Instructors: Rodney L. Cooper, Ph.D. and Octavia Baker, D.Min.
Office Phone: 704-940-5832
Email: rcooper@gcts.edu or rodneylcooper@carolina.rr.com; obaker@gcts.edu
Class Schedule: 7:00 -9:30 p.m. on Fridays and 9-4:30 p.m. on Saturdays
Chapel: 6:30-7:00 p.m. Fridays
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

SAKAI

Course documents and other supporting materials can be accessed on SAKAI Learning Management System at https://sakai.gcts.edu. Students are to use their GCTS login information and password to access SAKAI. It is expected that students will utilize both the required textbook and SAKAI to gain an understanding of course content. Pre-work and readings are required prior to the first class and expected to be completed before the first class.

Course Description

This course is designed to enable the student to construct an expository sermon utilizing exegetical skills. Students will gain experience with two main activities: (1) explaining a biblical passage and (2) delivering a biblical sermon without notes. One year of a Biblical language and/or NT 502 Interpreting the New Testament are prerequisites for the course.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

PR601 relates to the mission of Gordon-Conwell by equipping the student to think biblically about the purpose of expository preaching. The literal, grammatical, historical and practical interpretation of the text, with its application to modern day congregants’ lives, is essential in developing mature followers of Christ.
Course Relationship To The Curriculum

This course is required for Master of Divinity students and is an introduction to the principles of preparing relevant biblical sermons. Lectures and exercises cover a stage-by-stage explanation of how preachers think as they prepare to preach. The aim of the course is to help students understand what is required to preach effectively and to practice what they understand. Practice sessions provide opportunity for students to preach and have their efforts recorded on video, with the professors’ critique, for later reference and self-analysis.

Course Objectives

The high-level goal of this course is for students to understand the principles of preparing relevant biblical sermons. This course focuses on providing a step-by-step process for students to gain experience explaining the main concept of a biblical passage, and delivering a biblical sermon without notes. Based on the vision and mission statements of Gordon-Conwell, it is expected that students will achieve the following outcomes upon completion of this course:

1. Gain skills to develop a basic procedure that moves from the biblical text to a sermon, based on the content of the text (articles 1, 2, 5, 6 of the mission statement).
2. Develop a working definition of expository preaching (articles 1, 5).
3. Explain a term or the meaning of a segment of scripture, or explain how a passage fits into its context, or explain the implications of a particular text for theology or action (articles 1, 2, 5, 6).
4. Develop skill in constructing a clear outline consisting of full, declarative sentences that relate to the basic idea of a text. This includes transitions between major points as well as optional supporting points (articles 1, 2, 5, 6).
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements in sermon construction and what those elements should accomplish (articles 1, 2, 5, 6).
6. Develop the skills to use the sermon outline to write a sermon manuscript based on how the concepts of how audiences listen (articles 1, 2, 5, 6).
7. Critique and analyze four (4) sermons to determine the effectiveness of a sermon (article 3).
Course Requirements:

Projected Time for Each Assignment
Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework both in class and out of class. The following break-down of assignments indicates how these hours are distributed across various course assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time</th>
<th>Students’ Actual Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading of Texts &amp; Articles</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanation Exercise</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon</td>
<td>35 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon Analysis</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Time</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Course Textbooks And Resources

Required:
6. PR 601 Sermon Video Recordings (Resources in Sakai)

Recommended:
Course Assignments: Reading and Delivery Activities

NOTE: Include your name on all written work. Submit all assignments in Sakai by due dates and times. Some assignments below that require a copy is brought to class.

1. Attendance at lectures and exercises. Students are expected to be on time for class.

2. Read Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*. Rather than read the book in a single sitting or two, you will profit more if you read it section by section as it is discussed in class.
   a. Read pages 1 – 66 *before* the first class.
      i. SAKAI: Review videos and information in Lessons 1 – 3 *before* the first class.
      ii. Select the text for your sermon. Upload to Sakai and bring to first class on an index card.
      iii. Begin studying your text.
   b. The following material will be presented *during* the first weekend. Review after class for a better understanding BUT read as much as possible *before* class.
      i. Read pages 67-76
      ii. SAKAI: Review Lessons 4 – 6 the *first week after class one*.
   c. Read pages 77 – 169 *before* the second class.
      i. SAKAI: Review Lessons 7 and 8 during the *second week after class one*.
      ii. SAKAI: Review Lessons 9 – 12 during the *third week after class one*.
      iii. SAKAI: Submit Explanation Outline and Manuscript. Bring a copy of both to class on October 10-11 when you lecture. NOTE: Your Explanation Delivery activity is due the second weekend.
      iv. Read pages 171-184: Sample Sermon and Evaluation:

3. Read Stott, *Between Two Worlds*. *It is recommended you begin reading this book as soon as possible*. A report is due on or before **Saturday, October 17 in SAKAI at 4:30pm**. Consider the following as part of your review and response: (a). What is the central idea of the book? (b). What did you find in the book that was new to you? (c). With what do you disagree? Why? The assignment should be no more than five (5) pages.

4. Read Edwards’ *Deep Preaching*. Write a three (3) page (maximum) review using the following questions: (a). Do you think the book has a central idea? What do you think it is? (b). Summarize the thrust of the author’s argument. How does the author support his idea? (c). Discuss at least three things you learned from reading the book. **Report is due in SAKAI on or before Saturday, November 14 at 4:30 pm.**

5. **THIS IS A TWO-PART ASSIGNMENT.** Part 1: Read five (5) articles from Part 2: “The Spiritual Life of The Preacher” and Part 5: “Structure” in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching*. Complete an annotated bibliography of each article that is no more than 1 1/2 pages. (Assigned Chapters in Art and Craft: 15, 90, 91, 95 and 102). Due at **11:00pm in SAKAI on or before Tuesday, November 17.** (For an understanding of annotated bibliographies, go to [www.owl.english.purdue.edu](http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu).)
Part 2: Go to **Preaching Points** under “Resources” on the Gordon-Conwell website. Listen to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) “Breath In God’s Word” (#1);</th>
<th>(f) “Good Preachers Own Wastebaskets and Use Them” (#11);</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(b) “The Disease of Modern Preaching Is Its Search After Popularity” (#3)</td>
<td>(g) “Give Your Listeners Verse Numbers” (#22);</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) “Organize Material into Meaningful Chunks” (#4);</td>
<td>(h) “Adapt to Gender-lects” (#24);</td>
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<td>(d) “Match The Mood of The Text” (#7);</td>
<td>(i) “Remember, Transitions Hold Your Sermon Together” (#153);</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) “Fewer Words, More Punch” (#8);</td>
<td>(j) “Diversify Your Illustrations” (#37).</td>
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</table>

Using quotes from each Podcast, summarize the key idea and supporting points of each topic. Submit Part 1 and Part 2 as one assignment at **11:00pm in SAKAI** on or before **Tuesday, November 17**. **NOTE:** It is to your advantage to work on this assignment throughout the course rather than completing it in one sitting.

6. Prepare an **outline** for the explanation exercise. See the sample in SAKAI. (For outline details, see the textbook (pp 91-95) or go to [www.owl.english.purdue.edu](http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu) for assistance.)


8. Prepare a **manuscript** for an explanation exercise. You will **explain** a passage or aspect of a passage so that the audience understands it. This will be a ten (10) minute explanation without notes. The manuscript & outline are due the day you speak. Print each and bring them to class. **NOTE:** This exercise is NOT a sermon. It is a clear lecture. You will explain something from your text. Typical topics include (examples are from Luke 19:1-10):
   a. A **word or phrase** (what does “Son of Abraham” mean?)
   b. A **cultural practice** (how did the Romans collect taxes?)
   c. The **arrangement/flow** of the text (why did Luke include Jesus’ statement at the end of the pericope?)
   d. The **context** (how does an understanding of the context help us feel what is taking place in Luke 19.
   e. A **literary feature** (who is a protagonist?)

9. Prepare a manuscript and an outline¹ for a complete sermon that both explains and applies the passage. This will be a fifteen (15) minute message without notes. The manuscript and outline are due the day you preach. **Print them and bring them to class.** Deliver your sermon the last weekend of class. **Come to class prepared to preach on Friday, November 13.**

¹ **NOTE:** Grading for all outlines will be based on the Stage 8 guidelines in *Biblical Preaching* on pages 91-95. If there are additional questions about outlining format, contact the GCTS Writing Center or visit [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
Part 2 (cont’d)

10. Listen to the sermons in SAKAI under “Resources”. Resourcing the full course content of PR601 and using the questions provided in the syllabus as a guide (page 6 below), evaluate and analyze the sermons. Be thorough and use complete sentences for the assignment. Due in Sakai on or before Saturday, November 14 at 4:30 pm.

