TH 960: “Research in Theology:
Christology: Biblical/Theological Perspectives”

Fall, 2012: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Boston Campus/Center for Urban Ministerial Education
William David Spencer and Athanasian Scholars

Overview of Class Sessions

**Class 1:** Fri, Sept 14: 6-10 p.m.
Introductory Lecture: Surveying the issues involved in studying Christology in its biblical and theological dimensions.

Discussion Session: Are all the theophanies in the OT appearances of Jesus Christ?

Doing Theology: Building a class Christology of the Old Testament.

Reading Assignment: Boettner; Erickson; Irenaeus, 1&2. See details under class descriptions.

Writing Assignment: Begin work on a theological analysis of the Christology of one theologian being studied in class (see details under paper #1).

**Class 2:** Sat, Sept 15: 9:00-3:00.
Lecture: The Lesson of Light – Discovering how a Christological image can be analyzed to ascertain the nuances within competing theologies of Christ.

Discussion Question: Is Depicting the Trinity Sacrilegious?

Doing Theology: Building a class Christology of the New Testament.

Reading Assignment: Eusebius; Bettenson; Norris; Athanasius.

Writing Assignment: Continue work on paper #1 and begin work on paper #2. Create 3-4 pp. presentation paper for next class.
Class 3: Fri, Oct 19: 6-10 p.m.
Lecture: Competing views of Jesus, competing creeds for the church: Athanasius on the battle to define Jesus Christ.

Discussion Question on Christ, the Trinity, and Monotheism: Are Origen’s, Arius’ (and today’s JW’s) views really that bad? Can’t we all just get along?

Doing Theology: Student presentations w. class response.

Reading Assignment:
Athanasius, Select Treatises (esp. Concerning the Councils…); House/Jowers.

Writing Assignment: Pass in drafts of paper if choosing the opportunity to redo.

Class 4: Sat: Oct 20, 9:00-3:00.

Discussion Question: Is the proper image for the Trinity a family or a business? Is Jesus Son or CEO?

Doing Theology: Student presentations w. class response.

Reading Assignment: Norris; Athanasius; House/Jowers.

Writing Assignment: Drafts due.

Class 5: Fri, Nov 2: 6-10 p.m.
Lecture: Implications for today. Are these issues historically fixed in time or still alive today?

Discussion: House/ Jowers, eds., The New Subordinationism?

Doing Theology: Student presentations w. class response.

Class 6: Sat, Nov 3: 9:00-3:00.

Discussion: What is needed for a sound Christology? What are the latitudes and limitations?

Writing Assignment: All final redoings due Dec 7 accompanied by original draft, cover sheet. NONE ACCEPTED LATER.
Course Description: According to the catalog, “This course examines the person and work of Jesus Christ across the breadth of the biblical canon as well as key episodes in the church historical development of Christological doctrine.”

Course Objective: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is the flagship seminary of the historically orthodox evangelical movement. The objective of this course is to assist Master of Theology students, first, in understanding the theological revelation of Jesus Christ in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and, second, in examining and evaluating how that revelation was formulated into orthodox doctrines resulting in the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon, which together define the historic, orthodox, evangelical Christian perspective on Jesus Christ’s person and work. Through class assignments, lectures, discussions, and student presentations and responses, students will be guided to become themselves theologians who will guide others to apply the interpretive tenets of historic orthodoxy to historic and contemporary views of Christ. This course fulfills the objective of goal #1 in each of the degree programs in helping students understand “the historical and theological dimensions of the Christian faith,” as well as Goal # 2 (MDiv, MAYM, goal # 3 in MAEM, goal # 5 in MACO), fostering “love for God and his word” as we examine the uniqueness of Jesus and the witness of the Bible, as it is distilled into these seminal creeds. Goal # 5 (MDiv, MAYM, MAEM), goals # 6-7 (in MACO) are addressed in classes 4 and 6 and in the course assignments by introducing a methodology by which to analyze the various Christological formulations offered by a variety of early church thinkers. Students will practice applying the methodology to a theologian we are studying in doing written assignment #1. This methodology, also applied in my “Systematic Theology 3” and “Contemporary Theology and Theologians” classes, refines the introductory interpretive (hermeneutical) principle taught in Systematic Theology 1, and developed in Systematic Theology 2 (addressing questions from the attributes of God), thus unifying what is learned in all the systematic theology courses into a coherent methodological (hermeneutical) approach. Finally, goal #6 in the MDiv, MAEM, MACO and goal #5 in MAYM, learning how to present “biblical truth” “effectively,” will be honed in the “doing theology” sections of four of the class sessions, wherein students will make presentations of their findings for class response.

