TH504 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
Gordon-Conwell Boston Campus (CUME) - July/August, 2014
Rev. Dr. William David Spencer and Athanasius Teaching Scholars

OVERVIEW

Tuesday, July 15: 6:00 to 10 pm
Reading Assignment: (see class schedule inside for pg #s) Erickson or Calvin; McGrath; Spencers' Global God; Davis; Gonzalez or Usry/Keener.
Writing Assignment: Pick paper topic and start first draft (due 3rd class).

Tuesday, July 22
Topics: The Trinity, Earliest Creeds, Heterodoxies that Threatened Orthodoxy.
Reading Assignment: Erickson or Calvin; Gonzalez; Davis. Choose a book review.
Writing Assignment: Continue working on term paper.

Tuesday, July 29
Topics: Trinity con’t: significance of Incarnation and Atonement.
Reading Assignment: Erickson or Calvin on Human Attributes and the Image of God; Davis; Gonzalez.
Writing Assignment: Hand in first draft of term paper. Write Book Review.

Tuesday, August 5
Topic: God's Revelation.
Reading Assignment: Erickson or Calvin; Gonzalez.
Writing Assignment: Book review is due at this class for those wishing the option to redo.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE MEETINGS will be held at the CUME building on Monday, August 11th, by sign-up sheet or by special arrangement with the instructors for those traveling a distance or with a schedule conflict. CUME students living or working North of Boston and Hamilton students may set a time with Dr. Spencer on that Monday morning on the Hamilton campus so they will not need to come to Boston. Hamilton meetings will be in Dr. Aida Besançon Spencer's office in the basement of the library. CUME students coming in from Boston or the south who want to meet with Dr. Spencer or the Athanasian Scholars should sign up for Monday night meetings at the CUME building. Those with a class already scheduled, please contact instructors for a separate time before or after class the next evening. (Please note: You should sign up to meet with the specific instructor who is helping you with your paper.)

Tuesday, August 12
Topic: God's Revelation Continued.
Reading Assignment: Erickson or Calvin; Gonzalez; Usry/Keener.
Writing Assignment: All book review first drafts are due tonight. All final drafts and revisions of the term paper are due next class.

Tuesday, August 19
Topics: Living Theologically - Ethics, Apologetics, and Hands-on Application of Theology to Your Ministry. Test Case: Analyzing the Abortion Debate.
ASSIGNMENTS: Hand in revised book reviews, revised term paper, and student evaluations. All final drafts are due tonight!

Course Description: According to the catalog, this course is an introduction "to the study of theology within the context of urban ministry. Topics include the history of theology and its relationship to philosophy, apologetics, and ethics; revelation in nature and in Scripture, with the focus on biblical inspiration and the existence, character, trinity, and attributes of God." The course will fulfill this description cognitively and practically by teaching students to
think theologically, write clearly, and apply intentionally derived systematic Biblical principles to daily thought and action.

**Course Objective:** For students to form an intentional, orthodox, working theology which is crucial to the proper formation of doctrinal concepts and the successful performance of ministry.

The course fulfills the various program degree goals in a number of ways. While it does not require knowledge of biblical languages, it does encourage students who have these to use them in doing their work, and class lectures provide insights to all students from the original scriptural texts, fulfilling Master of Divinity goal #1. Also addressed is alternate goal #1 (as well as goals 2 and 3) in all the Masters degree programs as the presentation of systematic theology is grounded in careful exposition of key texts. Goals 4-8 for all the Masters programs are fulfilled as the class lectures apply the information being learned to each program’s interests as they arise. Topics covered relate also both to students’ spiritual growth and local and global ministry. As well, flexibility is allowed in the choice of assignments so that students of the Master of Arts programs in Urban Ministry, Youth Ministry, Education Ministry, Counseling can work on topics for their major paper related specifically to their fields. Diploma students are introduced to an overview of the key theological issues (how to think theologically, choose sources, adopt theological and exegetical methods of approach, and such specific topics as the existence of God, the nature of the Trinity, the significance of Jesus Christ, the function and value of the historic creeds for preserving right doctrine, God’s revelation and the role of the Bible in our faith, and how to develop right practice are explored in a hands-on class in living theologically, overviewsing ethics and apologetics, including a practical class exercise applying theology to a key issue in the Church).

