This final written assignment is a critical essay on a book of your own choice.

You are to choose a book in some area of theological studies. Perhaps the best approach is to first determine a subject area in theology/religious studies that is of some interest to you and then to find a book in that area. The book should be of a reasonable length (no less than 100 pages – and this is a minimum guidelines).

This is an opportunity to explore ideas in theology, faith and religion that interest you. Among the topic areas you might consider are:

• Fundamental theology: the question of God, belief/faith, the Christian response to atheism. This can include areas like the relationship between religion/theology and science.
• Comparative religion: Christianity in relation to other religions, contemporary issues in religion, e.g. fundamentalism.
• Christology: the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the “historical Jesus”, the Resurrection, teachings about Christ.
• The Church, its worship, the sacraments, church history.
• Particular approaches to theology, e.g. Feminist theology, liberation theology.
• A particular figure in theology, i.e. a specific theologian.

Points to consider in writing this paper:
• A synopsis: What is the author saying in his or her work?
• Develop a point of view or thesis, which represents your perspective on the book.
• What questions were answered or raised for you in reading this book? How did the author engage you, challenge you, affirm you?
• How is this work effective as theology?
• Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not?
• Please note that one element in evaluating this paper will be the propriety of your choice of a book – that is, can you recognize a theological book when you see one? Avoid “light reading” or “Christian self-help” books.

I am going to go out on a limb and provide some suggestions of authors. This is provided to help students in their search for a good book. However, just because an author or book is listed here does not guarantee that this will be good for you. YOU ARE NOT LIMITED TO THESE AUTHORS. There are many books out there, in the library for you to choose from.

Juan Arias.  The God I Don’t Believe In
J.B. Phillips.  Your God is Too Small
Paul Tillich. The Dynamics of Faith
C.S. Lewis.  Mere Christianity.
   Lewis has a number of books that are worthwhile, including:

Marcus Borg.  Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time.  (On the “liberal” side!)
Marcus Borg.  The God We Never Knew
Albert Nolan.  Jesus Before Christianity
N.T. (Tom) Wright.  The Original Jesus.
N.T, Wright and Marcus Borg.  The Meaning of Jesus
N.T. Wright.  Simply Christian
Geza Vermes.  Jesus the Jew
Luke Johnson.  The Real Jesus; Living Jesus
Elizabeth Johnson.  She Who Is
Sally McFague. Models of God
Anthony Bloom.  Beginning to Pray
Avery Dulles.  Models of the Church
Alexander Schmemann.  For the Life of the World

Other authors to consider: Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Scott Hahn,
John Polinghorne, Henri Nouwen, Karen Armstrong.

As you can see, this is a somewhat unorganized list – mostly of books and authors past students have enjoyed. Not all of the authors are Catholics. I do not agree with some of them, although a few of my favorite books are listed. You might look at other books by the same authors. Some of these are well within your abilities; some would be a stretch for some of you.

Again, if you tell me what your interests are, it is possible that I can suggest something, but at the bottom line, the choice of an appropriate book is your responsibility. Good luck – and enjoy!