

# Planning Your Semester



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# 5 Reasons to Plan Your Semester

- Prevent procrastination
- Reduce stress
- Learn more effectively
- Submit quality work
- Delight in God's Word & World

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## Why Create a Semester Plan?

1. Outlines each assignment's requirements.
2. Serves as a handy checklist to reference.
3. Provides a timeframe for completing assignments.

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# When Should You Create a Semester Plan?

- Create a semester plan **as soon as** you receive your syllabus.
- Plan to complete your assignments early.
  - *This means starting early!*

# Creating a Semester Plan



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# 1. List Semester Tasks

- **READ, READ, READ** the syllabus!!!
- Pay attention to...
  - The course instructions (WHAT)
  - The course schedule (WHEN)

The **syllabus** is  
*not a suggestion,*  
but a

**PRESCRIPTION.**

It tells you  
what you are

**REQUIRED**

to complete  
to receive full credit  
for the course.

# 1. List Semester Tasks (Example)

SEMESTER OVERVIEW				
✓	Class	Assignment	Label	Due Date
	<i>Example:</i>			
	ST5101	Blount et al., <i>Exploring Christian Theology Vol. 1</i> (first half)	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	Grenz and Olson, <i>Who Needs Theology?</i>	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method</i>	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	McGrath, <i>Theology: The Basics</i>	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	Nichols and Brandt, <i>Ancient Word, Changing Worlds</i>	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	Bingham and Kreider, <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption</i>	Read	13-Dec
	ST5101	Theological Definitions / Response Paper	Minor	1-Nov
	ST5101	Postmodern/Culture Paper	Minor	1-Nov
	ST5101	Theological Method Paper	Minor	15-Dec
	ST5101	Doctrinal Synthesis	Major	15-Dec

## 2. Read Assignment Directions

- Syllabus
- Rubric
- Separate document ("Files")
- Canvas ("Assignments")

The screenshot shows a Canvas LMS page for an assignment titled "Thesis & Argument". The URL is [online.dts.edu/courses/16788/assignments/215179](https://online.dts.edu/courses/16788/assignments/215179). The left sidebar contains navigation links: Home, Assignments (highlighted with a red box), Files, Logos Help, DTS Resources, Office 365, Microsoft Teams Information, and Lucid. The main content area shows the assignment details: Due Jul 19 by 11:59pm, Points 20, Submitting a file upload, File Types pdf. The instructions require uploading a PDF identifying the thesis and argument from a provided PDF. The instructions include a checklist of requirements and an example outline format.

**Thesis & Argument**

Due Jul 19 by 11:59pm Points 20 Submitting a file upload File Types pdf

Upload a PDF identifying the Thesis and argument from [Humility and Repentance - Kopic.pdf](#) ↓ provided in course files. As the student reads the chapter, he/she should:

- Identify the author's thesis/main point of the chapter.
  - A thesis is the main idea or assertion the author intends to prove and/or support in an article, chapter, or book.
  - Introduce the author's thesis with an introduction, such as "Kopic argues ..." or "Kopic asserts ..."
- Outline the author's argument supporting his thesis in bullet point format (Main points only). This should be in your own words.

**A Checklist Before Submitting Assignment:**

- Contains a direct quote of Kopic's thesis in the chapter
  - This includes the page number in parenthesis. This is NOT proper Turabian formatting but Turabian is covered in a future assignment.
  - The paper does *not* need to follow Turabian formatting, which will be covered in a future module.
- Provides an introduction to Kopic's thesis (ex. "Kopic argues ...")
- Outlines Kopic's main points/argument supporting his thesis in bullet points.
  - Each point should use full sentences.
  - These sentences should *paraphrase* the main points of his argument and not be a direct quote from the article.

Example Outline format:

I. Thesis:  
A.  
B.  
C.

II. Conclusion:

Thesis and Argument				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Identify Thesis Statement	10 pts Expectations Met	5 pts Expectations Somewhat Met	0 pts Expectations Not Met	10 pts
Students correctly identified Kopic's Thesis statement.	Students identified Kopic's thesis, directly quoted it, and included the page number.	Students identified Kopic's thesis but may not have directly quoted it or included the page number.	Student did not identify the Thesis	



## 2. Read Assignment Directions (Example)

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### Written Assignments

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#### **All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)**

##### 1) Doctrinal Synthesis Paper

The student will develop a 5–7 single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper on Bibliology (including inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, and canonicity). There are three distinct parts to the paper: 1) a Brief Statement, 2) a Detailed Exposition, and 3) a Practical Implications Reflection. (Note that elements of this doctrinal synthesis paper will be reused in ST106 Eschatology in the student's final capstone doctrinal synthesis assignment.)