The class fulfills the “Statement of Mission” by leading students through a careful exposition of the Biblical passages from which the doctrine of the Trinity is derived before analyzing the doctrine theologically and also by including two classes devoted to God’s general revelation and God’s specific revelation in the Bible, thereby addressing Article 1: “encourages students to become knowledgeable in God’s inerrant word and competent in its interpretation.” Article 2 is addressed by a grading system I have developed over the years since I first began teaching seminary classes for New York Theological Seminary in 1974. The system guides students through several redoings of written work to help them master the content. The major assignment applies theology to a practical instance in ministry in order to “train” students” to become “skilled” in applying what they learn directly to ministry, as Article 3 directs. I also illustrate each doctrine’s use in real ministry settings from my own 40 plus years of active ministry experience, since 1966, in a variety of urban settings. The content and methodology of each class are selected to teach students to apply theology to their own personal growth and communal life of faith. The entire last class on ethics and apologetics, with its class exercise unearthing the theologies in a debate on abortion, shows them how to apply what they are learning, which is the goal of Article 4. I also bring in material from my own global interests, addressing the desire of Article 5 for students to develop a larger worldview. These include exclusive films of debates on the Bible from Jamaica, appropriate illustrations and quotations from Christian theologians in Asia and Africa, and readings drawn from all over the world, extending from the Patristics to contemporary theologians. Such illustrations and applications directly address Article 6’s desire for a locally and globally oriented praxis. Given the nature of CUME, such instruction is, of course, indispensable since it is an intrinsic need of its multi-cultural student body.

**Student Academic and Moral Requirements:** Gordon-Conwell’s “Spiritual Growth” Statement explains: “As a community of believers, our first desire at Gordon-Conwell is to worship and engage with God, both corporately and individually. We believe that academic learning divested from a life of biblical spirituality and holiness neither honors God nor serves His people. Working with the local church, our goal is to grow our students so that their experiential knowledge of God in Christ is evidenced in their character, outlook, conduct, relationship and involvement in society.” The Semlink plagiarism statement adds, “The Seminary considers all breaches of personal and academic integrity to be serious offenses. As such, the Seminary has a zero tolerance for such behavior.” This policy
extends to academic issues, such as cheating (e.g. by bringing unauthorized sources into exams), plagiarism (i.e. passing another’s words off as one’s own, including copying other student(s)’s work, or taking words or ideas from other sources without citation, quotation marks, or other indications), submitting the same work for two different courses without the professors' knowledge. GCTS-Boston (CUME)’s ‘‘Community Life Statement’’ also renounces ‘‘greed, jealousy, false pride, lust, bitterness, hostility, an unforgiving spirit and prejudice such as that based on race, sex, and academic or socio-economic status,’’ and ‘‘renounces’’ moral breaches and ‘‘behaviors such as distortion of God’s Word, deception, falsehood, drunkenness [or use of illegal drugs or abuse of prescription drugs], stealing, and sexual immorality such as premarital intercourse, adultery and homosexual behavior,’’ committing domestic violence, breaking civil laws, promoting slander against the character of others and infringements against the rights of others and other such behavior unbecoming a Christian leader. All of these are grounds for penalties, including dismissal. Instead, CUME’s statement counsels, ‘‘We will seek to practice an attitude of mutual submission according to the mind of Christ, recognizing that at times our personal rights and preferences must be put aside for the sake of others’ conscience and the good of the community.’’ Our goal is to serve God by becoming more Christ-like, and so, ‘‘we will seek to encourage the cultivation of such spiritual attitudes as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.’’

