



RELT-255 Christian Beliefs

Course Syllabus for Summer 2023

Class Meetings

Class: Monday evenings from 7-8 PM EST beginning June 8

Professor

Joseph Nesbit, MDiv

Email: josephanesbit@southern.edu

Office Hours: Please text, message, or email me to set up a time for a phone or Zoom appointment.

Academic Support

eClass Help Desk:

Email eclasshelp@southern.edu or call 423-236-2086

Information Technology Workstation Support: Desktop Computer Support.

Go to IT Workstation Support Desk in Wright Hall, or call 423-236-2712

McKee Research & Writing Center: Help with writing or research assignments for any class.

Call to make an appointment. McKee Library: 423-236-2788

Academic Support:

To schedule a meeting with an Academic Support Manager Academic Support, email asm@southern.edu, call 423-236-3400, or stop by Lynn Wood Hall suite 3012.

What we will study

Course Description

A study of Adventist doctrines in a Christ-centered context. This course will involve a study of major Christian teachings with a view to enhancing the student's understanding of and ability to provide biblical support for their faith.

Textbooks

- A. Required: The Bible - any translation (no paraphrases).
- B. Required: *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. Second Edition. 2005. ISBN: 1-57847-041-2
- C. Optional: E. Lonnie Melashenko. *What the Bible Says About . . . 31 Studies on Important Topics and a Simple Bible Marking Plan*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2003.
- D. Optional: Humberto Rasi and Nancy Vyhmeister, editors. *Always Prepared: Answers to Questions About Your Faith*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2012.

Biblical Foundation Course

This course might be entitled Bible Teachings, as it explores what the Bible teaches regarding several different topics across its 66 books. The course assignments and assessments are designed in such a way as to facilitate the student's deeper understanding of Christian beliefs, their biblical support, and how they can be applied to the student's life. My hope is that the information learned in this class deepens your faith and leads to personal and community transformation resulting in greater hope, deeper peace, and superior mental, physical and spiritual health.

Course Objectives

1. To familiarize the students with basic Bible doctrines as revealed by a systematic approach to reading and studying the Bible.
2. To furnish the students with the broad, biblical foundations of Christian beliefs.
3. To help prepare students to be able to better understand and communicate their faith.

How we will study

Additional information on important policies and procedures, such as, but not limited to, disabilities and accommodations, academic honesty, and student authentication, can be found in the link provided at the end of this paragraph. The document also provides valuable information regarding instructional strategies/methodologies and how to access eClass, technology support, learning methods, resources available in eClass, etc: [University Policies and Additional Syllabus Information](#). Be aware that you will be accountable for the provided information.

Class Attendance/Presence

In an online class, attendance looks different than it does in a face-to-face course. For the most part, other than on Sabbath, you should enter eClass daily, especially given that this course is intensive. Please note that the professor and course coach check logs of eClass to ensure that students are actively engaging with the course materials. If you are inactive or miss an assignment, you will be contacted. If an assignment has not been submitted by the due date, a grade of zero is entered in the gradebook. If you wish to submit that assignment, please contact the professor to find out if you may and what procedures should be followed unless that information is provided in the gradebook comment accompanying your grade of 0. On days and times designated in the Course Schedule, we will hold a class meeting where we will have a worship thought, a brief review of that week's content, and a time for questions and clarification. Please plan to attend these meetings. Attendance is STRONGLY encouraged. If for some reason you cannot attend, each session will be recorded. We will generate a link to that recording and place it in eClass in the week in which the meeting took place.

Absences and Make-Up Work

As life is indeed busy and unpredictable, things occasionally will come up that preclude class attendance and submitting one's assignments on time. Whenever possible, please communicate your need for accommodation regarding such matters with me *prior to* the event.

All assignments are due on the Sundays specified before 10 pm. Unless previously coordinated with me, if students make late submissions, 10% per late day will be deducted from the possible points available.

Feedback Plan

Students are welcome to contact me for consultation, counsel, feedback, and prayer during regular business hours via email. If I am unable to readily reply, I will do so at my first opportunity. I will also check my emails daily and will make every attempt to reply within 24 hours all email communication. Furthermore, unless circumstances prevent it, students may expect assignments to be graded and returned within 1 week of their submission.