Fulfillment of the Mission Statement: Article 1 concerns students obtaining knowledge of “God’s inerrant Word” and competence in “its interpretation, proclamation, and application in the contemporary world.” Since Christ’s person/work is the key issue defining the “Christian” faith, all class lectures, discussions, and assignments are geared to address this issue, and contemporary adaptations of and parallels to the concerns of the theologians being examined will be referenced. Article 2 on maintaining academic excellence is ensured by the high quality of assigned readings, the seminal materials being examined, and the carefully coordinated assignments, which are designed to move students toward becoming scholars equipped to wrestle with both primary and secondary source data. Articles 3 and 4 are addressed by the
assignments themselves, which are geared to help students strengthen the personal application of their faith by having it tested within guided class sessions. Lectures and discussions will help students understand how contemporary evangelical orthodoxy arrived at its position on Christ and thereby equip them to distinguish their evangelical worldview within contemporary theology, while appreciating the concerns that drive competing interpretations of Jesus Christ’s significance today. The writing assignments and guided discussions are included within the educational process to help produce the result. Article 6 on the global implications of theology is the subject of classes 5 and 6, as we look at the controversy today that is currently taking place globally within evangelical theology, but students will learn from classes 1-4 that these Christological revelations and formulations being tested were not defined in either conservative or liberal American Christianity, but in Asia and Europe long before America was invaded by the conquistadores.

Required Texts: in order of use:


Course Requirements:

1. Reading all assignments is essential to success in this class as your written assignments will key off the required readings and seminar sessions will be based on them.

2. Writing assignments are a shorter and a longer paper and a brief condensation of your papers which you will present. Make sure that your work is informed by your class reading, the lectures and discussions, and your own research.

3. Grading: The longer paper will comprise 60% of your grade, your shorter paper 30%, and your condensation and class presentation 10%.

4. As a swing factor, attendance, informed responsive participation, and completing all required reading will also be very important and will be taken into account in grading.

Class Sessions:

**CLASS 1.** Hours: 6:00-10:00 p.m. Friday evening, September 14.

Introductory lecture: The goal of this course is to help graduate students delve more deeply into the complex issues involved within the early church’s struggle to arrive at a communal agreement on the person and work of Jesus Christ and with that delving achieve a fuller understanding of the theology that has been preserved in today’s classic evangelical orthodoxy. The ultimate goal is to help graduate students discover the resources and grapple with the issues so that they will be prepared to explain and defend the biblical faith in the wider post-modern theological arena. The class will pause for a review of the syllabus and assignments and will include an explanation of what the professor hopes students will gain from the course: to learn by content and guided practice to do theology from an historically orthodox, evangelical position and thereby become theologians.

Discussion Session: Each class will have a question that will encourage free-throw discussion as students are given the opportunity to test out their theological ideas with the professor and with each other. We will open this class component with the provocative question raised by our Boettner text and discussed in much of the literature on the place of Christ in the OT: “Are all the theophanies (or appearances of God) in the OT appearances of Jesus Christ, despite the fact that they take place chronologically before Jesus is incarnated and has a human body?”
Doing Theology: Following the warm-up discussion will be a more focused time when we will do theology together. This evening’s session will be building a class theology of Christ (that is, a “Christology”) from the evidence in the Old Testament.