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Bible, both Old and New Testaments (access to the Hebrew and Greek texts is certainly helpful, but not required).

   OR


   OR


RECOMMENDED BOOKS ACCORDING TO THEIR APPEARANCE IN THE SYLLABUS:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Students will read all assigned readings, reflect upon them, and write about ways of integrating the material into daily life and practice.

2. Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions.

3. Students will write a research paper on one of the topics drawn from the list at the end of this syllabus. (If you have an idea for a topic not on the list, you MUST get prior approval from the professor.) Format for the paper and advice on research and draft requirements are found on the enclosed sheet, titled: “Term Paper Assignment” (2/3 of your grade).

4. Students will write one three-paged (3 paged) book review on any book on the required bibliography. (For format and directions see enclosed sheet, titled: “Book Review Assignment” [1/3 of your grade]).

5. Please submit cover sheet with your paper. Earlier draft and earlier cover sheet must be resubmitted with redoing for redoing to be accepted, so never discard your corrected draft and critiqued cover sheet, but always send them back.
to us with your redoing. Please highlight the changes you have made in your redoing. We will be checking the new draft against the old draft and cover sheet to evaluate the improvements you have made. Also, do not attempt to email papers to Dr. Spencer. Hard copies only may be handed in at class or sent by snail mail to 10 Maple Street, South Hamilton, MA 01982. All papers must be double-spaced, in size 12 font, with at least one inch margins so that we may write helpful comments on them. Students may select the instructor they wish to evaluate their paper by writing that instructor’s name on the cover sheet. (Hamilton students or CUME students living in the north should choose Dr. Spencer so they can meet with him in his wife’s office on the Hamilton campus the morning of the interview day. Boston and South of Boston-based students may meet with him or one of the Athanasian Scholars that evening at CUME. A sign-up sheet will be available at Class #3 so students can begin signing up for meetings. Please choose to meet with the instructor or professor who has evaluated your paper. Additional meetings may be scheduled that same night or on another evening before class or by telephone.) Athanasian scholars are present to give students extra attention, therefore they will be limited in the number of students with whom they may work. If you would like to work with one and receive extra attention on your paper, please make sure you ask one to work with you as soon as possible (and write that Athanasian Scholar’s name on your paper when you hand it in to be evaluated). You should also sign up beforehand to meet with that instructor to discuss your paper on the interview night.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

CLASS 1: Hours: 6:00-10:00PM.

Assignment: Students may select one of the two theology texts listed in the syllabus (Erickson or Calvin) and read the assigned pages for each topic for that particular text. While students may, of course, read both textbooks in parallel (and would benefit immeasurably), students are reminded that this is a 6 week course. A wise procedure would be to choose 1 text and read all assignments. Once the coursework is completed, students who wish to expand their knowledge should go back and read the pages of the other text, as well as work through the excellent books on the bibliography and in the GCTS libraries. For the present course, students choosing to read Erickson, please begin with chaps 27-31; students selecting Calvin, please begin with 241-255. Also all students should read Davis' pages 56b-60 on sin. (Recommended further reading: Wiley 160-179; Hodge 271-307.)


Assignment: Erickson chaps. 8-9 (or Calvin Bk 1: chap 5) and McGrath: "Getting Started": Anselm’s Proofs for God’s existence to Polkinghorne on Theology, 11-62. (Recommended: Wiley 75-97, Hodge 99-132).

D. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD: The Nature of God as the Key to All Theological Understanding and Practice. Doing Biblical Theology: An Exercise in Systematizing.

