



St. Olaf College General Education Curriculum Biblical and Theological Studies–Theology (BTS-T) Requirement

Description:

A course on Christian theology that acquaints students with ongoing efforts to understand the essential content of Christian belief in a critical and coherent manner, and that engages students in theological reflection.

Intended learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

1. knowledge about Christian teachings, including knowledge of their historical development, their complexity and variety, and their coherence.
2. skill in reading and interpreting theological texts.
3. ability to evaluate the truth and meaning of their own and others' theological positions.
4. ability to apply theological knowledge and skills to issues of historical, contemporary, or personal significance.

Course guidelines with Curriculum Committee comments:

1. The principal focus of these courses must be Christian theology, understood as critical and normative reflection on Christian teachings.

Comment: While these courses may also consider other traditions or disciplines in relation to theology, Christian theology must be the principal focus. Theology is understood as “critical and normative reflection.” Theology is critical in that Christian discourse about God and Christ claims to be meaningful and true. Hence these courses must explore criteria of meaning and truth, and address such questions as, How, if at all, are Christian teachings about God and Christ meaningful? Theology is normative in that it intends to shape Christian discourse about God and Christ. Hence these courses must address such questions as, What kinds of claims about God and Christ are consistent with Christian teachings?

2. Courses must consider substantial examples of historical or contemporary theological reflection, and attend to the context, the variety, and the coherence of the theological claims they advance.

Comment: Christian theology is a temporally extended and multi-cultural discussion about Christian teachings concerning God and Christ. Courses satisfying this requirement must introduce students into this discussion by presentation of historical or contemporary movements or figures. Where appropriate, this may also involve considerations of critics of Christianity, minority Christian traditions, other religious traditions, or theological interaction with non-theological disciplines.

3. Courses must include explicit attention to Christian teachings about God and Jesus Christ; courses may include attention to significant aspects of other central teachings as appropriate to specific course goals.

Comment: Although these courses must include substantial attention to Christian teachings about God and Christ, they need not be exclusively concerned with them. They may also include the relation of these teachings to other Christian teachings about, for example, creation, sin, anthropology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and more. They may consider other aspects of Christianity such as religious practice, institutions, or ritual. They may include comparisons of Christian teachings with those of other religions.

4. Courses must provide opportunities for students to engage in explicitly theological reflection, and to apply their theological knowledge to matters of historical, contemporary, or personal significance.

Comment: Students in courses meeting this requirement will both acquire knowledge of Christian theology and participate actively in theological discussion, through informed engagement with a variety of theological positions.

Information for instructors proposing BTS-T credit for a specific course:

The St. Olaf Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving proposals to designate individual courses as meeting the Theology requirement. Instructors may seek BTS-T credit as part of a proposal for a new course, or may seek to add BTS-T credit to an existing course. BTS-T credit is attached to the *course*, not to the instructor or to the specific term in which the course is offered. A proposal for BTS-T credit must show how the course meets each of the BTS-T course guidelines; the comments following a guideline provide additional information about how the Curriculum Committee interprets and applies that guideline in reviewing proposals. Instructors are encouraged to consider the comments as well as the guidelines themselves in preparing proposals. Forms and additional instructions for submitting proposals electronically are available on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#).