Required Reading Assignment: Boettner, THE PERSON OF CHRIST; Irenaeus, PROOF OF THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING: Section C (Christ in the Old Law) and Section D (Christ in the New Law), chapters 42-100; Irenaeus, AGAINST THE HERESIES, BOOK 3: chapters 16-24; Erickson, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: Part 7 (The Person of Christ) and Part 8 (The Work of Christ): chapters 32-40.

Recommended Reading: Students wishing greater depth of understanding are encouraged to read E.W. Hengstenberg, CHRISTOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT; Royce Gruenler, THE TRINITY IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN; David Wells, THE PERSON OF CHRIST; Irenaeus, AGAINST THE HERESIES, BOOK 1; Millard Erickson, THE WORD BECAME FLESH; and to sample other books on Christology in the CUME and Hamilton campus libraries.

Writing Assignment: Begin working on your 1st paper (the 1st draft for those choosing the option to redo is due class #3).

CLASS 2, Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Saturday morning, September 15

Lecture: How an image or illustration (or, in the case of Arius, a set of song lyrics) can convey a compelling theological message that can move hearts and change minds: Test Case: the varying uses of the “Lesson of Light” in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Arius, Athenagoras, and Athanasius to convey a Christological Position.

Discussion Question: Given the 2nd commandment forbidding graven images, especially in light of God’s further warning in Deuteronomy 4:15-18, is the attempt to depict God, as we see in these early Christian writers and in Christian art today, not only wrong, but sacrilegious?

Doing Theology: Today’s session will complete the working Christology for our class begun the night before by building together a theology of Jesus Christ from the New Testament revelation.

Required Reading Assignment: Eusebius, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, Book 1: The Person and Work of Christ; Norris, THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY (61-101: selections by Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius); Bettenson, CREEDS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, Section 2: Creeds; Athanasius, “Epistle of S. Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, Concerning the Councils Held at Ariminum in Italy and at Seleucia in Isauria” (known as the DE SYNODIS, or “Of the Councils”) in SELECT TREATISES OF S. ATHANASIUS IN CONTROVERSY WITH THE ARIANS.

Writing Assignment: Continue working on drafts of shorter and then the longer paper to be turned in in class 3 (and 4) for those wishing the option to redo. Prepare the short 4 page summary of your studies to present in class.

CLASS 3. Hours: 6:00-10:00 Friday evening, October 19

Lecture: Focusing on Athanasius’ review of the various creedal attempts to define Christ for everyone, this class will examine the nature and impact of theological discourse on the tenets of faith that are demanded (in some cases on peril of exile or even execution). Examining the various creeds that begin with the “Dedication” (or “Golden Church”) Creed, we will see how heterodoxy slowly gained power as it dismantled the affirmations of the Creed of Nicaea (and how, in parallel, the more gentler corrections of Nicaea were replaced by political sanctions and incited mob violence against dissenters).

Discussion: The interplay between the doctrines of monotheism and the Trinity will be the focus as we assess together the heterodoxies of the early church that laid the foundation for today’s heterodoxies, as they compete with the Nicaean/Chalcedonian creedal parameters of the historically orthodox, evangelical perspective on Jesus Christ’s person and work - and even, in some cases, permeate it - in the thought of Origen, Arius, into today’s Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Doing Theology: Now we will focus this component of the class on students presenting brief (no more than 4 page summaries) of the work they are pursuing in their shorter and longer papers. We will divide up the time allotted to individual presentations and class responses in these 4 sessions according to how many students are in the class. The rules of respectful familial discourse and debate laid out in Theology 1 will be reviewed and applied (and what Zachary Seech in LOGIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE identifies as the “dirty tricks” of chop-logic – creating a “straw man” of an opponent’s argument, veering an interchange one is losing onto a tangent, personal attack on a presenter or a responder’s scholarship rather than calm assessment of the proffered argument, etc. will be prohibited).

