

LONG BEACH CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, MTI
(Nondenominational School of Ministry)

COURSE SYLLABUS—THEISM-400

Fall 2026 | SEVEN-WEEK COURSE | September 15, 2026 – October 27, 2026

Professor: **Dr. Mildred Oates**

Class Zoom link will be sent to registered students at least 1 week prior to class

Required Texts:

Title: **No Other God, A Response to Open Theism**
Author: John M. Frame
ISBN: 10: 0-87552-185-1

Title: **Holy Bible**

Class Format (Virtual)

This class is intended for students with computer and internet access. The course will adopt a virtual (Zoom) classroom format. In this online teaching and learning environment, teachers and students can present and view course materials and lessons and engage and interact with one another. Each class will include prayer, lectures, readings, presentations, and/or guest speakers.

Course Description:

THEISM – THY-400 (Accelerated Course, 7-week)

A study of the doctrine of God, focusing on His nature, attributes, personality, and work. An in-depth exploration of the gospel includes a critical and analytical survey of the belief in a personal God as Creator and Supreme Ruler.

This course critically analyzes Open Theism through a theological lens. Students will examine the origins, claims, methods, and implications of Open Theism while evaluating its teachings, considering Scripture, classical Christian theology, and Frame's doctrine of divine lordship. Special focus will be given to God's sovereignty, omniscience, immutability, providence, freedom, foreknowledge, and the relationship between divine and human action.

Prerequisite: None

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Course Requirements:

- Readings: Must read the assigned text.
- Reflections: These papers are required after each class and/or presentation. All papers must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced. No more than two pages. Reflection papers are due by 7:00 pm on the night of class (Before class starts at 7:00 pm).
- Chapter presentations: Students will receive chapter assignments to present in class.
- Research Paper: For the final project, students will select a topic from the list provided in the "FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT" section of this syllabus and author a research paper. The paper is due on the last day of class, October 27, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. (before class starts on Tuesday, October 27, 2026).

Course Objectives:

1. Define Open Theism.
2. Develop a biblical and theological comprehension of Open Theism.
3. Respond to Open Theism from a traditional theistic viewpoint.
4. Apply Open Theism to Christian life and ministry.

By the end of the course, the student be able to:

1. Define and explain the main claims of Open Theism.
2. Trace the history of Open Theism's development.
3. Analyze the hermeneutic method of Open Theism.
4. Critically evaluate Open Theism's view of freedom and providence.
5. Defend biblical teachings on God's sovereignty and foreknowledge.
6. Apply theological conclusions to Christian pastoral ministry and discipleship.

WEEK 1

What Is Open Theism?

Topics

- The Rhetoric and the Reality
- The Openness of the Sovereign God
- Sovereign Vulnerability
- The Ambiguities of Open Theism
- The Open-Theist View of Traditional Theism
- The Main Contentions of Open Theism

Key Questions

- What is Open Theism?
- How does it differ from Classical Theism?
- Why has it gained popularity?

Reading

- Frame, Chapters 1–2

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Discussion

- Can God be both sovereign and vulnerable?

Assignment:

- Reflection Paper: "Why Open Theism Matters for Ministry"

WEEK 2

Historical Origins of Open Theism

Topics

- The Antiquity of Open Theism
- God and the Greeks
- Socinianism: The Missing Link
- Modern Influences
- What Is New About Open Theism?

Key Questions

- Is Open Theism new?
- How did Greek philosophy influence theology?
- What role did Socinianism play?

Reading

- Frame, Chart:

Discussion

- Should theology be shaped primarily by Scripture or philosophy?

Assignment:

- Reflection Paper: Historical Evolution of Open Theism

WEEK 3

Open Theism and Biblical Interpretation

Topics

- How Do Open Theists Read the Bible?
- Logic Models
- Straightforward Exegesis
- Anthropomorphism

Key Questions

- What is anthropomorphic language?
- Does God change His mind?

Key Scriptures

- Genesis 6
- Exodus 32
- Jonah 3

Discussion

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- How should difficult texts about God be interpreted?

Assignment

- Reflection Paper: Does God Change His Mind?

WEEK 4

Is Love God's Most Important Attribute?

Topics

- Love
- Sensitivity
- Responsiveness
- Vulnerability

Key Questions

- Is love God's controlling attribute?
- How do God's attributes work together?

Key Scriptures

- 1 John 4
- Exodus 34
- Isaiah 6

Frame's Concern

- Open Theism often elevates love above God's sovereignty, holiness, and lordship.

Discussion

- Can divine love exist without divine authority?

Assignment

- Reflection Paper: The Relationship Between Love and Sovereignty

WEEK 5

God's Will, Human Freedom, and Divine Sovereignty

Topics

- Is God's Will the Ultimate Explanation?
- Natural Events
- Human History
- Human Decisions
- Sin
- Faith and Salvation

Additional Topics

- Universalizing Particulars
- Divine Foreordination versus Human Responsibility
- Election

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- Sanders's Distinctions
- The Efficacy of God's Will

Key Questions

- Is God's will irresistible?
- What are decretive and preceptive wills?
- How does an election function?

