CT760: Readings in Christian Thought – Augustine
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Dr. Don Fairbairn – Fall 2012

Professor’s Contact Information:
Email: dfairbairn@gordonconwell.edu
Phone: (704) 940-5842

Schedule of Class Meetings: Saturdays, Sep. 22, Oct. 20, and Nov. 17 (5:00 to 7:00 PM)

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

Catalog Course Description: A study of the life and work of the most influential theologian of the early Western church. Attention is focused on Augustine’s historical context, including the philosophical and religious factors that shaped his early response to Christianity and colored his mature work.

Relation to Curriculum: This course can satisfy the Christian thought elective requirement in the MACT and can be a general elective in any other program.

Course Purpose: Augustine has had a monumental influence upon the Western Church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, and particularly upon the Reformed tradition within Protestantism. This course seeks to give students broad exposure to Augustine’s thought and the tools necessary to appreciate and evaluate his influence.

Course Objectives: The professor intends that by the end of the term, students will:

1. Understand the thought world in which Augustine lived and the major theological battles that dominated his life.

2. Appreciate and critique the spirituality that lies behind Augustine’s writings.

3. Reflect upon and evaluate Augustine’s influence on the Western Church generally and on their own traditions specifically.

4. Begin to formulate appropriate theological and spiritual expressions for their own ministries, utilizing the resources Augustine offers.

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 Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time</th>
<th>Student’s Actual Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Augustine’s writings and keeping your journal</td>
<td>94 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in on-line discussion forums</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures and class discussions</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must keep a record of the approximate time you spend on each assignment and by Dec. 19 must upload to the Sakai site a chart like the one above, indicating the amount of time you have actually spent on each assignment in the right-hand column.

### Required Textbooks and Materials:

You may use any translation of Augustine’s writings, but older translations will be harder to read than newer ones. The following are the recommended translations:


### Course Assignments:

1. **Reading**: You must read the assigned works by Augustine (totaling ~2200 pages). In connection with this reading, you must read/study the professor’s Power Point presentations covering the material. The reading schedule is at the end of the syllabus. The Power Point presentations will help you achieve objective 1 above, and the reading will provide the basis for achieving objectives 2-4.

2. **Discussion Forums (20 points)**: Prior to the three class meetings, you must participate in discussion forums on Sakai according to the schedule at the end of this syllabus. As you read Augustine’s works and the corresponding Power Point presentations, keep a Word file with questions and points of interest that you want to discuss with other students. Post these comments and questions, and respond to the other students’ posts. We will also discuss some of these issues in class.

Your participation in these discussion forums will provide a beginning point for your writing the reading journal (described below), and so you may want to use the categories suggested for that
Assignment to help organize your thinking and participation in the discussion forums. This assignment will help prepare you to achieve objectives 2-4 above.

You will see from the schedule that there are six forums (two prior to each class meeting). The forums on City of God, books 11-22 and on The Trinity will be worth 4 points each, and the other four will be worth 3 points each, for a total of 20. You will receive one point for each quality post or response to another student’s post, up to the maximum number of points available for that discussion forum. A quality post is one that does not merely repeat or summarize information, but raises substantive issues or helps to address substantive questions raised by other students.

3. Reading Journal (30 points): You must keep a reading journal in which you reflect on Augustine’s thought and how that thought can be utilized in our own expressions of Christian faith. You are not limited to any particular format in keeping the journal, but it is recommended that you pay attention to things Augustine writes that are…

1) Useful as explanations of Biblical passages
2) Useful as explanations of Christian teaching
3) Especially brilliant insights into Christian theology
4) Problematic or (in your opinion) unbiblical
5) Useful as illustrations of Christian life
6) Especially brilliant insights into the nature of spirituality
7) Hard to understand or raise questions in your mind.

This journal will demonstrate your achievement of objectives 2-4 above. The journal is due in three parts, corresponding to the readings for each of the three class meetings. The first part is due on Monday, Sep. 24, the second on Monday, Oct. 22, and the third on Monday, Nov. 19.

3. Research Paper (50 points): You are required to write a 10-12 page research paper. It is expected that the research will involve ~300 pages of additional reading, bringing the course total to ~2500 pages. The paper is due on Monday, Dec. 17 and will demonstrate your achievement of objectives 2-4 in depth for one specific topic.