Required Reading Assignment: Finish reading Athanasius’ DE SYNODIS (Epistle on the Councils) and sample some of the rest of his writings in controversy with the Arians in our required class text.
Recommended Reading: For more insight on the issues, see Athanasius, ON THE INCARNATION, J.N.D. Kelly, EARLY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES; Frances M. Young, FROM NICAEA TO CHALCEDON; Khaled Anatolios, RETRIEVING NICAEA. For a more critical reading of Athanasius and orthodoxy, see R.P.C. Hanson, THE SEARCH FOR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD; Karl – Josef Kuschel, BORN BEFORE ALL TIME? THE DISPUTE OVER CHRIST’S ORIGIN. For more selections of early church theology, see Cyril Richardson, ed., EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS; Henry Bettenson, ed., THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS: A Selection from...S. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius; along with the various multi-volume collections available in the library (e.g. THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, etc.). For a desultory discussion of early church issues, see Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, eds., STUDIES IN PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY. For more insights on participants, see Peter J. Leithart: ATHANASIUS; Gerald R. McDermott: THE GREAT THEOLOGIANS; Socrates, ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

Writing Assignment: Tonight or tomorrow, hand in all drafts you would like us to check so that you can redo them for a higher grade.

CLASS #4: Hours 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, October 20

Lecture: The resounding defeat of Arianism at the Council of Nicaea did not mean that those committed to Arianism or influenced by it were totally routed and defeated. Instead, they became political, as we saw in last night’s class. One of the questions the influenced (semi-Arians) raised has become once again a front-line concern today, but, this time, the question is being asked by respected thinkers within the orthodox camp. The question involves the word taxis (rank): Is there equality of substance in the Trinity, but a different ranking among the 3 persons that is part of the authority structure in an equal but different eternal configuration? Also under consideration will be the Eternal Generation of the Son, a doctrine developed to negate the Arian idea that the Son is not of the same substance as the Father. We will consider its place as a part of several historic orthodox creeds (e. g. “The Westminster Confession of the Faith” 2.3.32 [6.013, p. 124, THE BOOK OF CONFESSIONS]), but also examine whether, in its long term effects, it supports or undermines Trinitarian monotheism.

Discussion Question: Does a difference in ranking within the Trinity necessarily entail a difference in glory, power, and honor as well? In effect, is a proper image for the Trinity a family where all are equal (as opposed to a human family where a parent can be emperor or dictator and thus hold permanent political authority over a child, or, conversely, a child can surpass his or her parents, as Moses surpassed his father in authority and Saint Hildegard her mother and father in renown), or is there a permanent one-way parental authority structure, or is the Trinity actually closer in effect to a Father and Son business? In short, is Jesus (or even
more so the Holy Spirit) an equal Person of the Trinity, or its chief executive officer (CEO), under
the Father as Chairman of the Board?

Doing Theology: Student presentations with class response.

Reading Assignment: Continue reading in Athanasius; Read Norris (103-159: selections by
Apollinaris, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo, Council of Chalcedon’s
“Definition of the Faith”): House and Jowers, eds., THE NEW SURBORDINATIONISM?
PERSPECTIVES ON THE EQUALITY OF GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON to discuss in class.

Recommended Reading: For current evangelicals espousing subordination in the Trinity, see
Bruce Ware, FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance; Andreas
Köstenberger and Scott Swain, FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT; Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler, JESUS
IN TRINITARIAN PERSPECTIVE. For historic evangelicals espousing subordination in the Trinity,
see Charles Hodge, SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, vol 1., chapter 6 (The Trinity), section 6, and ,
Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology (vol.1, pt. 4, ch. 2, sec. 4c) p. 334. For current
evangelicals espousing equality in the Trinity, see Millard Erickson, WHO’S TAMPERING WITH
THE TRINITY? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate; Kevin Giles, THE TRINITY &
SUBORDINATIONISM and JESUS AND THE FATHER: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine
of the Trinity. For historic evangelicals espousing equality in the Trinity, see John Calvin,
PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST (ed. Samuel G. Craig [Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and
Reformed, 1950], 226.

Writing Assignment: Hand in both drafts due if you wish to redo (if you do not wish to redo, you
may hand them in at class number #6). Hand in 4 page summaries at the end of your
presentation.

