Theology Survey I - TH 501  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte  
Dr. Alan Myatt – Fall 2015

Schedule: Fri. 6:30-9:30 p.m., Sat. 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Oct. 2-3; Oct 30-31; Dec. 4-5.  
(Note that chapel at 6:30 is required and counts as part of our class time.)

Meetings with the professor are by appointment. Students may arrange to chat with me via Skype. Contact is best made by e-mail: amyatt@gordonconwell.edu

Course Description: Systematic theology, as an essential component of a Christian worldview, is introduced in this course through a survey of its basic methods and content. Through this course students will develop skills necessary to evaluate differing theological options and arrive at their own conclusions. Specific issues covered will include the task and methods of systematic theology, God’s revelation in nature and Scripture, the nature and attributes of the Triune God, the work of God in providence and creation, angels, and human beings as created and as sinners.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

The course has various objectives which are intended to develop basic competence in the area of systematic theology and to specifically contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of GCTS as expressed in the six articles of the GCTS mission statement (http://www.gordonconwell.edu/about/Mission-and-Purpose.cfm). Specifically, the faculty have identified the following learning outcomes in relation to the articles of the mission statement:

Article 1: a) Demonstrate a strong understanding of both the content of the Bible and the overarching redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation. b) Demonstrate appropriate and effective use of the tools of biblical interpretation.

Article 2: Demonstrate constructive and critical thinking about Christian ministry in light of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship in accordance with historic Christian orthodoxy.

Article 3: Develop proficiencies in practical ministry that are biblically and theologically grounded, and contextually sensitive.

Article 4: Demonstrate growth in a life of biblical discipleship and intimacy with Christ, expressed in the life of the mind, interpersonal relationships, and interaction with broader society.

Article 5: Demonstrate engagement in the Church and society, using their spiritual gifts and redemptive leadership to promote renewal and reform.

Article 6: Articulate a coherent vision of God’s global activity and develop strategies for actively engaging in God’s redemptive work in the world.

Relation to Curriculum
This course is required for all masters degrees.

Course Objectives

The course has various measurable objectives, related to the achieving the above learning outcomes. Upon completing this course students will:

1) **have a mastery of the basics of the doctrines covered.** Evidenced by completion of reading, and competent performance on quizzes and written assignments. Articles 1 & 2

2) **be able to apply the methods of theological studies in the critical analysis of various theological positions.** Students are expected to “own” their doctrinal convictions, having arrived at them through the process of personal reflection and study. Students will demonstrate their ability to think critically in the task of doing theology in class discussions and completion of a paper examining a topic of theological controversy. Articles 1 & 2

3) **integrate the materials and methods of theology with the specific body of knowledge and skills of their projected area of ministerial practice.** Whether their anticipated ministry is in the pastoral, counseling, discipleship, teaching, or other areas, systematic theology provides students the essential foundation for proper theory. Since all practice is the practice of some theory or other, there is no proper practice without proper theory first. This competency will be demonstrated in a paper integrating theology with practical ministry. Articles 3 & 5

4) **apply the study of theology to the development of their experiential knowledge of God.** While systematic theology is an academic discipline, it is by no means only that. Knowledge about God should lead to a deeper knowledge of God. While students will not be tested on this, it may be measured by how they integrate material learned in the course into their personal devotional lives, as well as indications of practical spiritual implications of theological issues in written assignments. Article 4

5) **relate the doctrines studied to the development of a philosophy of ministry that contributes to the Christian mission in church and society.** This objective for the course will be realized as the student carries the knowledge gained in this course to the study of other disciplines in the seminary curriculum. In addition, service in and to the Church presupposes that the student understands the doctrinal standards of the tradition where he or she will likely serve. This is especially the case for those seeking ordination. One objective of the course is to help the student prepare for future ordination or other doctrinal examinations that may be required for Church or missionary service, as measured by the completion of reading of a theology text in the student’s tradition. Articles 3 & 6

Course Requirements

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend **at least** 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates due dates and how these hours may be distributed across the various course assignments. Note that students are expected to complete the assignments, regardless of how long it takes. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Estimated min. Time</th>
<th>Actual Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>As Scheduled</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading log 1: Sire, preface, chpts 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Total for Reading 15%</td>
<td>65 hours Total reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading log 2: Fairbairn, chpts 1-2, Tennent chpts 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Theology text*: Introduction, Doctrine of Revelation.</td>
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<td>Reading log 3: Sire chpts 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>Oct 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading log 4: Fairbairn, chpts 3-4 Tennent, chpt 3 Theology text: God, Trinity, Creation and Providence</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative reflection paper</td>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading log 5: Fairbairn chpts 5-6 Tennent chpt 4, Theology text: Angels, Humanity, Sin</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sire chpts 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
<td>Dec 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam due</td>
<td>Dec 19</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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*(Text = your chosen theology text as explained below.)*

**(see the attendance policy below)**

Students will keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report on the charts in Sakai.