1) **The Brief Statement** (150–200 words or one-fourth to one-third of a page). This first section will summarize Bibliology in non-technical (but biblically and theologically accurate) language similar to an article in a church's or ministry's doctrinal statement. It will include parenthetical key Scripture references and will reflect the orthodox, protestant, evangelical faith. (See sample doctrinal synthesis paper provided.)

2) **The Detailed Exposition** (500–750 words or two-thirds to three-fourths of a page). This second section will provide a succinct but thorough elucidation of Bibliology using technical, traditional language and covering the major issues related to Bibliology (see course description and outline for major issues in this area of doctrine). This exposition should read

Image from ST5101 syllabus

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## 3. Break Down Assignments

- **Readings:** sections, chapters, pages
- **Doctrinal Statements:** brief statement, detailed exposition, personal reflection
- **Papers:** writing process (i.e., topic, thesis, research, draft, edits)

### 3. Break Down Assignments (Example)

SEMESTER OVERVIEW					
✓	Class	Assignment	Label	Due Date	Components
	<i>Example:</i>				
	ST5101	Blount et al., <i>Exploring Christian Theology Vol. 1</i> (first half)	Read	13-Dec	Note: this is required reading in order to complete the Theological Definitions / Response Paper.
	ST5101	Grenz and Olson, <i>Who Needs Theology?</i>	Read	13-Dec	
	ST5101	Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method</i>	Read	13-Dec	
	ST5101	McGrath, <i>Theology: The Basics</i>	Read	13-Dec	
	ST5101	Nichols and Brandt, <i>Ancient Word, Changing Worlds</i>	Read	13-Dec	
	ST5101	Bingham and Kreider, <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption</i>	Read	13-Dec	
	ST5101	Theological Definitions / Response Paper	Minor	1-Nov	Read Grenz/Olson, define terms, interact with thesis, discuss argment, evaluate argument's helpfulness, reflect
	ST5101	Postmodern/Culture Paper	Minor	1-Nov	Define postmodernism and culture, discuss the role culture plays in your theological method
	ST5101	Theological Method Paper	Minor	15-Dec	Revelation, Prophecy, Table Manners / Theological Method
	ST5101	Doctrinal Synthesis	Major	15-Dec	Brief Statement, Detailed Exposition, Practical Implications

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## 4. Assign a Personal Due Date to Each Part

Why a personal due date?

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## 4. Assign a Personal Due Date to Each Part

- You may have multiple assignments due on the same date.
- You only have so many hours to work.
- You give yourself personal accountability to do the work—and to do it in a timely manner.

## 4. Assign a Personal Due Date (Example)

SEMESTER OVERVIEW						
✓	Class	Assignment	Label	Due Date	Personal Due Date	Components
	<i>Example:</i>					
	ST5101	Blount et al., <i>Exploring Christian Theology Vol. 1</i> (first half)	Read	13-Dec	13-Sep	
	ST5101	Grenz and Olson, <i>Who Needs Theology?</i>	Read	13-Dec	4-Oct	Note: this is required reading in order to complete the Theological Definitions / Response Paper.
	ST5101	Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method</i>	Read	13-Dec	25-Oct	
	ST5101	McGrath, <i>Theology: The Basics</i>	Read	13-Dec	22-Nov	
	ST5101	Nichols and Brandt, <i>Ancient Word, Changing Worlds</i>	Read	13-Dec	22-Nov	
	ST5101	Bingham and Kreider, <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption</i>	Read	13-Dec	29-Nov	
	ST5101	Theological Definitions / Response Paper	Minor	1-Nov	11-Oct	Read Grenz/Olson, define terms, interact with thesis, discuss argment, evaluate argument's helpfulness, reflect
	ST5101	Postmodern/Culture Paper	Minor	1-Nov	25-Oct	Define postmodernism and culture, discuss the role culture plays in your theological method
	ST5101	Theological Method Paper	Minor	15-Dec	15-Nov	Revelation, Prophecy, Table Manners / Theological Method
	ST5101	Doctrinal Synthesis	Major	15-Dec	8-Dec	Brief Statement, Detailed Exposition, Practical Implications

