



SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL

S E M I N A R Y

Bible-based - Christ-centred - Spirit-led



COMMON COURSE GUIDE



Starting the Course

We want your learning experience here to be as successful and productive as possible, so there are a few things you should do to prepare yourself.

The following instructions will help you to start a course for which you are enrolled. You will find links to the materials and assessments on your course page. From there:

1. Make sure you know who your course facilitator is and his/her contact details. There is a block in the margin of the course page with this information. If you are a partnership student with your own tutor, contact your tutor instead if you have queries.
2. Download the Study Guide and read it carefully.
3. Download and preview the Reader.
4. Download and preview the Assessments document (if the assessment instructions are not included in the Study Guide).
5. Click on each assessment (assessed forum, test or assignment) listed on the course page. Note the due dates (deadlines) for each one on your personal calendar and plan your weekly study goals that will ensure you finish each assessment in time. You can see the due date for an assessment by clicking on the link to it.
6. Go to the Course Forum and introduce yourself there to the other students on the course. Write about how you feel about taking the course, and if you have any experience relevant to it. Read the other students' self-descriptions. You may reply to their forum posts or send them a message on MySats. You should visit the Course Forum regularly.



Course Sections

The headings below correspond to the different sections you will find in your course. Please familiarise yourself with each section and its contents.

Introduction Section

As you take notice of the course page on MySats, you will see two forums in the first section. The “announcements” forum is where you can go to view any important news from your tutors regarding the course. Anything that is posted here will also be automatically emailed to the address you have provided in your profile.

The second forum is used for general communication between you, your tutor, and other students. Use this forum to ask for clarification on assignments, raise an issue about course content, or discuss practical application issues. Make sure you review the forum posts before you post a new question to determine whether another person has not already posed the same question. If you require academic assistance, you will use this forum to contact your course facilitator. Please do not contact the seminary’s administrative offices until you have contacted the facilitator.

Materials Section

In the materials section, you may find your course documents, including study guides, assessment criteria, course readers, and marking rubrics. Please download these documents for easy reference, as you will be referring to them regularly throughout the course. It is advisable that you review these fully before beginning.

On most courses, the seminary provides you with a reader that contains information to help you complete the assignments for this course. The reader includes selected extracts from relevant books and articles which will assist you as you complete each lesson. So that we do not infringe on any copyright laws, we have signed a contract with the Dramatic Arts and Literary Rights Organisation (DALRO), the terms of which enable us to include these extracts in the readers.

Other reading material may be provided, and some courses may require a textbook, but generally this is included in the course fee and provided electronically.

Assessments Section

The assessments and activities section may comprise one or more parts of a course page. In most cases there is one section containing all your assessments. In a few courses, however, you may find multiple sections with lectures, interaction activities, and assessments. In either case, this is where you will submit your assignments and interact with the course content. Please take careful note of the due dates indicated. These due dates have also been added automatically to your personal calendar, which you can view at any time by selecting “calendar” from the “My Dashboard” menu.

Please read the following instructions for each type of assessment used at SATS (your course

may not have all of them):

Essay Assignments

All essay assignments must be written in keeping with the requirements below.

- You must write all essays in keeping with the instructions in Kevin Smith, *Academic Writing and Theological Research* (Johannesburg: SATS Press, 2008), chapters 1-6. See especially:
 - the requirements for font size, line spacing, etc. on page 87, and
 - the guidelines for the cover page on page 94.
- All essays must be type-written and uploaded in the proper place on the MySats course page. You may *not* email assignments to SATS.
- Unless you are specifically told not to include citations, all essays must contain in-text citations and a bibliography laid out exactly as instructed in *Academic Writing and Theological Research*, chapters 3-4.
- Any violation of the plagiarism norms described in chapter 5 of *Academic Writing and Theological Research* may result in you failing the course. You are responsible to ensure that you understand plagiarism well enough to avoid it in your essays.
- SATS has provided a list of academic criteria that will be used to assess academic essays. You should ensure that your essays comply. These instructions are contained in the document Assignment Assessment Criteria, which can be downloaded from the Student Guides section of the Information Kiosk.