Assessment Plan

- The Weekly Reading Reflection Papers will be worth a total of 112 points and are 55% of the course grade.
- The Course Reflection Paper will be worth a total of 50 points and is 25% of the total course grade.
- The Spiritual Journey Paper will be worth 10 points and is 5% of the total course grade.
- The weekly Zoom meetings will be worth 35 points total and are 15% of the total course grade.

Grading Scale			
The following Grading Scale will be used:			
A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	59% & below

Category	Weight
Weekly Reading Reflection Paper	55%
Course Reflection Paper	25%
Spiritual Journey Paper	5%
Weekly Zoom Meetings	15%
Total	100%

Accessing your grades in eClass

Your grades can be accessed by clicking on the "Grades" link found in the navigation drawer on the very left side of the page. This section contains the overview of the grades you have received so far in the course. The list of items and the points received for each item is provided here.

Class Meetings/Live Sessions

Each Monday, June 8-July 19, from 7-8 p.m. ET, we will hold a class meeting where we will have a worship thought, a brief review of that week's content, and a time for questions and clarification. Please plan to attend these meetings if possible. If for some reason you cannot attend, each session will be recorded. We will generate a link to that recording and place it in eClass in the week in which the meeting took place. You attend by clicking on the provided link.

More detailed information regarding live session requirements, and helpful tips, can be found [here](#).

Course Assignments

1. Online Class Meetings (Zoom)

The weekly Zoom meetings will be worth 30 points total and are 15% of the total course grade. Students must attend the 7 weekly online class meetings that will be held Monday evenings at 7 pm EST on June 8, 15, 22, 29 and July 5, 12, 19. Each meeting will last for one hour. These online class meetings will be recorded for the benefit of students who may be unable to attend a meeting. If a meeting is going to be missed, students are required to coordinate with the professor in advance. To earn full credit, a student who misses a live meeting must listen to its recording and write a meaningful response of at least 500 words. Students who attend the live online class meetings will earn full credit by having their camera on, being punctual, and interacting with the professor and their fellow classmates.

2. Spiritual Journey Paper

The Spiritual Journey Paper will be worth 10 points and is 5% of the total course grade. This will be read only by your professor. Detail your religious journey over your life thus far, and where you are currently at in your relationship with God. Respond to the following questions, but do not feel limited to them in your paper: Who and what have been the major influences in this journey? Would you describe your experience more as religion, or relationship, more as law or love? With what lenses do you think about God: Loving heavenly Father? Distant lawgiver? Personal friend? Lord? Savior? What part has your family of origin played in your understanding of God? What part do your family and friends play in your current religious experience? Given what you know of the Bible and God at this point, what are some of your greatest hopes for the future?

3. Weekly Reading Reflection Paper

The Weekly Reading Reflection Papers will be worth a total of 110 points and are 55% of the course grade. A Reflection template has been provided, which should be followed to receive full points for the assignment. The Reflection Paper allows the student to interact with the reading material for the week and is intended to provide intentional reflection on the subject matter covered and its importance and relevance to the student.

4. Course Reflection Paper

The Course Reflection Paper will be worth a total of 50 points and is 25% of the total course grade. A Course Reflection Paper template has been provided, which should be followed to receive full points for the assignment. Like the Weekly Reflection Paper, the Course Reflection Paper allows the student to interact with the reading material, but this time for the entire term. It is intended to provide intentional reflection on the subject matter covered and its importance and relevance to the student, while also inviting them to help improve the class for future students.

Communication

Keeping in Touch

To facilitate communication between the professor and learners, all class members are encouraged and expected to regularly check their southern.edu email account and the "Announcements Forum" within your eClass course. All eClass announcements posted to the class will be considered public class announcements.

Southern Email

To facilitate communication between the professor and every co-learner, all class members are encouraged and expected to **regularly check their southern.edu email account**. Students should email questions or comments to the professor. The student can expect to receive an electronic reply to questions or comments within **24-48 hours**, except on the weekend. An important reminder: when you need to send an email, the email subject should reflect the purpose of that email. Additionally, as your professor may teach more than one course simultaneously, be sure to also include the course prefix and number in every email subject line. For instance, if you have a problem while taking the week 1 reading quiz, your email subject could say something like "EDCI 517 Week 1 Reading Quiz."