Key Scriptures

- Romans 8
- Romans 9
- Ephesians 1
- Acts 2:23

Assignment

- Reflection Paper: Comparing Open Theism and Classical Theism

WEEK 6

Freedom, Time, Change, and Divine Suffering

Topics:

Do We Have Genuine Freedom?

- Critique of Libertarianism
- Other Models of Freedom
- The Problem of Evil

Is God in Time?

- Divine Atemporality
- Divine Supra-temporality
- God's Temporal Omnipresence

Does God Change?

- Divine Relenting
- Divine Immutability

Does God Suffer?

- Aseity
- Divine Emotions
- God and the Cross

Key Questions

- Is libertarian freedom biblical?
- Does God experience time?
- Does God suffer?

Discussion

- How does God's immutability affect pastoral care?

Assignment

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- Reflection Paper: Can God Change?

WEEK 7

Divine Foreknowledge and Final Evaluation of Open Theism

Topics:

Does God Know Everything in Advance?

- Divine Ignorance Texts
- Exhaustive Foreknowledge
- Prophecy and Providence

Is Open Theism Consistent with Other Biblical Doctrines?

- Inspiration
- Sin
- Redemption
- Assurance
- Heaven and Hell
- Guidance

Key Questions

- Can God be trusted if the future is partly unknown?
- What happens to biblical prophecy if Open Theism is correct?

Key Scriptures

- Isaiah 46:9–10
- Psalm 139
- Revelation 13:8
- Ephesians 1:11

Final Research Paper

I. Select a topic from the options listed below:

1. Open Theism and Divine Omniscience
2. John Frame's Critique of Libertarian Freedom
3. Divine Foreknowledge and Human Responsibility
4. God's Immutability in Scripture.
5. Open Theism from a Pentecostal Perspective
6. Is God's Will the Ultimate Explanation of Everything?

II. Write a research paper on one of the topics listed above.

- A. It must be 7-10 pages, not including the cover page and the bibliography.
- B. Use the required APA writing style formatting for quotations and bibliography.
- C. Must be double-spaced, in 2-point font, with 1-inch margins.
- D. The following is expected from your college-level paper:
 - Contain an in-depth examination of the topic.

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- Include 5-10 sources: commentaries, articles, Bible dictionaries, theologies, etc. Limit internet sources to no more than 10% (Books and journal articles, which are hard copies but also appear online, are not considered internet sources).
- Will be graded primarily on thoughtful engagement of the topic. and the quality of the sources used.
- The research paper is due at 7:00 pm on the last day of class, before class starts at 7:00 P.M. on October 27, 2026.
- Papers are expected to be emailed on time. Late papers will lower the grade. Papers not received within one week of the due date will result in an "Incomplete" grade for the class and on the transcript.

The professor reserves the right to modify course assignments.

Exams: There are no mid-term exams for these accelerated classes. Final exam assignments or final projects must not be completed during instructional time (Tuesdays, 7:00–9:00 p.m.) and are due on the last day of class.

Student Honesty | Plagiarism Statement: Plagiarism, or intellectual theft, is a serious offense and is not acceptable at LBBCMTI. Each member of the academic community is expected to complete their own work. When using another writer's or speaker's material, be careful to give proper credit.

Attendance: Regular attendance is required for success in this course. Students are expected to arrive by 7:00 p.m. and remain until the end of class. Each student is responsible for contacting the instructor about any attendance concerns.

Refunds and Withdrawals: Refund eligibility is determined based on the date the notice of withdrawal is submitted on the college website.

Withdrawal Deadline

- The deadline for withdrawing from classes is at the end of the first week of the class.
- Failure to submit a timely notice of withdrawal can result in an 'Incomplete' grade on the transcript.
- Failure to submit the proper Notice of Withdrawal on the college website before the deadline will result in the student remaining academically and financially responsible for the class.

Refund Policy

- **100% refund for payments made before or during week one (1) of the class.**
- Zero refund for payments made during and beyond week two (2) of class.

NOTE: Students who drop a class after the second week will be charged full tuition for the class.

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Students may request approval to transfer a portion of paid tuition to a class offered the following semester: approval is not guaranteed.

Expectations:

1. Students must perform college-level work.
2. Work must be completed with the student's name and date and submitted on time.
3. Read the required text as assigned—come prepared for each class.
4. Bring the appropriate materials for class meetings, respect fellow students, and refrain from bringing food or drink to virtual class sessions (Water bottles are acceptable).
5. Be prepared, you may be asked to speak impromptu.
6. Have a well-lit and quiet setting with the **CAMERA ON** for “Remote/Virtual” class.

Grading/Assignment Weight

Attendance and Class Participation 15%

Reflection Papers 50% **(Five papers required)**

Final Research Paper 35%

WELCOME LBCCMTI SCHOLARS!