Multiple-choice Tasks

If your course has multiple-choice tasks in the course materials, you can work out the answers offline and then submit your answers on MySats. You may see references to the word 'quiz' there (for example, 'The quiz will close' on a given date). This is because the software we use calls these tasks quizzes.

Please note: students may not collaborate on multiple-choice assignments. If the seminary discovers two or more students collaborated and submitted the same answers, both students will fail the course.

Forum Discussions

If your course has compulsory forum discussions, whether assessed or non-assessed, specific instructions will be provided in the forums on the MySats course page. All forum contributions must be submitted to the relevant forum discussion by the due date given there. Unless otherwise instructed, all forum posts should be suitably researched and referenced.

Tests and Examinations

SATS uses several different kinds of tests and examinations (exams). Here are some definitions:

Open-book	You are allowed to use all your study materials during the test or exam to look up answers. You do not need to have an invigilator present if you write it on MySats.
Objective type	The questions will be of the following types: true/false, multiple-choice, multiple-response, matching, and fill-in-the-blank. These are graded by MySats, and the results are available immediately.
Subjective type	There will be some questions that require typed responses. They may range in length from one-sentence answers to essay-length answers. These are graded manually, and the results are only available after the facilitators have done the grading.

The instructions on MySats will provide all the essential information about the type of test or exam for your course. You will also see important information such as the closing date, duration, number of attempts permitted, etc. You may see references to the word 'quiz' there (for example, 'The quiz will close' on a given date). This is because the software we use calls these tasks quizzes.

Resubmissions

If you fail an assessment task, under certain circumstances you *may* be allowed to resubmit it. Please note the following:

- In the case of an essay assignment, you cannot resubmit and there is no supplementary assignment. The mark awarded for the first submission counts towards your course mark. Late submissions will incur a penalty of 10 per cent per day (or part thereof, i.e. -10% for a submission in the first 24 hours after due date, -20% in the second day, etc.). Late submissions will be accepted up to one week past the due date.
- In the case of a multiple-choice test that is written on MySats, you *may* be allowed to retake the test, but only if an extreme circumstance prevented the completion thereof. The registrar will determine whether an additional attempt or extension is warranted.

- In a multiple-choice assignment, you are allowed two attempts; the highest mark counts towards your course grade.
- In the case of forum discussions, you cannot resubmit. The nature of the discussions does not allow for resubmissions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism (which encompasses all forms of academic cheating) is a serious ethical offence. SATS has a zero-tolerance policy towards plagiarism. Please note the following points:

- SATS makes use of plagiarism detection software which scans all submissions on MySats and alerts the course facilitator to instances of suspected plagiarism.
- Chapter 5 of *Academic Writing and Theological Research* deals at length with plagiarism. You are required to read it! We do not consider ignorance to be a valid excuse for plagiarism.
- If you are caught plagiarising, you will fail the course and you will need to pay to take it again. If it is a first offence, you will receive a final warning, and any subsequent offence may result in expulsion from SATS.

Grading Schema

The distribution of grades as well as any grading standards or rubrics will be indicated in the Assessment Guide or Study Guide for each course. Your course grade will be aggregated based on the marks you achieve in your assessments, according to the formula provided in these course materials.

Passing criteria

To **pass** the course, you must fulfil **all** the following criteria:

- You must participate in all compulsory¹ assessments.
- Your **course grade** must be at least 50 per cent.
- Your **exam grade** must be at least 40 per cent.

By implication, **any** of the following will result in a fail:

- Failure to **participate in a compulsory assessment**.
- A **course grade** of 0–49 per cent.
- For courses with exams, an **exam grade** of 0-39 per cent is a course **fail**.

Distinctions

- In **undergraduate courses**, a course grade of **80–100** per cent is classified as a **distinction**.
- In **postgraduate courses**, a course grade of **75-100** per cent is classified as a **distinction**.

¹ Any course assessment worth 20% or more toward the total course mark, or which are specifically identified in the course documentation as compulsory. Failure to participate in or complete a compulsory assessment will result in a failure of the course.