

GST Orientation

BIBM 602 | Spring 2021

Instructor Information:

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Consultations available upon request

Mission

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate its students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The mission of the College of Biblical Studies is to provide leadership, preparation, and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ.

The broad mission of the Department of Undergraduate Bible is to provide biblical training, Christian spiritual formation, and a Christian world-view for every student in the university.

The GST aims to equip men and women for effective missional leadership for ministry in all its forms, and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry. By equipping students with the requisite skills, knowledge, and experience, the GST aspires to produce graduates with trained minds and transformed hearts.

Required Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for this course.

Course Description

The course provides new GST students information about both curricular and co-curricular aspects of the GST community. Students will examine personal and professional identity issues by completing various assessments.

Course Purpose

GST Orientation is a 0 credit hour course whose purpose is to orient students to life as a student in the Graduate School of Theology at the beginning of their academic program.

Outcomes

In keeping with the stated mission of the Graduate School of Theology at ACU ("to equip men and women for effective missional leadership for ministry in all its forms and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry"), this course fulfills the following GST program outcomes:

Student Learning Outcomes	Competencies	Measures
Students will have clarity in professional identity. (GST 4)	- Provides a discerning, coherent accounting of one's internal and external vocations and motivations to pursue ministry or other related fields. - Focuses one's attitudes, behaviors, and disciplines to live in accordance with one's professional identity.	Formational Goals Paper

Course Prerequisites

BIBM 602 is a 0 credit hour course and has no prerequisites.

Course Requirements/Assignments

Students must fulfill the following requirements to receive credit for orientation:

- 1) **Information For Students**: students are expected to read carefully through the material posted in the online orientation module. They are responsible to abide by the policies and procedures described there.
- 2) **Information From Students**: students must provide the information requested through the Entering Student Questionnaire and the GST Release Form. They must also complete the EQ-i and TypeFocus personality assessments as preparation for writing the Formational Goals Paper (see #4 below).
- 3) **Communication with Director of Contextual Education**: Students in the ministry-related degrees (MDiv, MACM, and MAGS) must schedule a meeting with the Director of Contextual Education (either in-person or through zoom) to begin exploring potential placements for their contextual immersion requirement (necessary for both BIBM 657 and BIBM 629) that occurs later in their program. These conversations can involve either making students aware of potential contextual partners and contexts for their placement or working with students to establish their own context as one that meets the necessary requirements. This conversation should be scheduled by the end of the first week of the student's first semester of classes and should take place within their first semester. In advance of the meeting, as part of orientation, students should fill out the "Contextual Education Biographical Sketch" document available through the orientation canvas site.
- 4) **English Bible Exam**: students must pass this 100-question exam over both Old and New Testaments before they are allowed to graduate. A first attempt at this assessment must be completed during orientation. Students are required to wait two weeks between attempts.
- 5) **Formational Goals Paper**: Students must submit a brief reflection paper detailing their short-term and long-term goals. Specific instructions for the paper are posted in the course site.

Grading

Orientation is a zero-credit module – students receive credit or no credit based on their completion of the course requirements above. Letter grades are not assessed. Students must receive credit for orientation before they are allowed to graduate.

Academic Integrity Policy

<http://www.acu.edu/community/offices/administrative/office-of-the-provost/academic-integrity-policy.html>

Administrative Information

1. **Participation**: Students must complete assignments in a timely manner.
2. **Correspondence**: I can be reached most readily via email. I will do my best to respond quickly, but please know that you may not receive a response for several hours. Emails sent in the evening/night

may not receive a reply until the next day. Emails sent on the weekend may not receive a reply until the next Monday. Please plan ahead in your work and communications to avoid urgent-response situations. Phone, Skye, or Zoom conversations to discuss course material or for individual tutoring are encouraged, welcomed, and should be scheduled in advance.

