

Course Prospectus

For THL 250 Introduction to Biblical Doctrines

Overview

This course will present an overview of many of the basic doctrines taught by the Living Church of God. Through review of past and present Church literature, this course will aim to give students a broad basic understanding of what the Church believes, and why it believes as it does. Upon completion of the course, a student should be able to recognize fundamental biblical doctrines, demonstrate an understanding of those doctrines' implications for Christian belief and conduct, and show basic competence in explaining those doctrines.

Course catalog description for this course

This course deals with basic biblical doctrines. Topics include the Church, the Holy Bible, God, the Holy Spirit, the gospel, salvation, holy days and festivals, the law of God, the Sabbath, sin, being born again, church government, marriage, the second coming of Christ, the last judgment, and human potential. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate fundamental doctrinal understanding. Tomorrow's World television presenter Richard Ames presents a series of lectures on foundational biblical doctrines.

Prerequisites and corequisites

Prerequisites: None.

Corequisites: None.

Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

Audit vs. Credit

Students may choose to take this course either for credit or as an "auditor." Students who audit the course will not receive a final grade, and will not ordinarily have their writing assignments evaluated, but they may listen to the lectures and follow along with the course material. Auditors are charged the same tuition fee as for-credit students.

Please note that students who are enrolled for credit are expected to complete their assignments by the posted deadlines. If a student who is taking the course for credit fails to complete three consecutive assignments by the posted deadlines, the instructor may at his discretion withdraw that student from the course. A student who receives a withdrawal notification may contact the instructor and ask to be re-enrolled either as an auditor or for credit.

Instructional Objectives

On completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Recognize fundamental biblical doctrines;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of those doctrines' implications for Christian belief and conduct;
3. Show basic competence in explaining those doctrines; and
4. Define basic vocabulary words.

Your instructor

Evangelist Richard F. Ames is the instructor for this course. To inquire from him about routine course matters, please use the "Contact Instructor" link on the course home page. Mr. Ames' executive assistant, Mr. William Bowmer, will serve as faculty aide for the course; you may contact him with your course-related inquiries at THL250@livinguniv.com . Should you need to contact Mr. Ames about any matters requiring his special attention, Mr. Ames can be reached directly at rames@livinguniv.com .

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please inform your instructor through the "Contact Instructor" link on your course home page.

Technology access

This course requires web access. You also have to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. If you do not already have it, you may download the free Adobe Acrobat reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> , which you may then install and use to access PDF documents on this site.

Course evaluation

We welcome your input for improving this course. Making suggestions to us by e-mail is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course you will have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make distance learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions

concerning your experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate your letting us know how we can improve our products and services for you and other distance learners. We welcome your input for improving the course and making suggestions by email is helpful.

Textbooks

Students will read the entirety of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's *Mystery of the Ages* during this course. Mr. Ames will be using the WCG-issued hardcover edition. If you do not have access to your own copy, you may wish to purchase a used copy through an online bookstore, or through an auction site such as eBay. If you have difficulty acquiring a copy, please contact the instructor for assistance. Other assigned texts, such as LCG's *Statement of Fundamental Beliefs*, will be made available online, and printed copies are available at no charge upon request.

Icebreaker assignment

To officially begin a course you must complete an icebreaker assignment by which you introduce yourself to your classmates through posting a short autobiography on the course Forum. The icebreaker assignment must be submitted by the eighth day of the semester. Post your biography as a reply to the "Bios" topic on the course forum. You can earn 25 bonus points in this course by doing so "on time." Simply tell the class about yourself and your goals. This is not the place for a profession of faith, or the details your conversion experience, or problems you have had with previous fellowships, as that information is more of a private nature. Here you inform your classmates what you would like them to know about you. As we have people from all over the world enrolled in this course each autobiography will help us know, understand and appreciate each other. Please read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

Course requirements and grades

Due dates

The last official day of instruction is May 10. The semester ends May 14.

Reading assignments

Refer to "Course outline and assignments" section for reading assignments and the program schedule.

Study tips

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. Your instructor functions as a facilitator with you as the driving force in mastering course content. Do not put off completing your readings and assignments. While there are many different learning styles the following strategy should serve the needs of most students.

- Look over assigned readings.
- Read the assigned readings making notes before viewing the assigned lecture.

- As you view lectures complete your notes.
- If you have a question, ask. Questions should arise in the teaching-learning process. By bringing questions to our attention you not only acquire assistance but you also maintain the interaction necessary in higher education. Use the Inbox on your course home page to send questions.

Lectures

This course includes nine online lectures by Mr. Ames—one for each of the course’s nine segments. It also includes seven *Tomorrow’s World* telecasts. Students who wish to pace themselves should thus plan on viewing one Listening Assignment per week during the course. Links to lectures are placed in lessons.

Forums

To help students think about the wide variety of doctrinal topics covered in this course, we will be using the Discussion Forum extensively. Students will first use the Discussion Forum to post their Ice-Breaker assignment consisting of an “Introductory Biography” for their classmates. Please be sure to complete that assignment before 3:00 a.m. ET on Friday, January 29; it is worth an automatic 25 points if completed by then.

