerhard. "The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Seventh-day Adventists." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 160–179.

Poirier, Tim. "Ellen White's Trinitarian Statements: What Did She Actually Write?" Ellen White

. "The Trinity in Scripture." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 14/2 (Fall

2003): 80–94.

and Current Issues Symposium 2 (2006): 18-40.

Reeve, John. "Do Christians Worship Three Gods?" in *Always Prepared: Answer to Questions about Our Faith.* Pacific Press, 2012.

Reynolds, Edwin. "The Trinity in the Book of Revelation." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 55–72.

Rodriguez, Raquel. "La Trinidad y los pioneros de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día." *Torah* 2 (2015): 127–147.

Whidden, Woodrow W. "God is Love—Trinitarian Love!" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 17/1 (Spring 2006): 98–124.

_____. "Trinitarian Evidence in the Apocalypse." Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 11/1-2 (2000): 248–260.

Whidden, Woodrow, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve. *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002.

TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COURSE

US Credit-Hour Regulations

For every semester credit, the Andrews University credit hour definition requires that:

- Courses for professional masters' degrees (e.g. MDiv) include 15 instructor contact hours and 30 hours of independent learning activities.
- Courses for academic masters' (e.g. MA [Religion]) and all doctoral degrees include 15 instructor contact hours, and 45 hours of independent learning activities.

The calculation of hours is based on the study skills of the average well-prepared graduate student. Students weak in these skills: 1) may require more time and should consider taking fewer classes each semester; and 2) can find skill development assistance through the Seminary Study and Research Skills Colloquia, the AU Writing Center, and AU Student Success office.

In order to achieve the outcomes of this course, learning time will be distributed as follows:

Professional Masters' Programs	
2	3
Credits	Credits

Instructor Contact Hours	Face to Face Instructional Time	40 hrs
	In class Discussions	5 hrs
Independent Learning Activities	Name of Assignment #1 Pre-Intensive Reading	40 hrs
	Name of Assignment #2 20-page project/paper	50 hrs
Total Hours:		135

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Grades are based on the independent learning activities below which provide practice toward, and assessment of, the learning outcomes of this course. The grade weighting for each assignment is provided in the right-hand column. Specific due dates are given in the Course Overview above.

Assignment Description	Weighting
Pre-Intensive reading report . 40 hours from the required books above—Report due October 9, 2022. Upload the report on Learning Hub. The report consists of one 10 full pages with the following information: 1) Name of the student; 2) number of hours read; 3) author and titles of books from which the student invested her/his 40 reading hours—two books minimum; 4) 20 ideas from the readings. Two commented ideas per page.	30 points
Participation to class discussions —Each student is encouraged to participate to the class discussion. This can be done by expressing theological thoughts and insights, and by asking questions to the professor or to a classmate who expressed a theological thought on the doctrine of Salvation.	10 points
 Final research paper (20 pages) or 9 sermons (5 pages each). Participants must select a topic they would like to write about for the final research paper. The paper will need the following sections: 1) Title page. 2) Table of Contents. 3) Introduction—relevancy of the selected topic. 4) Chapter 1—Biblical and theological foundations for the Selected Topic—include EGW writings. 5) Chapter 2—Current Literature review on the Topic—minimum of 20 authors—EGW counts as one author. 6) Chapter 3—Applicable insights on how the contents can be applied in ministry. 7) Conclusion. 8) Bibliography—Only sources used for the research. Series of Sermons: will need the following sections: 1) Title page with the title of the series. 2) Table of Contents. 3) Title of each Sermon. 4) The following 	60 points

structure: Introduction; Section 1, 2, and 3; Undersection a, b, and c; 5)
Conclusion. 6) Bibliography.
This report should follow AU Standards for Written work:
(http://www.andrews.edu/GRAD/style.html). This project must be submitted by
June 07, 2023 and will be graded according to the rubric that appears at the end of this syllabus.

• **Note**: The final report must be submitted through our Learning Hub in *ONE MSW file*.

Total points 100 points

Note. In order to make grading fair for everyone, grades will be assigned on the basis of the above requirements alone. No individual arrangements will be made for those requesting last minute grade adjustment or extra credit.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be turned in on Learning Hub before the dates indicated in the Course Overview-Above.

Late Submissions

Because student assignments are an essential part of class activities, assignments turned in after the time they are due will be worth a maximum of 50 of possible points%--for this course, see penalties posted on the *Course Overview Table*. Any requests for extra time on an assignment must be made in advance with the professor. Such requests should be a rarity and should be accompanied by a valid reason why the work could not be done by the date due.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Davide Sciarabba (PhDc.) is Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics in the Department of Religion and Biblical Languages at Andrews University. He is the author of peer review articles and book chapters, and is editor of three books. His international experience (he served in Italy, France, Spain, and US) brings to his teaching an inclusive flavor of ideas and culture. He served as chaplain, youth pastor, pastor, and professor. He also had a unique experience as Olympic chaplain.

OTHER COURSE-RELATED POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The Seminary expects its students to exhibit rigorous moral integrity appropriate to ministry leaders representing Jesus Christ. Complete honesty in academic matters is a vital component of such integrity. Any breach of academic integrity in this class is subject to discipline. Consequences may include receipt of a reduced or failing grade, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university. A record of academic integrity violations is maintained by the University Student Academic Integrity Council. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel for recommendations on further penalties.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarism in which one fails to give credit every time use is made of another person's ideas or exact words, whether in a formal paper or in submitted notes or assignments. Credit is to be given by use of:
 - Correctly designed and inserted footnotes each time one makes use of another individual's research and/or ideas; and
 - O Quotation marks placed around any exact phrases or sentences (3 or more words) taken from the text or speech of another individual.
- Presenting another's work as one's own (e.g., placement exams, homework assignments);
- Using materials during a quiz or examination other than those explicitly allowed by the teacher or program;
- Stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials;
- Copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz;
- Assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof, without permission from the instructors, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course.