3. **Inclusive Language:** In this course every attempt will be made to use gender and racially inclusive language, as this concern influences not only classroom assignments but also our interpretation of the Bible and our views about the nature and character of God. If you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please feel free to contact me.
4. **Grammar and Clarity in Assignments:** While this is not an English course, students are expected to adhere to the rules of grammar in their writing projects and reflection pieces. Students will not be graded on their grammar, *per se*, but if the student's use of grammar makes their writing unclear or extremely difficult to read, it could negatively impact the grade of that assignment.
5. **Technology Requirements:** Each student should be familiar with, have access to, and be able to navigate the online learning system prior to beginning the course.
6. **Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to observe Christian principles at all times. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Fraud: Copying, misrepresentation, fictionalized accounts, and unauthorized collaborations.
 - b. Plagiarism: Word for word lifting and quilting, and quoting without identifying the source.Cheating, defined as any act of fraud or plagiarism discussed above, will result in severe penalties as outlined in the Academic Catalog.
7. **Pathways Assignments:** A Pathways assignment **is not** applicable for this course.
8. **Audit Policy:** This course is not available for audit.
9. **Americans with Disabilities Act:** The ADA protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. If a student requests an accommodation under ADA, please notify the professor one week prior to the course. If needs arise during the course, please notify the professor as soon as possible. The professor will work with the College of Biblical Studies to accommodate the student's needs.
10. **Title IX:** Information on Sexual Harassment and Assault <https://www.acu.edu/community/offices/hr-finance/hr/title-ix/overview.html>
11. **Extra Credit:** Students are not able to do "extra" work in order to improve or compensate for the grades they have earned. Please do not ask to be an exception to this rule.
12. **Subject to Change Clause:** This syllabus, course calendar, and other documents are subject to change during the course. Every attempt will be made to notify students promptly when changes are made.

GST Classroom Virtues

The GST invites students to participate in a process of theological and spiritual formation. Knowing how to think theologically comes by habit and by imitation, not simply by acquiring isolated facts. The assumption here is that books alone are insufficient for addressing difficulties of life and forming people into the image and likeness of God. Ultimately, we strive to form communities of inquiry, inviting you to inhabit a shared world of learning. Within such an environment, the goal is to cultivate critical skills of reflection, spiritual disciplines, interact authentically with one another, and learn to function as a community of inquiry. A large part of this involves connecting areas of life rather than pitting them against one another. Prayer, study, and other dimensions of life are all integral to the process of formation. Consequently, we invite you to participate in a set of practices; nurtured within

this context, you pursue “intellectual, moral, spiritual excellence” the result of which is the formation of the whole person.

Desire for truth in the context of love—the aptitude to discern whether belief-forming processes, practices, and people yield true beliefs over false ones. People motivated by this desire will be more likely to conduct thorough inquiries, scrutinize evidence carefully, investigate numerous fields of study, consider alternative explanations, while respecting and caring for others.

Humility—the capacity to recognize reliable sources of informed judgment while recognizing the limits of our knowledge and the fallibility of our judgments. This is not created in isolation but takes into account feedback and correction from other sources of informed judgment.

Honesty—the capacity to tackle difficult questions without seeking simple answers. Ignoring complex and difficult questions only solidifies vices such as intellectual dishonesty, close-mindedness, and rash judgments. These vices preclude the possibility of refining our thinking and of participating in conversations with others.

Openness—the desire to engage in an open-ended search for knowledge of God, including receptivity to different ideas, experiences, and people. Listening becomes a discipline that acknowledges the other and respects diversity. The art of being a student and a teacher is an ongoing process that necessitates hospitality, patience, and love.

Courage—the ability to articulate one’s position while considering other perspectives. The aptitude to express convictions involves risk yet fosters opportunities for meaningful dialog. Responding to objections entails tenacity but should not be confused with close-mindedness.

Wisdom—the capacity to offer a synthetic discernment of knowledge on behalf of the community. The aim is not merely the dissemination of information but a pastoral implementation of faith for the building up of the community. It solidifies various pieces of data, practices, and experiences and aptly applies knowledge and faith to particular situations.

Stewardship—the commitment to one’s accountability to the gifts and responsibilities that one brings to the classroom. Classroom engagement includes proactively participating in the course goals, seeking mastery of course competencies, and collaborating with faculty and fellow students in the developing of a learning environment. Committing oneself to spiritual and intellectual well-being and growth is a faithful response to the opportunities graduate education affords.

Hopefulness—the receptivity to the future possibilities of God. The cultivation of thankfulness for our heritages and expectation for our future ministries engenders a guard against cynicism and a spirit of perseverance during times of stress and disorientation.

Prayerfulness—the making of space to commune with God. The task of learning and teaching so that we are formed into the image of Christ through the Spirit involves our consistent reliance on God’s sanctifying work.