Assignment: Read Erickson chaps 13-16 (or Calvin Bk 1: chps 10-12). Students should pay special attention to Global God, pages 17-36 (which discuss the attributes of God) and pgs 37-250 (which demonstrate Evangelical scholars doing in macrocosm [analyze a culture] what you will do in microcosm [analyze an issue] using an attribute of God as your analytical tool); also read Davis 21-39, Gonzalez 89-100. (Recommended: Wiley 88-109, Hodge 133-165, A. B. Spencer, Beyond The Curse, 121-131, A.B. Spencer, Goddess Revival, 1-17, 75-194, T. Adeyemo, Salvation in African Tradition 17-49, E. Yamauchi, Africa and the Bible.)

Writing Assignment: Pick Topic and Write first draft of 5-8 page term paper.

CLASS 2:


CLASS 3:

A. THE TRINITY (CONT'D): THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST: Why Jesus being fully God and fully human is essential for our salvation.
B. THE ATONEMENT AND SALVATION
C. FAMILIAL THEOLOGY AND THE NATURE OF GOD: God's Relationship within the Trinity and with Humanity
D. IS THE TRINITY STRATIFIED?
F. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD (Creator, Source of Inheritance).

Assignment: Read: Davis 53-55a, Erickson chaps. 22-26 (or Calvin Bk 1:15; Bk 2:12, sec 6), Gonzalez 117-123, 130-131 (for those choosing Gonzalez). (Recommended: Wiley 185-238, Hodge 261-264, Dyrness 1-16, 127-154, A.B. Spencer, Goddess, 19-74.)

Reading Assignment: Catch up on all reading. Writing Assignment: TONIGHT HAND IN FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER.

CLASSES 4-5:

GOD'S REVELATION: The Secular Origin of Higher Criticism and its Application to the Bible. Why We Need to be Submissive to Biblical Authority.

Assignment: Erickson: chaps 9-12, 4-5 (or Calvin Bk 1: 6-12, Bk 2: 10-12), Gonzalez 75-88 (for those choosing Gonzalez). (Recommended: Wiley 37-69, Hodge 79-98, 45-74, Davis, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, 171-219.)

Writing Assignment: READ AND DO BOOK REVIEW WHILE WAITING FOR RETURN OF FIRST DRAFT CORRECTIONS: Due Class 4 for those wishing to redo, or during Individual Conferences or at final 2 classes for those not choosing to redo.

Class 6
INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES: In this session, Dr. Spencer and Associate Instructors will be at the CUME building to meet individually with students about their papers and their studies in this course. We will divide the time by the number of students. Students will receive corrected term paper drafts back during their conference, so please sign up to meet with whomever is working with you on your paper. Redone final drafts are to be handed in at Class 7 (the final class). Dr. Spencer will also be on the Hamilton campus that morning to meet with CUME students who live north of Boston and Hamilton students. Those who cannot make any times this day, or who live far away from campus, please contact teaching staff for special arrangements. PLEASE SEE SIGN-UP SHEETS DISTRIBUTED DURING CLASS. (Please note: Extensions are available only for handing in first final drafts only [absolutely not redoings] after the class is over. Students are encouraged to complete assignments on time, since the next class follows swiftly, and its new material and new assignment challenges may drown out the cries for attention of your old assignments.) Also, Fs are now being automatically assigned by CUME for incomplete work and are only removed and replaced when all work is submitted and graded. Dr. Spencer hates to turn in Fs for incomplete work and students hate to receive them. So, make life pleasant for yourself and your teachers: do all assignments on time!

Class 7  
LIVING THEOLOGICALLY.

APOLOGETICS: The Nature of God as the Key to Defending/Explaining the Faith, Answering Questions and Challenges from the Nature of God.

ETHICS: The Nature of God as the Key to Ethical Living. Establishing a Biblical Lifestyle. Test Case: The Abortion Controversy.


FINAL ASSIGNMENT: HAND IN FINAL DRAFTS. All papers are officially due in this last class. However, students needing it may have a grace period until (and not to exceed) Friday, when all papers without CUME Registrar action must be postmarked with Friday’s date and mailed to my home:

10 Maple Street, South Hamilton, MA 01982

Please note: Registrar extension approval applies only to first drafts. No redoings with or without approval will be accepted after last class session. Papers will automatically be returned to CUME and filed in the library for you to pick up. (However, students who wish to have their work personally returned may provide a stamped self-addressed envelope with their paper submission.) Now apply all the good things you have learned to your reflective life and active ministry.