For additional details see: https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic integrity.html

Academic Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (<u>disabilities@andrews.edu</u> or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

Use of Electronics

No recording or streaming is permitted in seminary courses.

Courtesy, respect, and professionalism dictate that laptops and cell phones are to be used only for class-related activities during class time.

Communications and Updates

Email is the official form of communication at Andrews University. Students are responsible for checking their Andrews University e-mail, Moodle, and iVue alerts regularly.

LearningHub Access

Andrews University Learning Hub hosts this course online. Your Learning Hub username and password are the same as your Andrews username and password. Use the following contact information if you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with Learning Hub.

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016

Technical assistance with Learning Hub	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Technical assistance with your Andrews account	http://andrews.edu/hdchat/chat.php	

Emergency Protocol

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus, with the consensus of the class, at any time during the semester for the benefit of the learning process. The up-to-date Course Description for this course may be found at www.learninghub.andrews.edu.

APPENDIX 1: INTERPRETING LETTER GRADES

Letter Grades and Percentages

96-100%	٨	83-86%	В	70-74%	\mathbf{C}
		80-82%	B-	65-69%	C-
	A- R+	75-79%	C +	55-64%	D
87-90%	DΤ			55-Below	\mathbf{F}

THE B GRADE

The B grade is a sign that you have competently fulfilled all of the requirements stipulated for an assessment or competency evaluation. It is a very good grade and demonstrates a high level of the knowledge, insight, critical competence and professional presentation standards essential for an individual wishing to pursue a career as a professional leader in ministry.

THE A GRADE

An A grade is given only when a student not only fulfills the criteria for a B grade, but in doing so demonstrates an advanced academic aptitude for content knowledge, critique, synthesis and independent insight, while exhibiting highly developed communication skills and professional publication standards that would allow them to pursue a highly competitive academic career.

THE C GRADE

The C grade differs only from a B grade in that the traits outlined in the B grade above are not consistently applied. However, with diligence and by applying feedback from your lecturer, the academic process can provide opportunity for a student to improve their consistency, and hence, their grade.

THE D GRADE

The D grade points to a limited level of knowledge, insight, and critique, as well as to inadequate quality of written work. This may be because of a lack of time management on the part of the student, difficulty grasping the concepts being taught, use of English as a second language, or a personal issue that is affecting one's concentration and motivation levels. Again, with diligence, applying feedback from your

lecturer, and seeking services offered by the University like the writing lab or the counseling center, the academic process can provide an opportunity for a student to significantly improve their performance.

THE F GRADE

A failing grade is given when very limited or no demonstrable competency has been observed or when the final assignment is not submitted within the dates indicated in the Course Overview Table.

Rubric for Assessing Research Papers

Criteria	(5) Exceptional	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Emerging	(1) Unsatisfactory	Score
Title Page	Includes: 1) institution's name, 2) title, 3) name of the course, 4) course period, 5) name of the student, 6) date submitted, 7) follows AU Standards for Written work (AUSWW). Has no errors	Misses 1 of the 7 components	Misses 2 of the 7 components	Misses 3 components	Misses more than 3 components	
Introduction	The introduction is engaging, states the main topic and purpose of the paper, and previews the structure of the paper	Introduction states the main topic and purpose of the paper and previews its structure	States the main topic and purpose of the paper, but does not adequately preview its structure	The introduction states the main topic but lacks a purpose and a preview of its structure	There is no clear introduction or main topic and the structure of the paper is missing	
Contents	The paper looks neat, crisp, and professional. Contents meets paper length and exceeds the number and quality of sources. The evidence is clear and presented in a convincing and progressive manner	Assertions are clearly supported by adequate resources but misses some factual evidence. Meets paper length.	The content is good but arguments are weak and unclear	Content is too broad and presents data without personal reflection	The report misses entire sections of the paper. Does not meet paper length and misses evidence to support argument.	
Organization	Report provides a table of contents, and is organized using different subhead levels, following AUSWW. Subheadings are exceptionally well-worded and reflect upon the main subject. Exceeds all organizational specifications stated in the syllabus	Table of contents and subheading levels follow AUSWW Standards. Subtitles reflects upon the subject, but wording can be improved.	Paper provides a table of contents and is organized using different subheading level. However, does not follow AU standards of written work	Paper provides first level headings, but headings do not clearly reflect upon the subject. No table of contents. Does not follow all specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	Does not provide a table of contents and is not divided under headings and subheadings. Does not follow organizational specifications stated in the syllabus and AUSWW	

Format/Style	All texts and references follow specifications from AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are outstanding. Models language and style. No errors in punctuation, spelling, and sentence formation	Consistently follows AUSWW with minor flaws. Syntax and semantics are very good. No major errors in style	Consistently follows all AUSWW format. Syntax and semantics are good. Few errors in style	Inconsistently follows some AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are poor	Does not follow AUSWW. Syntax and semantics are deficient	
Conclusion	Conclusion is engaging and provides an outstanding overview of the project and personal reflections on projected implementation. Exceeds expectations	Conclusion restates the purpose, gives a good summary, and provides personal opinions about the outcome	Conclusion restates the purpose and satisfactorily summarizes results Lacks personal reflection on projected implementation	Conclusion attempts to summarize the thrust of the project, but is ambiguous. Lacks personal reflection	Conclusion fails to summarize and to express personal reflection on the project	