TH760 Readings in Theology: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Charlotte
Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Alan Myatt
Contact Information: amyatt@gordonconwell.edu, Skype ID: ambrs57
Class Schedule: 5:00pm-7:00pm, Sept. 8, Oct. 6, Nov. 3
Office Hours: Meetings in person or via Skype by appointment

Course Description

The last three decades have seen a renaissance in the treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in systematic and philosophical theology. This has given rise to new attempts at formulating this central doctrine, some of which have raised controversy. Is the doctrine of the Trinity contradictory and irrational as some charge? Is it a paradox? What is the nature of the inter-Trinitarian relations between the Father, Son, and Spirit? How does this doctrine relate to the encounter between Christianity and the world’s great religions? What does an Evangelical formulation of the doctrine have to say about human relationships? These are some of the issues that will be engaged through a survey of recent perspectives on the Trinity. Students will engage the work of several key thinkers in this area, as well as recent debates among Evangelical theologians.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

The statements in italics describe how this course relates to each the learning outcomes GCTS faculty have identified in relation to the articles of the mission statement (http://www.gordonconwell.edu/about/Mission-and-Purpose.cfm):

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. The positions discussed will be evaluated in light of orthodox biblical teaching.

Article 2: Demonstrate constructive and critical thinking about Christian ministry in light of biblical, theological, and historical scholarship in accordance with historic Christian orthodoxy. Statements of the ancient creeds and tradition will inform evaluation of the readings, along with implications for ministry.

Article 3: Develop proficiencies in practical ministry that are biblically and theologically grounded, and contextually sensitive. Implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for preaching and missions will be considered.
**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. *Implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for devotional life will be discussed.*

**Article 5:** Demonstrate engagement in the Church and society, using their spiritual gifts and redemptive leadership to promote renewal and reform. *Political and social implications of the doctrine will be directly addressed by specific authors to be studied.*

**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. *Views of the Trinity in global theologies and their implications for Christian mission will be addressed.*

**Relation to Curriculum**

TH760 counts towards the elective requirements in Christian Thought for the M.Div. and MA degrees.

**Course Objectives**

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

1) *acquire knowledge of the basic issues concerning recent discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity* as evidenced by completion of reading and competent performance on written assignments.

2) *be able to apply the methods of religious and theological studies in the critical analysis of the work of contemporary theologians.* Students will demonstrate this competency through discussions and the completion of a term paper research project.

3) *be able to preach and teach effectively in the context of the church on the doctrine of the Trinity* This will be demonstrated in the form of discussions and a growing commitment to teach and preach on the Trinity in the local church.

4) *form a Trinitarian vision for social ethics and action in the life of the church.* Through discussions and writing the student will demonstrate understanding of how the doctrine of the Trinity informs relationships in the church and the world.

**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 approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in
class and out of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment (hrs)</th>
<th>Student’s actual time on task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will keep a record of time spent on each course-related task, and will submit a final report, as above, with their actual hours spent on each task listed in the last column of the table. (The report may be filled in on the above chart. Copy and paste to an MS-Word file and upload to Sakai).

**Required Textbooks and Materials**


Other articles will be supplied.

**Course Assignments**

*Please note that all assignments should be uploaded to Sakai in MS-Word Format. I do not accept hard copies or pdf files.*

1) Complete the reading of all texts and submit a reading report for each reading. (40% of final grade). The reading support will consist of the following: a) a statement of the percentage of the reading completed for each text. (\% = # pages read/# of total pages in reading assignment.) b) a list of questions and key ideas raised in the readings. (Page numbers should be included in parentheses by each entry. Cover sheet and footnotes not required.) You should do this based on notes you would need if you were leading the discussion. Limit yourself to no more than two pages per book or one page per article. Reading reports are due before the beginning of the class for which they are due.

2) Research paper relevant to the material covered in the readings. (60% of final grade) 20 -25 pages. The topic should be approved by the professor. A grading rubric will be provided on Sakai. Students should read and carefully adhere to the grading rubric.

**Grading Scale**

The reading report grade will be based on the % of reading completed and the quality of the notes submitted. Each report is worth 100 points.

The research paper 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.

**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**

Students are expected to be present for all class time. Excused absences will be considered in the case of serious circumstances that are not unforeseen. Excused absences will be made up by doing additional assignments.

**Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements**

Papers and assignments should be submitted on Sakai, in MS-Word format, according to Turabian or the APA style (for students in the counseling program), as discussed in IS 501. All papers should include a cover page, footnotes, and bibliography unless specifically stated otherwise by the professor.

**Course Schedule**

**Sept 8**

Erickson. *God in Three Persons*

Veli-Matti Karkkainen. chpt 1-16, (255 pp)

Pannenberg. Chpt 5 (77 pp)

Torrance

**Oct 6**

Veli-Matti Karkkainen. chpt 17-27 (143 pp)

Rahner

Moltmann

Boff

**Nov 3**

Articles and books should be read in chronological order as listed:


Peter R. Schemm, Jr., ‘The Subordination of Christ and the Subordination of Women’ (Ch 19) by Kevin Giles” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 10:1, 80-86.

Ware, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Giles. *Jesus and the Father*.


Erickson. *Who’s Tampering with the Trinity?*


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.