May God reward you and your ministry with blessing,  
as you study to show yourself approved.

For Consultation: Dr. Spencer will hold office hours by telephone (1-978-468-4318) M T W Th 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. and M W TH 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. If you cannot make those times, please leave your number and suggested times he might call you back. He will try to arrive at least 45 minutes early on Tuesday evenings (about 5:15, depending on traffic) to eat with students in the lounge. You can schedule to talk with him at that time in person and as he sets up the classroom, in addition, of course, to the interview night, which is devoted to one to one student-instructor meetings. The Athanasian Scholars will tell the class the best time to telephone them or whether email contact is more effective. Telephone is best with Dr. Spencer, as his email is over-full and your message will be lost.
BOOK REVIEW ASSIGNMENT
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I

Choose any one of the books on the required bibliography. Please double-space, in at least size 12 font, leaving 1 inch margins. Use full sentences. Summarize the book’s content on page one; analyze it on pages two-three. Always present proof (quotations) from the book to support your statements about it. Retain returned drafts and cover sheets to resubmit with redoings.

Book Reviews should be presented in the following format:

PAGE ONE

Course Number and Title (TH504 Systematic Theology I).
Course Instructor: (Dr. William David Spencer).
School: (GCTS-Boston Campus-CUME).
Date and Year.

Last name of the author, first name of the author.
Title of the book underlined or italicized.
(City of publication, State of publication: publisher, year of publication), no. of pages.
Library Call Number used to retrieve it from the shelves (i.e. BT1234.7.S67 1997) (see the librarian if you have any doubts).

Identify the topics and thesis of the book. Why did the author(s) write the book? What point of view or position does he/she/they take on the topic?

Summarize the contents of the book (use the table of contents as a guide). What is discussed first, second, third? How is the theme of the book introduced? How does the book end? Do not evaluate yet, just tell us what is in the book. Consult the table of contents to help you summarize.

What are the author's(s’) sources of information? What are the credentials for writing about this topic with authority? How was the information gathered about this topic?

PAGES TWO AND THREE

Now provide an analysis of the book:
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's(s’) position? What types of questions would you ask the author(s) to help clarify your understanding? With what do you agree (and summarize for us the arguments that compel your agreement)? Do you disagree with any of the author's statements? What are they and what is the nature of your disagreement? What sources support your position? Is this book biblically sound? What scriptures are used to support the author's position? Do you think these scriptures are interpreted correctly? Who would you recommend read this text and why? Should we continue to use it as a class text?
TRY TO CONTAIN YOUR PAPER TO THREE PAGES

For samples of how to write book reviews you can check out book reviews in theological journals like our *Africanus Journal*: http://www.gordonconwell.edu/boston_africanusjournal
Cover sheet: to be attached to your submission. Name:
Book Review Assignment: Theology 1 Telephone:
Grade so far:

Symbols: Y = yes; S = Somewhat; N = No

Required Data

1. Did you include author’s(s’) name(s) and book title? Y S N
2. Did you include publisher’s city, name, publishing date? Y S N

Reporting Content

1. Did you summarize the content of the book (topics covered)? Y S N
2. Did you identify the thesis of the book? Y S N
3. Did you report the author’s(s’) point of view? Y S N
4. Did you discover why the author(s) wrote this book? Y S N
5. Did you tell us how the author(s) began the book? Y S N
6. Did you tell us how the author(s) ended the book? Y S N
7. Did you identify the author’s(s’) sources? Y S N
8. How did the author(s) gather (his, her, their) data (e.g. reading books, surfing the net, conducting interviews or surveys? What?) Y S N
9. Did you identify the author’s (s’) credentials? Y S N
10. Did you support all your statements with quotations from the book? Y S N