Class #5: 6:00-10:00 p.m. Friday, November 2

Lecture: In the final two classes, we will bring the discussion into today, beginning with a
review of current literature on the question of whether there is equality of rank, honor, glory,
etc. or subordination within the Trinity, in other words, if there is a one-way
authority/submission structure among the Persons of the Godhead. As a practical application,
we will review Origen’s argument and ask whether such a one-way authority structure should
reflect the Trinity today among current humans and whether this would necessitate
relegitimizing slavery and reintroducing a one-way authority structure among “races” and
between the genders.
Discussion: Do the chapters in House/Jowers’ *The New Evangelical Subordinationism*? reflect the ancient controversies we have been studying, or do they introduce a new evangelical subordinationist doctrine on relationships within the Trinity as reflected within humanity?

Doing Theology: Student presentations with class response.

Reading Assignment: complete all reading assignments.

Writing Assignment: For those wishing to redo, revise the papers you have received back in order to hand final revisions in (with the corrected draft and original completed cover sheet) by December 7th at the very latest.

Class #6: Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Saturday morning, November 3

Lecture: The creating of a creed. In this final lecture, the professor will explain carefully the choice of content and the process that resulted in “An Evangelical Statement of the Trinity,” going through the creed line by line, explaining the intention of each line (including how it came to be added) and fielding student questions on each part.

Discussion: As a final exercise, the class will decide what is needed today for a sound Christology, in one’s personal theology, in one’s church statement of belief, in one’s denomination’s creed, and for the historic, orthodox, evangelical expression of the Christian faith. Among the issues with which we will deal are the latitudes which we can allow and limitations which we should enforce in forging a position on the Trinity.

Doing Theology: Final presentations and class responses.

Writing Assignment: finish all writing assignments. All final first drafts and redoings (which must be accompanied by the original corrected drafts and cover sheets to be accepted) are due Dec. 7. **ABSOlutely No Re-DoiNGs Will Be Accepted After That Date.** Dr. Spencer will grade all final work, so please hand it in to him and not to any of the other instructors. Please note: although, if approved by the registrar, first drafts may be accepted after that date, if delayed by an unavoidable difficulty (and also please note: mismanagement of one’s time, deciding to concentrate on doing work for other courses and delaying this one, or sheer laziness or writer’s block are not valid excuses, especially for advanced ThM students who should be arriving at a responsible structuring of their academic schedules by this late date), however, students are urged to complete their work on time since Dr. Spencer’s formal teaching for the year concludes and, as he is traveling and writing extensively, and does not teach in the spring semester, therefore, papers arriving after this date may easily be lost (and will be graded with a tired and jaundiced eye….). A word to the wise: hand your work in on time.

May God bless you and help you lead the church and society with godly wisdom.
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

Select one (one) early church theologian, or one early church creed (before A.D. 460) from the books we are reading for class.

Read carefully the material assigned in class and any other extant material written by the theologian or by those who drew up the creed you are studying until you feel you understand what is being expressed.

Analyze the theology of this theologian or this creed by using the following methodology (first presented in “Systematic Theology 3” and then again in “Contemporary Theology and Theologians”):

1. Report to yourself (do not evaluate yet): what is the content, approach, methodology? What are the motivating concerns?

2. What do you think is the best: what can be lifted out for evangelicals and is helpful to your theological understanding of Christ?

3. What is the rest: What are errors that you should discard?

Try to discover the following facets:

* What is the view of God? Is it fully Trinitarian? Is the view of God similar to some view you recognize? Is it orthodox or heretical?

* What is the view of Scripture? How authoritative is the Bible regarded to be? How does the author's (or authors’ if a creed) view compare with the Bible's view? Give some specific examples.

* What is the specific view of Jesus? Is Jesus fully God and fully human or not? If not, what is actually being claimed about Jesus’ person? Is the view being presented orthodox or heterodox in your view? (e.g. How does it square with the Creed of Nicaea?)

* What is the view of the atoning work of Jesus? Is the atonement sufficiently done by Christ or is something more needed?

Ask the following questions:
1. What are the author's concerns? What does the author care about? What is important to the author?

