How to Write an ST Doctrinal Synthesis Paper in 8-Steps:

Step #1 – Read the syllabus and instructions in Canvas carefully for the range of topics and/or texts that should be covered in the paper. The course objectives and description in the syllabus will also help you identify what topics to address.

Step #2 – Watch the 6-minute "Developing the Doctrinal Synthesis" video on YouTube to learn how Logos can help you: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxAT92ijywE&feature=youtu.be

Step #3 – Review the "Sample Doctrinal Synthesis" paper in the course files as a guide on what your paper should look like and key elements the paper should include. The Doctrinal Synthesis Paper is typically divided into three sections:

I.   **Brief Statement** – Write this section after the Detailed Exposition. Think about this as an "elevator pitch" or condensed summary that you might see on a church or ministry website. Avoid using technical or theological jargon. Imagine teaching a new believers class with participants from a non-churched background, so any technical terms need to be defined or avoided.

II. **Detailed Exposition** – Begin with this section early and return to it often. This section will require the most time to research, write, and edit.

III. **Practical Application/Implications** – End with this section. Think about those in your ministry and how you would unfold this doctrine in a discipleship relationship. A few questions might be helpful to stimulate your thinking: So what difference does X doctrine make in my life and ministry? What difference would this doctrine make in X's life? Why should a high-school student, single parent, married couple, etc. care about this doctrine? Be specific about your ministry and how the doctrine(s) connect with that ministry. Think about this as a reflection upon what you learned in the course and a guide to help you lead others to see how theology is vital to one's life.

Step #4 – Use the "Sample Doctrinal Synthesis" NOT the Turabian Word Template from the Library Resource page to format your paper. Your Doctrinal Synthesis paper should be single-spaced NOT double-spaced like the Library Sample Turabian Word Template.

Step #5 – Use the "Shelf Space" sections in *Exploring Christian Theology* (ECT) for a starting point of resources to consult while writing your doctrinal statement. Students should use more resources than their assigned textbooks or articles in the course. These resources are a starting point for your research but not the end. Your sources should include a combination of historical, biblical, and systematic sources. Graduate-level resources are expected.

- ST101: Theology Proper & Bibliology – pgs. 111-117 (ECT, Volume 1)
- ST102: Trinity – pgs. 242-247 (ECT, Volume 1)
- ST103: Creation, Man, Sin, Angels, Demons – pgs. 115-121 (ECT, Volume 2)
- ST104: Soteriology – pgs. 238-242 (ECT, Volume 2)
- ST105: Ecclesiology & Sanctification – pgs. 119-123 (ECT, Volume 3)
- ST106: Eschatology – pgs. 227-230 (ECT, Volume 3)

Step #6 – Use proper Turabian formatting for the references in your endnotes. Consult the "DTS Turabian Supplement" and current version of Turabian for information on the abbreviation of biblical books, biblical studies resources, and other theological works.

Step #7 – *BEFORE* you submit your paper, read through your paper to (1) ensure all necessary topics are covered and (2) for spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors. If there is a grading rubric, compare this to your paper.

Step #8 – Submit your paper by the assigned due date in the syllabus!

8 Tips and Tricks for Writing a Doctrinal Synthesis Paper:

1. Give credit to whom credit is due! Do not plagiarize other doctrinal statements or authors in your paper. The goal is to synthesize, in your own words, what you believe about various doctrines through your diligent study of what others believe and how they have articulated those beliefs. Your paper will also be checked through Veritas for plagiarism.

2. Plan ahead! This will take hard work to do well and should not be delayed until the last minute. If you need clarification about the assignment or a resource, send your Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or professor a message a few weeks before the assignment is due. Last minute questions may not be answered by the due date or in the detail you may desire.

3. Ask your paper questions. What do you mean by that term? How is it understood by others? Why do you believe this view is correct in contrast to other views? Why is this important for life and ministry?

4. At the end of each week or major unit in the course, write that portion of your doctrinal statement while the lectures and readings are fresh in your mind.

5. Start with your Detailed Exposition and conclude with the Application section. Cite at least one example or take away from your learning that will positively impact your ministry. (see explanation above)

6. When citing *Exploring Christian Theology* (ECT) be sure to cite the specific author writing that chapter or section.

   - Example: Nathan D. Holsteen, "Created in Christ Jesus: Church, Churches, and the Christian Life." in *Exploring Christian Theology: The Church, Spiritual Growth, and the End Times.* Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds., (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014), page#.

7. You might find it helpful to initially enter the Scripture texts and resources as footnotes, then copy and paste these as endnotes every 4-5 citations. The solid line dividing footnotes from the paper is unnecessary and should be deleted. If you have a dual-monitor, you might be able to format your paper or windows to view your paper and endnotes side-by-side.

8. Anything you use to support your argument or statement should go in your endnotes. The Brief Statement can have parenthetical Scripture references. The Body/Doctrinal portion should have your support and/or rationale in the endnotes. Your endnotes should be 3-5 pages using 10-point Times New Roman font.

Resources for Writing ST Doctrinal Synthesis Papers:

- DTS Library Page: https://library.dts.edu/
- Best Commentaries: https://www.bestcommentaries.com/
- Christian Classics Ethereal Library: https://www.ccel.org/
- Logos Training Videos: https://www.logos.com/student-training
- Grammarly.com is a free resource to review basic spelling and grammar. You can pay for an annual subscription for further writing tips but this is a supplement not replacement for carefully reading and reviewing your paper: https://www.grammarly.com/
- DTS Basic Turabian Video (30-minutes): https://media.dts.edu/player/?course=lib101-2017-en&unit=1&video=3&language=en-US
- Michael Kibbe's book *From Topic to Thesis* includes basic instructions on how to write a theological paper by understanding various types of resources at each step of writing your paper. This book is required in RS101 Orientation & Research Methods. Kibbe also includes instructions on how to use ATLA Religion Database to find theological journals (Appendix D) and Zotero (Appendix E).
    - Zotero is a free Bibliography software to help manage citations and create a bibliography: https://www.zotero.org/
    - The Library includes some instructions on how to use Zotero: https://library.dts.edu/Pages/RM/Write/zotero.pdf