Evaluation

1. Do you give your own analysis of the book? Y S N
2. Do you tell us what you think are the book’s strengths? Y S N
3. Do you tell us what you think are the book’s weaknesses? Y S N
4. Do you tell us what you agree with? Y S N
5. Do you tell us what you disagree with? Y S N
6. Do you tell us if this book is biblically sound? Y S N
   (If you did not think so, did you list your reasons?) Y S N
7. Did you give reasons whether or not this should be a class text? Y S N

Comments:
Required Assignment: Pick one attribute (characteristic) of God and show us how it helps us interpret an important issue in the church today.

Student Choices: Select only one attribute of God you want to explore. (To find an attribute, read “God’s Self Revelation in Adjectives” in the packet; Chapter One, “The God of the Bible” in The Global God; and Part 3, “What is God Like?” in Erickson’s Christian Theology.) Select only one issue in the church to address. (To find an issue, see suggestions on “The Sample Paper Topics” list at the end of this syllabus). Please note: if you want to choose a topic not on the list, you must ask the professor for approval.

Step One: PAGE ONE

Center Your Title on the First Page
By: (Put in Your Name)
Prof:
Class:
Campus:
Date:

Step Two: PAGES TWO AND THREE

- Write an introduction with a topical thesis and scope briefly describing the attribute (that is to say, the characteristic) of God you will be helping your church to understand and the issue in the church to which you will applying your understanding of that attribute as your interpretive tool (this is your topical thesis statement). Briefly show us the steps you will take to develop the connection between the attribute of God and the issue in the church (this is your scope). Make sure you have a strong topical thesis statement and scope (see examples on the first page of your packet).

- Do a word study of that attribute throughout the Bible.

- Use a concordance or a tool like Bible Works to find references to your chosen attribute of God in the Old Testament. Look up each verse and read all the surrounding verses to see by its context what that word means. Make sure all verses are applying to God (not to people or any other reference).

- Please note: if there are many verses, select about one half dozen key representative ones.

- Write one or two paragraphs summarizing each of your findings. These summary statements will be the OT biblical principles you will use as your interpretive tools.

- Supplement (or refine) your biblical summary statements with information you
gleaned from your readings or class lectures.

- Next, use a concordance or a tool like Bible Works to find the references to the attribute you are studying in the New Testament. Again, look up each verse and read all the surrounding verses to see by the context what that word means.

- Try to discuss at least one half dozen instances of the word to discover its various shades of meaning.

- Write one or two paragraphs summarizing your findings into declarative summary statements about this attribute of God. These will become the NT biblical principles you will use to interpret your issue.

- Finally, you may consult the meanings in the lexicons and also consider what the various assigned readings and the class lectures have to say about the attribute of God you have selected.

- Now compare your list of OT and NT biblical principles to see which can be fused together and which add new dimensions to your understanding and should be listed separately. Can you draw any additional conclusions to refine your interpretive biblical principles? Does the comparison add anything to your understanding of this characteristic of God?

- To end this section, make sure you have summarized all your discoveries from readings, lectures, discussions with your biblical findings to refine your interpretive principles (which you will very shortly be applying to the church issue you selected).

Step 3: PAGES FOUR AND FIVE

- Now introduce the current issue facing the Church which you selected. Show us why this issue is important. Consult various sources of information about this issue. Look at books, journals, surveys, Internet essays, newspaper articles, news magazines, music lyrics, movies, interviews (or conduct interviews yourself), etc. Remember, all sources of information must be footnoted. Check with the librarian if you have questions about how a footnote should be written. Use The Chicago Manual of Style, Kate Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Nancy Vyhmeister’s Quality Research Papers, or a similar style book. We are checking for consistency, whether you follow carefully whichever system you choose.