**Details of assignments:**

*Due dates for the assignments will be found on the accompanying table, above. Please note that you are expected to begin your reading and course preparation on Sept 8, well before the first day of class. Late registration will not be an excuse for late work.*

1. **Completion of required reading** as follows:

a) **Each student shall choose a major systematic theology text from the list of suggested texts and read the chapters that cover the doctrines scheduled for classroom discussion.** A different text may be chosen with the professor’s approval. In keeping with the objective of helping students to prepare for eventual ordination or other exams for ministry service, students are encouraged to choose a text consistent with the doctrinal standards of the denomination or organization where they are likely to serve.* A list of possible texts is provided, but the student may also choose another, with the professor’s approval.

b) **Students will read James W. Sire, The Universe Next Door 5th ed. InterVarsity Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0830838509** The study of Systematic Theology presupposes some acquaintance with philosophy and other world views. Reading Sire will provide background that is presupposed in this course.

d) Students will read the indicated chapters of Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007) ISBN-13: 978-0310275114

2. Students will write an integrative reflection paper (10 pp), integrating one of the doctrines studied with their projected area of ministerial practice. For example, M. Div. students may discuss how to apply the doctrine in preaching or other areas of pastoral ministry. Counseling students will reflect on the integration of theology with psychology and counseling theory and practice, using the doctrine studied. The paper should discuss the doctrine and show how it is relevant to the ministry issues under consideration. In order to complete this assignment students will read one of the following books and interact with it.


3. Students will complete a written final exam. This exam will be take home and open book. It will consist of essay questions designed to test your knowledge of the material as well as your ability to interact critically and practically with theological concepts. It may also require further reading and research beyond the required readings. Below is a list of books that may be helpful in this regard (you are not expected to read them all, but they are good references to consult). The specific format and requirements will be discussed in further detail in class.


All assignments and other course resources will be available and administered through Sakai. Upload all completed assignments to the appropriate Sakai section. Please submit papers in MS-Word format. Pdf files will not be accepted. Hard-copies will not be accepted. Papers will be returned on Sakai with the professor’s comments after grading. An assignment is not considered “turned-in” until you have confirmed that it has been successfully uploaded. The time stamp on Sakai will be the official time it is turned in.

DO NOT delete any of your work until after you receive your final grade! Files occasionally get lost and the professor may need to ask you to resend something. It is strongly suggested that you back up your files.

Use your gordonconwell.edu address for all communication with the professor. Check your GCTS inbox every day for important notices related to the course.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Grading Scale

Assignments will be given a point value on a 100 point scale. Points are earned from a starting point of zero, not taken off from a starting point of 100. Final grades will be calculated according to the above percentages weighted for each assignment and letter grades will be applied with cutoffs as follows: A+ 100, A 94, A- 90, B+ 87, B 84, B- 80, C+ 77, C 74, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60.

Grading rubrics for the written assignments will be posted on Sakai. The student is encouraged to study these carefully before attempting the papers.

Late work: There will be a one point penalty per day of lateness, deducted from the final grade of each assignment for late work that is not excused.

Attendance Policy: Points will not be awarded for attendance. However, a record of attendance will be sent to the registrar’s office with the final grades. Excused absences must be made up by doing additional reading and written assignments.

Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements

Papers must be formatted according to the standards set forth in IS 502. All research and writing must conform to the protocols of IS 502. If you have doubts about proper procedure, refer first to your notes from that course.

Syllabus Addendum

For other seminary policies refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum

Course Outline:

Introduction
  Doctrine and the Christian Worldview
  The Methods and Scope of Systematic Theology
  Traditions and Models of Systematic Theology

God’s Universal Self Disclosure - Universal Revelation
  The Nature and Possibility of Revelation
  Revelation in Nature and History - Is Natural Theology Possible?
  The Limits of Natural Revelation

God’s Particular Self Disclosure - The Doctrine of Scripture
  The Inspiration of the Bible
  The Authority and Inerrancy of Scripture
  The Canon of Scripture

The Triune God
  The One God
  The Trinity
  The Nature and Attributes of God
  The Person of God the Father
The Creation
  Genesis and Theories of Creation
  Theology of Creation

Divine Providence
  The Will and Plan of God
  Providence and Evil

Angels
  The Nature and Role of Angels
  Fallen Angels

Humanity
  Created in the Image of God - The Nature of Human Persons
  Human Beings as Male and Female
  The Cultural Mandate

Humanity in Sin
  The Fall and its Consequences
  Sin and Human Nature
  Sin and the Creation

SUGGESTED SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TEXTS

Baptist/Evangelical


Dispensational


Evangelical/Ecumenical/Methodist


Lutheran


**Pentecostal/Charismatic**


**Presbyterian/Reformed**


**Wesleyan/Holiness/Nazarene/Methodist**


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**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 cancellation 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
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. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work
Work will be returned via Sakai, since no hard copies will be turned in.

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.