

## **CH/TH669: Soteriology in Christian History Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Charlotte Spring 2012**

**Instructor:** Dr. Don Fairbairn

**Contact Information:**

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**Schedule of Class Meetings:** Tuesdays, Feb. 7 – Apr. 17, 6:30 – 9:30 PM  
(no meeting on March 20)

**Office Hours:** I will be in the office and available for drop-in meetings on Monday and Tuesday afternoons. I will be in the office all day on Wednesdays, but most Wednesdays will be filled with meetings. I can also be available on Friday afternoons prior to weekend classes by appointment.

**Catalog Course Description:** An examination of the various ways the Christian Church of the last 20 centuries has expressed the salvation believers have in Christ. Students are encouraged to learn from past expressions of soteriology in order to formulate a theology of salvation that is comprehensive, consistent, and powerful for preaching and ministry today.

**Relation to Curriculum:** This is an elective course that can satisfy the requirement for a CT elective in the M.Div. and M.A.C.T. programs. It has no formal prerequisites, but I recommend that students have completed TH501 and TH502 prior to taking this course.

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to help students appreciate the ways the Christian Church has expressed our salvation, and to give students the opportunity to evaluate these expressions biblically and to utilize them appropriately in ministry. In keeping with Gordon-Conwell's mission statement and the stated learning outcomes that grow out of each article, I intend that upon completing this course, students will:

1. Understand the various frameworks within which Christians in different times and places have expressed salvation (article 2 of the mission statement).
2. Grasp the significance of context in any expression of salvation (articles 2, 6).
3. Appreciate the breadth and the depth of what Christian salvation includes, and in doing so foster a deeper relationship with Christ (article 4).
4. Gain experience in evaluating various expressions of salvation in light of Scripture (article 1)
5. Critique, refine, and augment their own expression of salvation in light of other

expressions considered in the course, as part of a strategy to minister the gospel more effectively in contemporary society (articles 3, 5, 6).

**Course Requirements:** Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments. The successful completion of these assignments will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and outside of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments. More specific descriptions of the assignments are given later in this syllabus.

Course Assignment	Expected Time Commitment	Student's Actual Time
Reading the documents for class discussions	65 hours	
Class lecture/discussion	30 hours	
Critique of your own preliminary understanding of salvation	10 hours	
Evaluation of Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, John of Damascus, Anselm, and Aquinas	10 hours	
Evaluation of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Schleiermacher, and Machen	10 hours	
Refined statement of your understanding of salvation	10 hours	

Students must keep a record of the time they spend on each assignment and by May 17 must upload to the Sakai site a chart like the one above, indicating the amount of time they have actually spent on each assignment in the right-hand column.

**Required Textbooks and Materials:** There are no textbooks required for purchase. The schedule of readings at the end of this syllabus indicates which writings we will read and also lists a source (not the only source) in which each reading can be found. All of the sources listed in the syllabus are on reserve in the library, but in most cases you may find other sources for each reading in question. (The exceptions are Cyril of Jerusalem, Aquinas, and Luther. To get the right selections from these theologians, you must read from the sources listed in the syllabus and available on reserve in the library.)

### Course Assignments:

**1. Reading (20 points, approximately 65 hours):** You must complete ~2000 pages of reading according to the schedule at the end of this syllabus. This reading is taken from major theologians and confessional documents from all periods in Christian history. Discussion of this reading will be the major learning activity in class, and thus it is crucial that you complete each reading assignment prior to the class meeting when it will be discussed.

As you read, you must keep a reading log in which you indicate how long it has taken you to complete each reading and when you completed it. By Tuesday, April 17, you must upload your

reading log to the Sakai site.

**2. Critique of your own expression of salvation (20 points, approximately 10 hours):**

In class on Feb. 7, you will write a preliminary statement of your own understanding of Christian salvation. After the initial lecture “Soteriology in Christian History: The Big Picture,” you must reflect on your preliminary statement in light of the categories and issues presented in that lecture. You must write a 4-6 page paper critiquing your statement, suggesting ways in which your own expression of salvation needs further development, etc. This critique will forge an initial direction for the refinement of your own soteriology under the tutelage of the theologians you will read in this course.

You must upload this paper to the Sakai site by Tuesday, February 21. (The readings for February 14 and 21 are shorter than the ones for subsequent weeks, to give you more time to reflect on your preliminary expression of salvation and to write this paper.)

**3. Evaluative papers (20 points each, approximately 10 hours each):** You must write two evaluative papers (6-8 pages each) in which you assess the soteriological thought of the theologians you are reading and discussing in the course.

The first evaluative paper will cover Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, John of Damascus, Anselm, and Aquinas, and you must upload it to the Sakai site by Tuesday, March 20. (We will not meet on that Tuesday, so you will not have additional reading for class discussion due at the same time.)

The second evaluative paper will cover Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Schleiermacher, and Machen, and you must upload it to the Sakai site by Tuesday, April 24 (the first Tuesday after the end of the class meetings).