Step 4: PAGES SIX AND SEVEN

- Apply your interpretive principles (the conclusion statements you made in part one that summarize what you learned about your chosen attribute of God) to the issue in the church you selected.
In your analysis, make sure you are using the scriptures and interpretive principles you drew up about the attribute of God you studied in part one and not drawing from new scriptures and using new attributes to interpret the issue. Remember, if you have not studied a particular scripture or attribute of God in part one, do not introduce it and use it for your interpretive tool here in part two. Stick with the attribute and scriptural principle you studied in part one. Make sure the 2 halves of your paper inter-relate.

After you have analyzed the issue, using your biblical principles as your interpreting tool, ask how you would help your church develop a position on this issue that is biblically sound (in other words, guided by the attribute of God with which you interpreted it).

Draw out from your analysis practical ways in which Christians should act when confronting this issue. Summarize these into step by step recommendations for your parishioners to apply. Make sure these practical ways flow directly out of your analysis.

Step 5: PAGE EIGHT

Now you are ready to draw your conclusion.

Restate your thesis statement as a conclusion, tying together all your research. Provide a thought provoking statement for people to ponder.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and FOOTNOTES or ENDNOTES** should be properly formatted. (Remember to follow your selected style manual [e.g. Chicago Manual of Style, Turabian, Vyhmeister, Campbell/Ballou, Trimmer/McCrimmon, etc., whichever you chose] for proper format for your bibliography and your notes. Please note, footnote and bibliographic entries are often not done in the same way, but will differ from each other. There is also a sample page on the Reserve shelves under “Research and Writing” you may consult.) Ask the librarian for help if needed. Also, remember to double space both text and notes, using at least size 12 font and 1 inch margins. Don’t forget to use the following cover sheet to double check your paper and make sure you have included all parts and aspects of the assignment. Attach the cover sheet to your draft and hand it in with your draft. Remember always to submit your previous draft and previous cover sheet with instructor’s comments with each redoing. And never hesitate to consult the professor or Athanasian Teaching Scholars at the appropriate times or with the appropriate means suggested (telephone, email, interviews) with your questions to help you complete the assignments. That is why we are here.
Name: ____________________________
Telephone: ______________________

*Attach this cover sheet to your submission.*

**Paper: Theology I**
**Date:** __________________
**From:** William David Spencer  GRADE

The following items are rated according to the following symbols:

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<th>Y=yes</th>
<th>S: sometimes/somewhat</th>
<th>N=no</th>
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<td>I=inadequate</td>
<td>A=adequate</td>
<td>G=good</td>
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**Methodology**

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<th>Conclusion proved</th>
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<th>Exhaustive / comprehensive</th>
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**Completeness of Study**

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<th>Basis of study is nature of God</th>
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<tr>
<td>One attribute of God's character</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word study of one attribute throughout Bible</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Is word study divided into OT and NT sections?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you study at least 6 passages from the OT?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you study at least 6 passages from the NT?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are your own word study definitions presented before lexicon definitions?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Do you derive principles for interpretation from your study?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Did you use class textbooks?</td>
<td>N</td>
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**Application to an Issue**

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<th>Did you tell us why this issue is crucial?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
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<td>Did you interpret your issue using the principles derived from your Bible study?</td>
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<td>Did you list practical suggestions for applying your findings to the church?</td>
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<td>Did you draw out recommended actions directly from your analysis?</td>
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**Did you include a bibliography and references?**

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| Facts and ideas of others rated in footnotes | N | S | Y |
| Footnotes & bibliography have a consistent and correct citation | N | S | Y |

**Comments:**

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SAMPLE PAPER TOPICS

NOTE: Students are by no means limited to the following topics. These are suggestions. Many topics are possible (but, please, ask for approval of those not listed). What we are seeking are current issues which may be addressed effectively by action based on an understanding of the nature of God.

