I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to give you a concise introduction to the nature, history and methodology of systematic theology. It should also provide a helpful stimulus in understanding the relationship between the practice of one's faith and the belief context into which that practice fits. The course will focus the nature of a theological vision, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, the interpretation of those Scriptures and the nature of the God whom we worship.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students are required to complete the assigned reading from the required texts listed below. In addition the student shall take a mid-term and final exam. Both of these shall be take-home essay exams. A sample copy of an exam is included for your perusal. The mid-Term exam shall be available on October 15 and due on October 22. The Final Exam will be available on the last day of class (December 10) and is due on the last day written work can be turned in (December 18). Please note that there will be NO CLASS on Monday October 1.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS
1. Lints, Richard, *The Fabric of Theology* (Eerdmans/Wipf & Stock)
5. Tennent, Timothy, *Theology In The Context of World Christianity: How The Global Church Is Influencing The Way We Think About And Discuss Theology* (Zondervan, 2007)
6. A Systematic Theology Text of your own choosing (see sample list below)

IV. EVALUATION
The examinations shall each constitute 50 percent of the final grade. The required reading shall nudge a person over the edge (one way or the other) if their grade is borderline. Completion of the required reading "nudges" one's grade upward if it is borderline. Failure to complete the required reading "nudges" one's grade downward if it is borderline. The required reading is either "completed" or "not completed". No credit is given in the final grade evaluation for "almost completed".
V. Warning on Plagiarism

Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found on the Indiana University website listed below. This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare your papers/exams. In order to save paper, we’ve provided you with the website address: 
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html. Please consider this carefully.

VI. Internet Usage
Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.

TH 504 - Course Outline
Dr. Richard Lints

WEEK ONE - Introduction
  a. Introduction to Course
  b. A Theological Framework and Vision
  c. Major Assumptions

WEEK TWO - The Theological Trajectory
  a. The Task of Theology
  b. The Use of Scripture in Theology
  c. The Use of Tradition in Theology

WEEK THREE - Culture and the Evangelical Theological Vision
  a. The Nature of Culture
  b. The Use of Culture in Theology
  c. Evangelical Culture and Theology

WEEK FOUR - Reason and Revelation
  a. The Use of Reason in Theology
  b. Human Language and Divine Revelation
  c. Special and General Revelation

WEEK FIVE - Redemptive Revelation
  a. The Nature of Inspiration/Authorization
  b. The Internal Case for Inspiration/Authorization
  c. The Importance of the Canon

WEEK SIX – Redemptive Revelation
  a. Consequences of Inspiration/Authorization
     Authority of Scripture
     Sufficiency of Scripture
     Inerrancy of Scripture
  b. Scripture and The Gospel

WEEK SEVEN – Objections to Scripture
  a. Religious Language
  b. Historical Criticism
  c. Inerrancy
WEEK EIGHT – Canon and Interpretation
   a. The Nature of the Canon
      Scripture's Own Sense of the Canon
      The Testimony of History to the Canon
   b. Canonical Interpretation
      The Three Horizons
      Culture and the Application of Scripture
WEEK NINE - The Trinity
   a. Monotheism
   b. The Divinity of the Son and the Spirit
   c. The Nature of the Trinity
WEEK TEN - The Nature of God
   a. The Attributes of God
   b. Knowing God and Knowing about God
Instructions - This is a take home exam. You will have three hours from the time you open up the exam until you complete it. Answer three (3) out the following six (6) essay questions. Please attempt to be clear and concise. Bibles are permitted in the exam. Therefore, you should cite the Biblical material where appropriate and also the material from the required reading. You will have three hours to complete the exam which means that you should spend approximately 1 hour on each question. If English is not your first language, you may take one additional hour to complete the exam. The exam questions are then to be typed as is, and turned in. Please make sure that the typed-versions are double-spaced using at least a 12 pt. font. Each of the essays will count as 1/3 of the exam mark. Please remember to put your box number on the front page of your exam. You may email your exam to me (RLints@gcts.edu). If you email it to me, please request confirmation that I’ve received it cleanly.

Grading Scale: 93-100=A, 90-92=A-; 88-89=B+; 83-87=B; 80-82=B-; 78-79=C+; 73-77=C; 70-72=C-; 68-69=D+; 63-67=D; 62-60=D-; 59 and below = F.

1. Theology and Faith - What are some guidelines you would suggest to a person in your congregation if they were to embark on the study of theology. How ought one to begin the study of theology? Is the objective study of theology possible? Why or why not?

2. Theology and Culture - What is "contextualization"? Offer some constructive examples of it and some negative examples. In what ways has the culture of modernity impacted the Christian community? Explain how the church ought to intersect with the culture of modernity.

3. Theology and Tradition - How should the past inform the present Christian community? What periods of church history seem especially fruitful to you for the contemporary church's consideration and exploration? Why?

4. Evangelicalism - Explain the relationship between the doctrinal (or beliefs) context and the cultural context of contemporary American evangelicalism. How has culture been influential in the shaping of conservative Christianity in our own century. What prescriptions would you give to the movement in order to alleviate these influences (where you consider them to be negative)?

5. Revelation - How does God reveal himself in the Bible? Explain the Bible's use of anthropomorphic language in reference to God? How does God accommodate himself to our limited rational faculties of understanding in order to reveal himself.

6. Scripture - In what sense is Scripture inspired? How does this doctrine relate to what role Scripture ought to play in the daily life of a human person? Does inspiration entail inerrancy? Why or why not?
Bibliography – Systematic Theologies
Richard Lints

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Key -

BE – Broadly evangelical  
CH - Charismatic  
ER - Evangelical Reformed  
EW - Evangelical Wesleyan  
LP - Liberal Protestant  
LA - Liberal Anglican  
D - Dispensational  
F - Feminist  
EB - Evangelical Baptist  
RC - Roman Catholic  
EE - Ecumenical Evangelical  
L - Lutheran  
W - Wesleyan  
LR - Liberal Reformed