During each of the nine course segments, there will be one or (usually) two Discussion Forum Topics in which students must participate. To encourage genuine discussion, each student will be asked to make one “new” comment based on the course materials rather than on other students’ comments, and then to make a second comment in response to one of the other students’ comments. When you post, please be sure to uphold common standards of courtesy in your comments, even if you are disagreeing with what another student has written.

Students are welcome to post more than two comments in a topic, especially if a lively discussion is underway, but posts after the first two will have no bearing on your grade; each student will earn participation credit simply for posting the two required comments. Points will only rarely be deducted from the standard 20, in cases where a student has obviously rushed to post substandard work simply in hope of meeting the “two post” criterion.

Please note that unlike quizzes (which can be completed “late” for full credit), and writing assignments (which can be completed “late” for a small grade penalty as noted above), Discussion Forum posts **must** be completed **on-time** in order to earn **any** credit. The two weeks of each lesson should give students ample time to complete their posts, barring a serious emergency; if you do have an emergency that prevents you from completing a lesson’s Discussion Forum posts on time, you must contact the instructor before the end of the lesson to explain the special circumstances that will prevent you from completing your posts within the (usually) two weeks available. Please do not neglect these posts; they make up nearly one-third of your final grade.

Quizzes and Examinations

Each of the nine course segments includes an “open-book” multiple-choice quiz, to test your mastery of the course materials. There will be also be a “closed-book” mid-term exam toward the middle of the

semester, and a “closed-book” final exam at the end of the semester, which will not be able to be re-taken. Much of the material in the “closed book” exams will have been covered in the “open book” quizzes, so students will want to be sure they are familiar with that material before taking the exams.

Writing Assignments

This course requires students to submit nine short writing assignments (between 400–600 words). For instructions regarding how to post them, please see the Frequently Asked Questions link on the course homepage. At the end of the course, each student will submit a final paper, 2,000–3,000 words in length, on a topic the instructor will assign toward the middle of the semester. As noted below, students may choose to complete one or two additional short writing assignments for extra credit. Please note that writing assignments submitted after the deadline are subject to a grade penalty of one point for each week the assignment is late.

Glossary Assignments

We would like to build a glossary for this course. Therefore we have included a Glossary Assignment for each lesson.

Extra Credit Assignments

Students may choose to submit one or two “extra credit” writing assignments, chosen from several topics selected by the instructor. Students may receive up to 25 points of extra credit for each of the two assignments.

Always keep a copy of your work for this course.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined based on the number of points you have earned over the semester as follows:

Quizzes (open book)	180 (nine at 20 points each)
Forum Comments	320 (sixteen at 20 points each)
Glossary Assignments	25 points (nine at 2 or 3 points each)
Writing Assignments	225 points (nine at 25 points each)
Mid-term Exam (closed book)	50 points
Final Exam (closed book)	100 points
Final Paper	100 points
Total:	1000 points

By getting your autobiography posted on time you can earn 25 bonus. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

Grades are assigned in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning we believe that mastery of the subject matter is achieved when a student can demonstrate that they have achieved 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want you to earn at least 800 points in this course. If you do not do so then you have not developed the mastery we would like you to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades (if you don't know what that means, don't worry about it). Also, don't go on a guilt trip if you get a C. That is an honorable grade, but if you receive a D or below, then you might want to retake the course. Mastery of the material is what your goal should be.

Grades are assigned by points as follows:

A	900-1000 points
B	800-899 points
C	700-799 points
D	600-699 points
F	Below 600 points

Academic irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were your own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned.

As a student you will need to support your conclusions by citing what others have written or said. It is vital that you give credit where credit is due, and accurately cite your sources, whether they are print sources or online materials. Be sure not to include material from an online source in your own work without proper attribution. Any paper found to contain plagiarized material (material written by someone else, that you have not credited to that other source) will receive a "0."

In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members are authorized to refuse to grade such papers, in whole or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure. In this course, a student found to have committed repeated acts of plagiarism may receive an "F" in the course and/or may be subject to other University discipline.

If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

Course calendar

All reading and viewing assignments are set forth in the lessons on the course website. Other readings are found in the lessons.)

Lesson 1 Introduction

Welcome

Introductions to Doctrinal Studies

Lesson 2 "Who and What Is God?"

Who and What Is God?

Lesson 3 "Mystery of Angels and Evil Spirits"

Angels and Evil Spirits

Lesson 4 "The Mystery of Man"

The Mystery of Man

Lesson 5 "Mystery of Civilization"

The Mystery of Civilization

Midterm Exam

Lesson 6 "Mystery of Israel"

The Mystery of Israel

Lesson 7 "Mystery of the Church"

The Mystery of the Church

Lesson 8 "Mystery of the Kingdom of God"

The Mystery of the Kingdom of God

Lesson 9 "The Big Picture"

The Big Picture

Final Paper due

Final Exam