1. God's Power and Human Power: How does God's omnipotence determine the realm and use of human power?

2. God of Individuals and the Place of the Individual in Corporate Society. This paper might deal with issues as wide ranging as the reality of covenantal theology, apartheid and individual worth, Marcus Garvey and the color of God, individual versus corporate understandings of God - should we see a difference? eugenics, cloning, snowflakes, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.


4. Why God's Purity OR Justice Condemns Pornography. (Warning: Choose one attribute of God not both.) This topic might also deal with victimization, human trafficking, God's desire for justice in human relationships, perfect Trinitarian love reflected in human relationships, or God's championing of the oppressed.

5. Divine Healing and the Divine Healer: How do natural and spiritual laws govern us? How should we respond individually and corporately to claims of divine healing?

6. Does God Act Miraculously Today? In what ways? As all papers, this one would need to be written with great discernment and support for statements and conclusions.

7. Is God Dead? The living God and the silence of God. Why does God sometimes seem silent?

8. The Jealous God: Syncretism and the relativism of our age.

9. The God of Historic, Orthodox Christianity versus the “god” of pluralism, relativism, secularism in current U.S. or another society.


11. The Love of God and the Task of the Church (please note: be
careful with this topic as many choose it, but the 2nd part is often too vaguely conceptualized and presented).

12. The Holiness of God and Pastoral Ambitions. How much can a set-apart people succeed in this fallen world? And what happens, when, as the televangelists, we do? What are the pitfalls Scripture warns us we need to avoid?

13. The "Unity of God” and the Unity of the Church. The plurality of God and the Plurality of the Church.

14. God as lifegiver and abortion.

15. God as Judge and Human Justice.


17. God as Creator, the Church, and the Environment.

18. War and the Lord of Hosts. Should a Christian Develop a Just War Theory or be a Pacifist? Is war ever justified?

19. The Omnipresence of God, natural revelation, common grace, other religions and the uniqueness of Christ.

20. The Lord of the Sabbath and Sabbatarianism: May we worship God on Sunday, or is the Church in general sinning? What are the differences between God's work in the Old Covenant and God's work in the New Covenant?

21. "The Lord is Peace" (Judg 6:24). What is true peace?

22. The Lord is Spirit (2 Cor 3:17) and modern spirituality.

23. The Wise God and Contemporary Wisdom.

24. The Rich God and Human Poverty: Inequity in the Distribution of Human Resources and the Triune Nature of God. When is Liberation Theology, and the Message of the Liberation of the Economically Oppressed, Christian and when is it not?

25. The Dangers of Human Urban, Suburban, or Rural Society and the Divine Love of the Trinity. The Christian community versus
fallen human society. The Church - leaven or leavened?

26. God the Healer and Youth Violence.


28. God the Father and Fatherless Children.

29. God the Provider and the Homeless.

30. God as Creator and Ministry in the Arts


32. The One God and the Single Christian: How God is One yet is Unified and Networks with Others.

33. The Glory of God and the Content of Christian Music (Please note: this topic is not asking you to disparage Christian music, it is asking what the content should be. What are our scriptural guides and guidelines?)

34. God as Champion of the Poor and Christian Social Action.

35. The Compassion of God and the Challenge of Teenage Pregnancies in the Church.

36. The Righteousness of God and Violence Against Women in the Church.

37. Societal Pressure, Obedience to Government, and Christian Convictions: How do Biblical teachings and duty to one’s country and culture inter-relate? Test cases may include physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia; or legalizing marijuana use; or redefining marriage in terms of dropping the age of consent for minors, or same sex, or polygamous, or group or line marriage; or justice, morality, the defining of “hate crimes” and the silencing of the church, etc. In short, how does a Christian’s responsibility to the state and duty to
obey the faith inter-relate?

38. The Benevolence of God and the Business of the Church.

39. Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Churches, maintaining Ethnic Safety in Foreign Countries and the Multicultural Kingdom of God.

40. Christian freedom and the responsibility of witness in a sinful society.