2. What is the personal historical context of the author as (s)he writes the book? Why was it written? What was the point?

3. How does its view of God interpret its issue or concern?

4. What does the author want the reader to do in response?

5. Double check by asking yourself: Do I agree with the author's view of God, Christ, theology, reading of the situation?

6. What are the author's primary sources? Were they correctly interpreted? Should they be primary sources?

7. Does the author use an image or illustration which is key to interpreting the author's thought? If so, what is that image and how does it function within the author’s argument? Is it an appropriate image to describe Jesus Christ? If not, why not? What theological impression does that image leave with you? Does it move you toward affirming Jesus as fully God, fully human, and the final atoning sacrifice for human sin? If so, how did it accomplish that goal? If not, how did it fail?

**Due by the third class for those wishing the option to redo.** Those not choosing this option may turn first drafts in in the 6th class. Please remember to include the assignment cover sheet with your initial paper submission. **All redoings must also be accompanied by the original draft and original cover sheet to be regraded.**

Please return this cover sheet and corrected draft with new redoing
Methodology:
Did you clearly present the beliefs of the theologian/creed? I A G S
Were you accurate in your reading and presentation? I A G S
Were you biblically/historically accurate in your analysis? I A G S
Were you exhaustive/comprehensive in addressing all points? I A G S

Completeness of Study:
Did you pick one (1) of our textbooks? y s N
Did you identify the view of God in this theology? y s N
Did you discover if the view is fully Trinitarian? y s N
Did you discover if it is orthodox? y s N
Could you identify it by historical category? y s N
Did you tell us if Scripture is regarded as authoritative or not? y s N
Did you judge whether this view is biblically-based? y s N
Did you show if the view of Jesus' person is orthodox? y s N
Did you show if Jesus' death is sufficient for our atonement? y s N
Did you identify the theologian's/creed's concerns? I A G S
Did you analyze the theologian's/creed's context? I A G S
Did you figure out why he/she wrote this specific book? y s N
Did you identify the main point(s)? Y s N
Did you identify the author's primary sources and influences? Y s N
Did you evaluate their quality and if they were used correctly? Y s N
Did you find a central image or key illustration? Y s N
Did you evaluate how accurately the theologian uses his/her view of God to interpret the issue of concern? y s n
Did you identify how the author wants readers to respond? y s n
Did you evaluate whether you agree with this response? y s n
Did you use concrete examples to prove all your points? I A G S

Presentation:
Were you accurate? y s n
Were you insightful? y s n
Did you work from your own consistent theological position? y s n

Comments:
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2

Longer Paper

Sixty percent of your grade will be determined from one (1) brief (10-12 page) term paper. This assignment is intended to help you refine your understanding of the course material while you are honing the theological skills you developed in Systematics 1,2,3, by employing the analytical questions you learned as interpretive or hermeneutical tools with which to arrive at a coherent, theologically responsible perspective on the Christological positions and controversies that surrounded the final codifying of the orthodox, biblical position on the person and work of Christ. You will, then, be able to share your insights responsibly with those whom you teach and to whom you minister.

* Warning: we are not looking for a polemic defending either side on these issues. We are looking for a calmly reasoned and fairly presented assessment of the various sides of the argument and one soundly derived conclusion based on your theology. Here is how to approach this assignment:

PAGE 1

Center your title on the page and follow it with your name

Write a brief introduction, culminating in a topical thesis along the lines of Darin Pouillard's model.

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1. Isolate a key Christological theme or image in the theologian or creed you studied in Paper #1.

2. Explain how that theme captures the heart of this theologian’s (or the theologians’ who drew up the creed you are analyzing) theology of Christ.

3. Identify the theological issues involved in the Christology you have selected and are presenting (FROM QUOTATIONS OF ORIGINAL SOURCES - NOT YOUR OWN UNSUPPORTED IMPRESSIONS).

4. Remember to use the data you gathered from the interpretive questions listed under the methodology you used to analyze the data.

