Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

كليّة اللاهوت المعمدانيّة العربيّة

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Developing Christlike leaders and equipping faithful men and women for effective ministry is at the core of the mission of ABTS. As Christian leaders, the more we know God in Christ, the more we develop lenses to view life and minister effectively. The deeper our understanding of God, the better we can reflect Him. This is why the Nature and Character of God module, currently being offered in our Bachelor of Theology program, aims to deepen students' knowledge of God and help them build a foundation for Christlike leadership. In the following, we will briefly discuss the six courses integrated within this module.

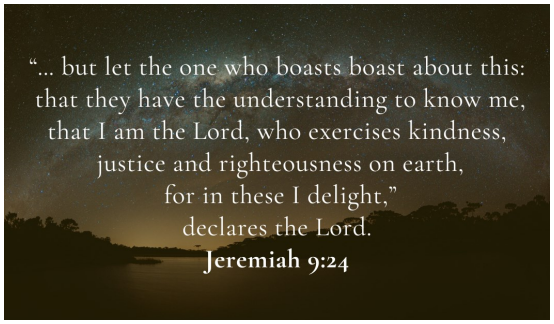
- ***God in the Old Testament* Course– Taught by Walid Zailaa**

The course takes students on an exploration of the names and attributes of the Triune God as depicted in the Old Testament and how they relate to the lives of individuals who have been created in the image and likeness of God. In the words of Walid:

> *As explained in Jeremiah 9:24, it delights the Lord for us to grow in our understanding of Him. Therefore, it is of great value for students at ABTS to actively seek to comprehend the nature and character of the Lord as revealed in the Old Testament. Doing this can lead to personal growth and a deeper connection to our calling.*

Speaking about the course, our third-year student Olfat said:

> *This module helped me see things in a different light. This course specifically explores how God created us in His image to enable direct communication with Him, revealing His true nature to us as His creation. Before Adam's disobedience, the Bible illustrates God engaging in communication with him, exchanging knowledge and wisdom. Through this intimate connection, God demonstrated multiple facets of His mightiness and asserted His identity to His creation.*



- ***God in the New Testament* Course – Taught by Dustin Ellington, Assisted by Lydia Kelliney, Faculty in Training**

Through the perspectives of Luke, John, and Paul students seek insight into the true meaning of the question "Who is God?" by examining scripture in their own context. They learn how knowing God transforms believers' self-knowledge and character. This course enhances students' ability to use literary methods to help them discover who God is in the New Testament. Dustin shared:

> *One student shared that writing down his observations as we read through scripture helped him understand the perspectives of the apostles much better. Another student said, "The course made me search in depth to discover the importance of what the text of the Bible says about who God is."*

Dustin, Associate Professor of New Testament

Lydia, Faculty in Training

Speaking about his experience studying the nature and character of God in the Old and New Testaments, Atieh, our fourth-year student shared:

> *Because my wife and I started in a new ministry, it was a blessing for us to better understand the person of the Lord so that we could better shape our ministry to reflect His image. Throughout history, the Lord has always been a reconciling God, taking the initiative to restore the relationship between us and Him in the Old Testament through covenants, and then through Christ and the fulfillment of His promises in the New Testament. So, we too need to be reconcilers in our communities.*

- ***God through History and Context* Course – Taught by Caleb Hutcherson**

In the historical theological course, we explore the question "Who (and what) is God?" by examining how Christians and theologians understand God's character and attributes. We turn to Christian writings and related books to learn about their practices, beliefs, and experiences concerning the nature of God. Caleb expressed:

> *"So what?", you might ask. "Why ought we ask other Christians about who God is? We have the Bible, after all." The historical perspective helps us look critically at our own inherited ideas about God, which shape how we read those scriptures. Through a focused study of how key Christian thinkers and movements in various contexts throughout history struggled to understand and express the nature of God, we work to come to a more spirit-guided understanding of God as revealed by Jesus, which in turn leads to a profoundly different way of life and leadership.*

Lilaf, our third-year student shared:

> *I loved the course because, through it, I felt like I went on a journey through history to get to know God and how he dealt with different people and cultures. It was a blessing to see how different people wrote about God and His work. It was also encouraging to see how, despite humanity's repeated failures, the Lord remained unchanging and never went back on His promises.*

Lilaf, Bachelor of Theology Student

- ***God in Islam* Course – Taught by Martin Accad**

The course helps students assess their understanding and deepen their comprehension of theological perspectives considering dominant views about God in their context. During the course, students compare and examine the attributes of God as presented in the Bible and the Qur'an, noting similarities and disparities. Reflecting on the course, Martin said:

> *The significance of this understanding for ABTS students is the establishment of a solid starting point in conversations about God with Muslim neighbors, giving them greater confidence in their sense of the church's mission as a redemptive and transformative force in Middle Eastern and North African societies.*

Martin, Professor of Islamic Studies

Our third-year student Ebtesam stated:

> I learned a lot from this course about how significant it is to compare other books from other religions with the Bible. I acquired valuable experience and insight into interacting with individuals from different religions, learning how to shape connections and build trust by approaching them with starting points about the essence of God in how they understand Him. This approach has opened doors to ministry, allowing for the sharing of the Bible's message and its offer of salvation.