Tentative Course Schedule/Calendar

Week 1 (May 30 – June 3)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 1 and 6.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on June 4.
Submit Spiritual Journey paper before 10 pm on June 4.

Week 2 (June 4-10)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 7, 8, 25, 26.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on June 11.

Week 3 (June 11-17)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 2, 3, 4, 5.
Submit weekly reading report before 10pm on June 18.

Week 4 (June 18-24)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 9, 10, 11, 12.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on June 25.

Week 5 (June 25 – July 1)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 13, 14, 15, 16.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on July 2.

Week 6 (July 2-8)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 17, 18, 19, 24.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on July 9.

Week 7 (July 9-15)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 21, 22, 23.
Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on July 16.

Week 8 (July 16-22)

Read *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* chapters 20, 13, 27, 28.

Submit weekly reading report before 10 pm on July 23.

Submit Course Reflection Paper before 10 pm on July 23.

Disclaimer

This course syllabus and <https://eclass.e.southern.edu/mod/assign/view.php?id=1478350> attached schedule is subject to change at short notice. The professor will endeavor to keep the changes minimal and communicate changes within the course site on eClass, but change may be necessary during the semester. Kindly be alert to announcements (either via eClass or via email) that may modify the syllabus or schedule.

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Course Reflection Paper

(50 points)

Instructions

Course Reading Reflection (35 points): Think back across your class reading of 28 major Christian beliefs drawn from the Bible. Select 2 that struck you as particularly meaningful or interesting. Reflect on each chapter/topic in a minimum of 700 words per chapter below. Address such things as how the chapter added to your understanding, why it was of special interest to you, what you thought was valuable about it, and why it is especially relevant here, now, in 2023. What captured your imagination? How does the belief as it was supported align (or not align) with the majority view of Christianity today? What about it gave you hope or comfort? How is the information, transformational?

Course Experience Reflection (15 points): Reflect on how the class went for you. What do you think went well and should be kept/repeated? What do you think didn't go so well, and could be changed/improved? How was the workload? How was the grading? If you were teaching a class like this, what would you do similarly, or differently...and why?

Name:

Date:

Chapter Reflections

Enter Chapter Title of First Chapter to Which You are Responding and Total Word Count for your Response (700-word minimum)

[Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your response as outlined above – God is kind and compassionate – “Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” Isaiah 54:10]

Enter Chapter Title of Second Chapter to Which You are Responding and Total Word Count for your Response (700-word minimum)

[Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your response as outlined above – I can receive help from the Creator God – “My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.” Psalm 121:2]

Course Experience Reflection

[Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your overall reflections on the class experience – God loves me deeply, no matter what – “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39]

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Weekly Reading Reflection

Name:

Date:

Module/Week #:

Section 1 – Select

(2 points)

In your own words, list a major point from each chapter you were required to read.

1. Enter chapter # and chapter title here: [Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your first major point – God wants good things for me – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11]
2. Enter chapter # and chapter title here – [Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your second major point – God sets me free from my past – “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isaiah 1:18]
3. Enter chapter # and chapter title here – [Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your third major point – God loves me – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:16-17]
4. Enter chapter # and chapter title here – [Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your fourth major point – God loves me even when I’m a complete mess – “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:7-8]

Section 2 - Ask

(2 points)

List **two** questions generated from your reading of the material covered in this module’s assigned chapters. Please use a separate numbered paragraph for each question.

Question 1 -

Question 2 -

Section 3 – Respond

(6 points)

Respond to the thoughts presented in the assigned reading. What did you find helpful, valuable, confusing, thought-provoking, hope-giving, clarifying, etc.? Explain why. Minimum of 200 words.

[Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your personal response to the reading – God is always with me – “This is my command: Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9]

Section 4 - Improve

(3.75 points)

Help improve the textbook. What about this week’s chapters was well done, and should be kept? What about the chapters was not so well done, and could be improved? What illustrations worked? What illustrations could be improved? What do you think should have been included, but wasn’t? Minimum of 100 words.

[Replace this section and the following Bible promise with your feedback to the reading – God is going to make things better – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”” Revelation 21:4-5]