The two evaluative papers should deal with all five of the theologians under their purview and should address issues such as the following:

- Evaluation of the theologians in light of categories and frameworks given in lecture on Feb. 7
- Explanation of major similarities between these theologians and the student’s own expression of salvation
- Explanation of major differences between these theologians and the student’s own expression of salvation
- Explanation of most biblical/helpful aspects of the soteriologies of these theologians
- Explanation of the most unbiblical/dangerous aspects of the soteriologies of these theologians.

**4. Refined statement of your own understanding of salvation (20 points;**

**approximately 10 hours):** After the completion of all classes and all other written assignments, you must re-consider what you have learned about Christian salvation through the course and write a final paper of 7-10 pages. You must upload this paper to the Sakai site by Tuesday, May 15. This paper should include the following:

- Summary of your way of expressing salvation prior to the course and the initial ways you thought this expression needed to be modified (from your first paper)

- Explanation of ways the soteriology of the theologians studied has prompted you to modify your expression of salvation
- Explanation of ways the soteriology of the theologians studied has prompted you to augment your expression of salvation
- Statement of your comprehensive expression of salvation
- Suggestions for ways specific elements of this expression can be used fruitfully in preaching and ministry

**6. Chart indicating actual time spent on all assignments.** You must upload this chart (printed earlier in this syllabus) to the Sakai site by May 17.

**Grading Scale:** The point values listed above mean that the total number of points available for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be applied with cutoffs as follows: A 95, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60. A grade of A+ will be given very rarely, when the student's work is truly exceptional. (At Gordon-Conwell, a grade of A+ and a grade of A are both counted the same way in calculating the student's GPA. Thus, a GPA above 4.0 is not possible.)

**Late work:** All late work will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date, unless arrangements are made ahead of time. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Work turned in later than Thursday, May 17 (one month after the last class meeting) will normally require that an extension be approved by the Seminary. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance and participation are a central part of this course. Students who must miss a class period should notify me in advance to justify their absence. If a student has more than one unexcused absence from class, he/she will receive a penalty of three points per additional unexcused absence on his/her final grade.

**Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements:** All written assignments should be prepared in MS-Word format (no pdf files, .dat documents, or Word Perfect documents). Assignments should be double spaced with 1" margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type or another font of similar size and appearance. Citations should preferably follow Turabian style, although APA style is also acceptable. Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies will not be accepted.

**Syllabus Addendum:** For other Seminary policies, refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum.

### **Class Schedule and Assignment Due Dates:**

**Feb. 7 Soteriology in Christian History: The Big Picture**

**Feb 14 Cyril of Jerusalem – 4<sup>th</sup> Century**

Cyril, Selections from the *Catecheses* [Yarnold, ed., *Cyril of Jerusalem*, pp. 79-187]

**Feb. 21 Critique of your preliminary expression of salvation is due.****Feb. 21 Augustine of Hippo – 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

*The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love* [Shaw, ed., *The Enchiridion*, pp. 1-141]

**Feb. 28 John of Damascus – 8<sup>th</sup> Century**

*The Orthodox Faith* [Fathers of the Church, vol. 37, pp. 165-406]

**Mar. 6 Anselm of Canterbury – 11<sup>th</sup> Century**

*On Free Will, On the Incarnation of the Word, Why God Became Man, On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin, On the Procession of the Holy Spirit, De Concordia* [Anselm of Canterbury: *The Major Works*, pp. 175-92, 233-474]

**Mar. 13 Thomas Aquinas – 13<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Summa Theologiae*, Summaries of Selections  
[Glenn, ed., *A Tour of the Summa*, pp. 3-184, 311-69]

**Mar. 20 First evaluative paper is due. (NO CLASS MEETING)****Mar. 27 Martin Luther and German Lutheranism – 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

*The Freedom of a Christian, Two Kinds of Righteousness, Lectures on Galatians* (selections), *The Bondage of the Will* (selections) [Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, pp. 42-203]  
*Augsburg Confession* [Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, pp. 7-73]

**Apr. 3 John Calvin and Swiss Calvinism – 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. 1, Ch. 13; Bk. 2, Chs. 1-2, 12-14; Bk. 3, Chs. 1-2  
[*Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 20, pp. 120-59, 241-89, 464-93, 537-92]  
*Second Helvetic Confession* [Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, pp. 831-909]

**Apr. 10 John Wesley and English Methodism – 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Sermons 141, 1, 110, 2, 40, 3-5, 16, 18, 45, 13, 43, 59, 85, 89* [Outler and Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, pp. 13-21, 39-121, 157-81, 335-45, 359-80, 475-92, 511-21]  
*Methodist Articles of Religion* [Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, pp. 807-13]

**Apr. 17 Reading log is due.****Apr. 17 Friedrich Schleiermacher and Gresham Machen – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, sections 11-14, 94-7, 101, 170 [pp. 52-76, 385-413, 431-8, 738-51]  
Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, entire [pp. 1-180]

**Apr. 24** Second evaluative paper is due.

**May 15** Final paper is due.

**May 17 (Thursday)** All late work is due.

## 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:**

Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued. [Note that this Seminary policy does not apply to this class, because I will not accept hard copies of work. My comments on all written work will be available through Sakai.]