5. Now formulate a working theological hermeneutic from your findings along the lines of the hermeneutic we developed in Theology 1.

6. Remember to keep in mind these questions:
Who is God the Son in this theological approach?

Who is God the Father?

What is the primary attribute of God the Son being emphasized?

What is the primary attribute of God the Father being emphasized?

Is any attribute of either Person of the Godhead missing?

Can this view be demonstrated to be biblically sound?

If we adopt this theology and follow its recommendations, how would it affect our historic orthodoxy? What is harmful, what is helpful in it, if anything?

7. Now apply that hermeneutic to a theological issue or position that is significant today. (Examples might range from Openness Theology, Subordination or Equality in the Trinity, The Eternal Generation of the Son, any teaching on the person or work of Christ prevalent today that you may suspect is not thoroughly orthodox.)

When researching a topic on which to apply the hermeneutic, feel free to gather data from theological books and other resources in the library, the internet, news magazines and current event discussions on television and radio, live interviews you may do, etc. Remember to identify the theological issues involved in the question and touch on each of the other points listed. You may even want to highlight two specific stances, if your test case is not as clearly defined as the terms orthodox/heterodox may suggest, but remember that your pages are limited to 10-12, so, if you encounter others, at least acknowledge them briefly in your essay or in a footnote. Again, never give us your unsupported opinion, but provide proof for all your statements.

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After you have analyzed your issue, as your conclusion, assess how successful your theology was in interpreting competitive views from the position of orthodoxy. From what you have learned by doing this exercise, include concrete applications that you can put into effect in your ministry. Remember to write succinctly. Make every sentence count. End with a conclusion that restates your thesis, a bibliography, and notes.

Due by the third/fourth class for those wishing the option to redo. Those not choosing this option may turn first drafts in in the 6th class. Please remember to include the assignment cover sheet with your initial paper submission. All redoings must also be accompanied by the original draft and original cover sheet to be regraded.
The following items are rated according to the following symbols: y = yes, s = sometimes/somewhat, n = no, I = inadequate, A = adequate, G = good, S = superior. PLEASE NOTE: WRITTEN COMMENTS ARE ON BACK.

CONTENT:
Do you work from a consistent theological position? I A G S
Do you identify the theological issues involved? I A G S
Do you use primary sources in gathering your data? y s n
Do you apply and answer these interpretive questions:
  Do you describe the view of the Trinity in this theology and note anything missing? y s n
  Do you note what attribute of God is being emphasized? y s n
  Do you describe the view of Christ in the theology? (Do you find anything missing?) y s n
  Do you note what attribute of Christ is being emphasized? y s n
  Are any key attributes missing? y s n
  Do you identify the views of the Father and the Son by historical category? y s n
  Do you tell us if Scripture is regarded as authoritative or not? y s n
  Do you judge whether this view is biblically-based? y s n
  Do you show if the view of Christ's person is orthodox or heterodox? y s n
  Do you determine if Christ's death is sufficient for our atonement? y s n
Do you identify the theologian's concerns? I A G S
Do you analyze the theologian's context? I A G S
Do you figure out why he/she wrote this specific book (or creed)? y s n
Do you identify the main point(s)? y s n
Do you identify the author's primary sources and influences? y s n
Do you evaluate their quality and decide if they were used correctly? y s n
Do you find a central image or key illustration? y s n
Do you evaluate how helpful the theologian’s views of God and Christ are to interpret the issue of concern? y s n
Do you agree/disagree with the response the author asks of readers? s n
Do you use concrete examples to prove all your points? I A G S

PRESENTATION:
Is the paper well-organized? y s n
  Does it include an introduction? y s n
Does it have a topical thesis and scope of what you will cover? y s N
Does it include a body? y s N
Does it have a summary and a conclusion? y s N
Do you prove your conclusions? y s N
Is this position paper exhaustive/comprehensive? y s N
Is it accurate? y s N
Is it insightful? y s N
Are the spelling and grammar correct? y s n
Is the print easy to read? y s n
Are facts, quotations, ideas of others cited in consistent notes with bibliography cited? y s n