11. Reading and Actual Time reports (see syllabus pages 3 and 10) in are due at 1100pm in Sakai on or before Tuesday, November 17.

Criteria for Grading: Your Sermon Will Be Judged On The Following:

1. Content
   a. Is the sermon clear? Is there a clear exegetical idea: Is the sermon well organized? Does it flow easily? Does the audience understand you? (A good outline will assist with content.)
   b. Does the sermon have effective content? Is it based on sound exegesis? Does it have good supporting material and relevant illustrations?

2. Delivery
   a. Does your delivery sound as though you really want to communicate? Does your voice have variety? Are you enthusiastic?
   b. Does your body support what you are saying? Do you have eye contact that is direct and personal? Do you use gestures?
   c. Do you want to be heard? Do you demonstrate conviction and sincerity?

Questions to Consider When Listening to or Reading a Sermon

For the assignment: Write out each question followed by your response. Be specific and give examples for what is asked.

1. What do you think is the main idea or concept the preacher was trying to get across? Can you state it? Y/N Analyze and comment.

2. When through with the introduction, did you want the preacher to go on? Y/N Did it capture interest so that you would want him/her to continue? Y/N How did he/she do? Analyze and comment.

3. Did he/she illustrate? Y/N If so, what did he/she do? — to explain, prove or apply? Did he/she succeed? Y/N Why or why not? Analyze and comment. Please provide specific examples of how the preacher explained, proved, or applied the text.

4. Do you think the conclusion drove home the main idea of the sermon in a way that caused you to want to respond? Analyze and comment.

5. What do you think that you as a listener might do, think or change as a result of hearing the sermon?

6. Do you think the delivery helped or hindered the presentation? What were its strengths? What about weaknesses? Analyze and comment.

7. Do you think that the sermon grew out of the biblical text? Or was it imposed on it? Analyze and comment.
Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to attend class, be on time, and not leave early unless absolutely necessary. Sloppy deportment (such as wearing of caps in the classroom, sleeping, reclining, eating loudly, and distracting behavior) is to be avoided. Respect for the professor and students is expected. Examples of disrespect include lateness for class, talking as an aside to someone, even in quiet tones, whenever someone else is speaking as part of the classroom discussion, demeaning remarks towards others, and rudeness. These guidelines are not intended to curtail anyone’s freedom in an academic community, but to provide a wholesome atmosphere for learning as befits Christian leaders.

Course Administration

**Attendance Policy**
Attendance is required for the class. Make every effort to be in class on time. If a difficulty arises, contact the professor.

**Due Dates**
No SAKAI or classroom assignments will be accepted after the due dates. If you have extenuating circumstances (personal illness, death in family, or similar occurrences), contact the professor. In such instances, the school’s Extension Policy may potentially go into effect (see Syllabus Addendum below).