# 4. Assign a Personal Due Date (Example)

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B	C	D	E	F
WEEK		READING	MINOR	MAJOR
5	ST5101	Nichols and Brandt, <i>Ancient Word, Changing Worlds</i> Intro Ch 3; McGrath, <i>Theology</i> Ch 5	Outline TDRP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			
6	ST5101	Nichols and Brandt, <i>Ancient Word, Changing Worlds</i> Ch 4–6; McGrath, <i>Theology</i> 6	Define theological terms for TDRP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			
7	ST5101	Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical</i>	Finish drafting TDRP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			
8	ST5101	Kreider and Svigel, <i>A Practical Primer on Theological Method</i> Ch 7–12; McGrath, <i>Theology</i> Ch 8	Revise and submit TDRP; outline and begin drafting PCP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			
9	ST5101	McGrath, <i>Theology</i> Ch 9–end	Finish drafting PCP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			
10	ST5101	Bingham and Kreider, <i>Dispensationalism and the History of Redemption</i> Ch 1–5	Revise and submit PCP; outline TMP	
	Course 2			
	Course 3			
	Course 4			

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## 5. Make a Weekly Schedule

- Allocate time on a week-to-week basis to do the work.
- Assign a specific time slot to each item.
- Consider blocking your schedule by class (e.g., ST 5101, BE 5101, PM 5101) or by assignment type (e.g., readings, papers, review class notes).



# 5. Make a Weekly Schedule (Example 1)

## Example Week Schedule

	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Morning	optional study	Church	Class 1	Study	Study	Class 4 *reading due	Study
Afternoon	optional study		Study	Class 2 *reading due	Class 3 *item due	Class 5	Study
Evening	P/T Job	optional study	P/T Job	Study	Study		P/T Job

### Study Time

**READING**

- Class 2 text ch.5 (due Tue)
- Class 4 ch.3 (due Thur)
- Class 3 ch.4 (due next Thur)
- Class 5 ch.3 (due next Mon)

**MINOR**

- Class 3 reflection assign. (due Wed)
- Class 5 quiz (due next week)

**MAJOR**

- Class 2 book review (due next week)
- Class 1 paper (due in 3 weeks)

Image from Zacharias and Forrest, *Surviving and Thriving in Seminary*, 83

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun				
6:00 AM	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Wake	Sleep				
6:30 AM	Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study	Bible Study					
7:00 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Wake				
7:30 AM	Study	Study	Misc.	Study	Misc.	Travel time	Bible Study				
8:00 AM								Breakfast			
8:30 AM					BE5101 Bible Study Methods & Hermeneutics				Travel time		
9:00 AM									Church		
9:30 AM			PM5101 Christian Life & Witness		PM5101 Christian Life & Witness		Volunteer				
10:00 AM											
10:30 AM											
11:00 AM			DTS Chapel	DTS Chapel	Study						
11:30 AM											
12:00 PM		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	P/T Job		Travel time			
12:30 PM	Misc.				Lunch						
1:00 PM	ST5101 Theological Method & Bibliology	P/T Job	P/T Job	P/T Job			Lunch				
1:30 PM										Travel time	
2:00 PM											Sabbath
2:30 PM											
3:00 PM											
3:30 PM											
4:00 PM	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study		Study				
4:30 PM											
5:00 PM											
5:30 PM											
6:00 PM											
6:30 PM											
7:00 PM	Dinner	Dinner	Travel time	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner				
7:30 PM											
8:00 PM			Small Group Bible Study (+ Dinner)								
8:30 PM											
9:00 PM	Study	Study		Study	Study	Sabbath	Study				
9:30 PM											
10:00 PM											
10:30 PM	Chores / Sleep	Chores / Sleep	Chores / Sleep	Chores / Sleep	Chores / Sleep		Chores / Sleep				
11:00 PM											

Key	
<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Church / Ministry
<span style="background-color: #C8E6C9; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	P/T Job
<span style="background-color: #FFCC80; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Study
<span style="background-color: #B39DDB; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Class
<span style="background-color: #D1C4E9; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Chapel
<span style="background-color: #DCE775; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	Food / exercise

# Example Schedule 2

SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM  
DTS SEMESTER PLAN  
(EXAMPLE)

# Contact Us

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