Selection of topic: You have considerable freedom in choosing your paper topic, as long as it deals with some aspect of Augustine’s life and thought. The paper should also deal with the relevance of this aspect of Augustine’s thought for our ministry today. You do not need my approval for your choice of topic, but you are more than welcome to confer with me as you choose and narrow the topic.

The task of research: You should consult the document “Writing Theological Papers” available on the Sakai site in order to understand the professor’s expectations regarding research papers. If you need additional help on your paper, you may want to consult Dr. Robert Mayer, Director of the Library at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte). Remember, however, that an important part of writing a research paper is the sometimes difficult task of locating and selecting the sources you want to use. This will probably involve several hours of hard work in an archive or library. Do not expect others to do this work for you; this is part of your assignment.
Completed papers should be typed and in correct form (as indicated below), foot-noted where appropriate, with a bibliography of all sources used for the study. If you have not had much experience in writing research papers, you should consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Grading the papers: Your research paper will be evaluated on the basis of four primary criteria: (1) the depth of the research in both primary and secondary materials, (2) the quality of the analysis/argument you present, (3) the connection you draw between Augustine’s own time and Christian ministry today, and (4) the clarity, accuracy and beauty of the writing. Attention to these matters will not only help you on this paper assignment, but it will also aid you in developing the analytical and communication skills you need for the ministry to which God has called you.

4. Chart indicating actual time spent on all assignments. You must upload this chart (printed earlier in this syllabus) to the Sakai site by Dec. 19.

Grading: 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 after Wednesday, Dec. 19 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. If you must miss a class period, you should notify me in advance to justify your absence. If you have more than one unexcused absence from class, you will receive a penalty of three points per additional unexcused absence on your final grade.

Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements: All written assignments should be submitted in either MS-Word or PDF format. (If you use a different word processor than MS-Word, please convert the file to PDF before submitting it.) 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.
Course Schedule and Assignment Due Dates:

September 1-9: Read Augustine’s *Confessions* and the professor’s Power Point presentation 1. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By September 10: Post your comments/questions about *Confessions*. Interact with the other students’ posts by Sep. 14.

September 11-16: Read Augustine’s *On Christian Teaching* (also called *On Christian Doctrine*) and the professor’s Power Point presentation 2. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By September 17: Post your comments/questions about *On Christian Teaching*. Interact with the other students’ posts by Sep. 21.

Saturday, September 22: Discussion of Augustine’s *Confessions and On Christian Teaching*

Reading Journal, Part 1, is due on Monday, Sep. 24.

Sep. 24-Oct. 4: Read Augustine’s *City of God*, books 1-10, and the professor’s Power Point presentation 3. Much of this material will relate to the pagan society of Augustine’s day and may not be very relevant. You may read it quickly, looking for points of contact with our society. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By October 5: Post your comments/questions about *City of God*, books 1-10. Interact with the other students’ posts by Oct. 10.

October 5-14: Read Augustine’s *City of God*, books 11-22, and the professor’s Power Point presentation 4. You will want to read this much more carefully than books 1-10. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By October 15: Post your comments/questions about *City of God*, books 11-22. Interact with the other students’ posts by Oct. 19.

Saturday, October 20: Discussion of Augustine’s *The City of God*

Reading Journal, Part 2, is due on Monday, October 22.

Oct. 22-Nov. 4: Read Augustine’s *On the Trinity* and the professor’s Power Point presentation 5. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By November 5: Post your comments/questions about *On the Trinity*. Interact with the other students’ posts by Nov. 9.
November 6-11: Read Augustine’s *On Nature and Grace* and *On the Gift of Perseverance*, and the professor’s Power Point presentation 6. Interact with this material through your reading journal.

By November 12: Post your comments/questions about *On Nature and Grace* and *On the Gift of Perseverance*. Interact with the other students’ posts by Nov. 16.

**Saturday, November 17: Discussion of Augustine’s *The Trinity* and *Anti-Pelagian Writings***

Reading Journal, Part 3, is due on Monday, November 19.

______________________________________________________________

Research Paper is due on Monday, Dec. 17.

Time chart is due on Wednesday, Dec. 19.

All late work is due by Wednesday, Dec. 19.

**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.