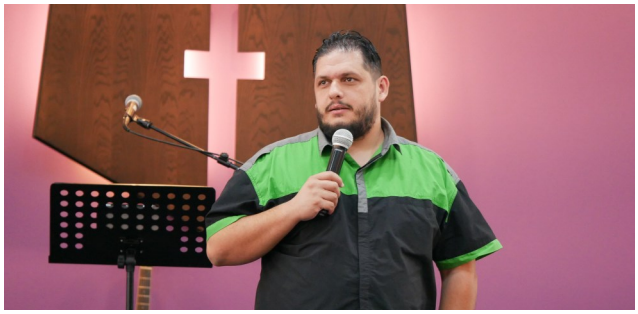
- ***God-Worship* and *Popular Christianity* Courses – Taught by Bassem Melki**

Over the centuries, the different contexts and ways of practicing our faith have created space for local and popular understandings of scripture to take root. And, while these are often reflective of their contexts, they can end up being misrepresentations of biblical truths. In the *Popular Christianity* course, students contend with these conceptions head-on, search for their biblical foundation, and work to either refute or support them. In doing so, these leaders gain an understanding of how these concepts arise in our communities, and how they can best walk their congregations through them so that they arrive at a healthy practice of doctrine and faith. The *God-Worship* course, similarly, deals with misconceptions about our practice of worship and encourages our students to reevaluate how we worship, both individually and communally, in light of biblical truth. Talking about the course, Bassem shared:

> *The core of communal worship is individual worship carried out in our daily lives. Without it, there is no space for authentic communal worship during our services. There are so many ways our worship can be diverted from the one true God. In this course, students are challenged as they learn that true worship is about submission, holiness, reconciliation, and love. It is a daily walk where we seek to become more Christlike.*

Anthony, our fifth-year student shared:

> *Our popular understanding of faith can be a slippery slope that moves us away from the core of our faith. We need to test our understanding of our faith as we seek to help each other grow. The conversations we've had in the God-Worship course have been very enriching. Our lives need to reflect our worship so that it can be authentic.*



Anthony, Bachelor of Theology Student

Through the module, students got to see the nature and character of God in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and throughout church history, and they grew in their ability to reflect Christ and impact their communities. As they continue to be formed in His image, we pray they are lighthouses that attract souls to His light.

Check out our latest Blog Posts:

[From Missio Dei to Motus Dei: The Recovery of Movement]

[My Journey Using Literary Context to Understand and Teach the Bible]

APPLICATIONS WILL OPEN NEXT WEEK!

TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH IS PROVIDED

MEC@ABTSLebanon.org

- Pray with Us -

Prayer Requests from Some of our Bachelor of Theology Students and Faculty

Lilaf Abdo | Third-Year Student

I ask you to pray for my three daughters, that they grow up in His grace and providence, and that they become beacons of His love wherever they go. Pray for the believers here in Lebanon that the Lord protects them amid all the difficulties the country is going through. Pray for the people we are reaching out to, that the Lord brings them to Him. Finally, pray for my family, that the Lord keeps us and guides us in our journey with Him.

Anthony Jawharji | Fifth-Year Student

Pray that the Lord uses my and my wife's ministry in the North of Lebanon to fulfill His will for the area. Pray that He gives us wisdom and energy to serve the souls He has entrusted to us and that we are able to meet the needs of the ministry. Pray also for my outreach ministry, that the Lord uses it to reach those who are seeking to know the truth.

Olfat Sleem | Third-Year Student

I ask you to pray for the security and economic situation in Syria, and that the Lord intervenes and brings change. Pray for my ministry, that I am always humble and ready to serve Him where He sees fit. Pray, finally, that I continue to walk in His will.

Ebtesam Al Frehat | Third-Year Student

Thank you for lifting us in prayer. I ask you to continue praying for my family. Pray for my husband, that he comes to accept Christ as His savior. Pray also, for me, that the Lord would keep me healthy now that I have recovered from cancer.

Bassem Melki | Faculty

Pray that the Lord walks with the students along their journey of theological education. Pray that He keeps them motivated and focused during their studies. Pray that they have strength and wisdom as they balance ministry, family, and life. Finally, pray that they always seek to know the true identity of Christ.

Dustin Ellington | Faculty

Pray for wisdom, insight, and maturity for our students as they journey toward understanding God, letting this understanding shape their understanding of themselves, and also their journey toward explaining God to others. Also, pray for the many who come from non-Christian background, and the many who have a privileged role in helping people who don't come from a Christian background to understand how to know the Father through Jesus Christ.