**Assistance**
Feel free to see either of us with your questions. Call or email to make an appointment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures cover Sakai Lessons</th>
<th>Course Calendar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>1-3.</td>
<td>Introduction to each other and the Course</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The Worlds of the Expositor</td>
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<td>What is Expository Preaching?</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Robinson pp. 1-14.</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
<td>4-6.</td>
<td>What's the Big Idea?</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Robinson pp. 15-26</td>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> Practice activities for 185-187 (class discussion only)</td>
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<td>The Essentials of An Effective Sermon</td>
<td>(Tools of the Trade)</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Robinson pp. 27-45</td>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> Select one passage for your two exercises to be preached.</td>
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<td>Hand in the passage on a 3 x 5 card with your name on the card.</td>
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<td>Be prepared to discuss your sermon text.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Road from Text To Sermon</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Robinson pp. 47-66</td>
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<td><strong>Due:</strong> Exercises</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do I Have Anything to Preach?</td>
<td>The Homiletical Idea and Sermon Purpose</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Robinson pp. 67-76</td>
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<td>Before next time:</td>
<td>✓ Complete reading for lectures before the class.</td>
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<td>✓ Prepare an outline and manuscript for an explanation exercise. You will explain a portion or element of a biblical passage. <strong>The outline should be in proper form</strong> and should be as detailed as necessary for a ten (10) minute exercise.</td>
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<td>✓ Please note: The exercise will be no more than ten (10) minutes in which you will explain an element of your biblical passage.</td>
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<td>✓ Be sure that you communicate a clear idea and the structure of the passage.</td>
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<td>✓ Deliver the exercise without notes. Be as enthusiastic as possible as you deliver the message.</td>
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**NOTE:** Grading for all outlines will be based on the Stage 8 guidelines in *Biblical Preaching* on pages 91-95. If there are additional questions about outlining format, contact the GCTS Writing Center or visit [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Homework/Assignments</th>
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</table>
| **October 16**<br>Sakai Lessons 7 & 8 | **BE PREPARED:** Ten Minute Explanation Exercise  
The Shapes Sermons Take  
Read: Robinson pp. 77-96  
Making Dry Bones Live  
Read: Robinson pp. 97-117. |
| **October 17**<br>Sakai Lessons 9-12 | **BE PREPARED:** Ten Minute Explanation Exercise  
Due in Sakai by 4:30pm: Book report on *Between Two Worlds*  
Getting Off to A Good Start  
Read: Robinson pp. 119-127.  
All’s Well That Ends Well  
Read: Robinson pp. 128-134.  
Words on Target  
Read: Robinson pp. 135-148.  
Dynamics of Delivery  
Read: Robinson pp. 149-165.  
Read: Robinson pp. 171-184 (Sample Sermon and Evaluation) |
| **November 13** | **BE PREPARED:** Fifteen Minute Sermons  
✓ Upload outline and manuscript to SAKAI and bring a copy of your sermon outline and manuscript to class.  
Note: Bring a thumb drive to class to record your sermon. |
| **November 14** | **Fifteen Minute Sermons**  
✓ Upload outline and manuscript to SAKAI and bring a copy of your sermon outline and manuscript to class.  
✓ **Due in Sakai at 4:30pm:** Report on Edwards’ *Deep Preaching*.  
✓ **Due in Sakai at 4:30pm:** Report on Willhite and Gibson, eds. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*. |
| **Tuesday, November 17 at 11:00pm** | ✓ **Due in Sakai:** Critique and Analysis of recorded sermons.  
✓ **Due in Sakai:** Two-Part assignment of: (1) Annotated bibliography of five (5) articles from *Art & Craft* and (2) summaries of Preaching Points Podcasts.  
✓ **Due in Sakai:** Student’s Actual Time and Reading Reports.  
See pages 3 and 10. |
Due in Sakai: Tuesday, November 17 at 11:00pm

ATTENDANCE

(Check all that apply. Indicate partial attendance.)

How many class sessions did you attend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekend 1</th>
<th>Weekend 2</th>
<th>Weekend 3</th>
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READING REPORT ON TEXTBOOK

(Circle one.)

Did you read Robinson’s *Biblical Preaching*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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% of Grade

5% = 50 pts

READING REPORT ON ADDITIONAL TEXTS & ARTICLES

Report on Stott, *Between Two Worlds*

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<th>(% you read)</th>
<th>(Points)</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<td>5% = 50 pts</td>
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- Report on Edwards, *Deep Preaching*
- Report on Willhite and Gibson, eds. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*

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<th>(% you read)</th>
<th>(Points)</th>
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5% = 50 pts

Two-Part Assignment: Annotated bibliography on articles from *Art & Craft* and summaries of Podcasts from Preaching Points.

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<th>(% you read)</th>
<th>(Points)</th>
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5% = 50 pts

COMMUNICATION DELIVERY

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<th>(Points)</th>
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<td>20% = 200 pts</td>
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Outline for Explanation Exercise

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<th>(Points)</th>
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<td>10% = 100 pts</td>
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Sermon Analysis Exercise

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<th>(Points)</th>
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<td>10% = 100 pts</td>
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Fifteen Minute Sermon, Outline & Manuscript

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<th>(Points)</th>
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<td>40% = 400 pts</td>
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Course Grade: __________
Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work,” as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.
Grades
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. *Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades* (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self addressed and postage- paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.
Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status. Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.