This January Term course meets 1:00–4:20, on 1/10–1/14; 1/18–1/21. Snow days will be 1/24 and 1/25.

Office hours are daily after class 4:30–5:30, and by appointment.

Course Description

A study of creation, providence, the image of God, human nature, original and actual sin, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Prerequisite: TH 504. For M.Div. students.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will have:

- Reflected on what it means to think theologically in an evangelical Christian context; and deepened your understanding of the nature, relevance and role of systematic theology in your Christian life and ministry.

- Gained a thorough understanding of the essential theological content of the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of sin, theological anthropology, and Christology; focusing on the testimony of Holy Scripture and their systematic interrelationships; and with reference to contemporary issues, their expression in our Christian heritage, and their application to all of Christian life and worship.

- Become more familiar with the person of Jesus Christ, both in His eternal and incarnational states; and with the work of Jesus Christ, emphasizing His earthly ministry, and especially His work of atonement.

- Gained a deeper appreciation of your own theological heritage and your place in the community of faith that transcends the boundaries of time and location; and a clearer vision and intellectual context for a lifetime of theological study that is expressed in continuing personal growth, and well-informed and articulate ministry.

Required Texts


Choice of One Text from the Following:

Morris, Leon. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross.* Third rev. ed. Eerdmans, 1984. (Considered one of the best modern studies on the work of Christ on the cross, this detailed and technical linguistic analysis focuses on key words in Scripture such as redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation.)

Plantinga, Cornelius. *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin.* Eerdmans, 1995. (An engaging, introductory account of the meaning of sin in connection with a Christian appropriation of *shalom*, with a view to the doctrine’s contemporary theological and philosophical relevance.)

Stott, John R. W. *The Cross of Christ.* 20th anniversary edition. InterVarsity, 2006. (Considered by many to be Stott’s greatest work and a classic articulation of the doctrine of the atonement, this book focuses on why and how the finished work of Christ on the cross is central to the Christian faith. Theologically sound, accessible, and practical, this text would make edifying reading to go along with this course.)

**Optional Helpful Texts**


**Course Requirements**

**Assignment #1**

For assignment #1 students have the option of writing a *Theological Position Essay* or a *Reading Response Essay*.

**Theological Position Essay (Option 1)**

**1,500-word max.** The essay will concisely address a point of doctrine covered in this course and develop it in conversation with a concisely stated opposing point of view. *The essay may not be longer than 5 pages.*

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Students are required to: 1) chose a doctrinal issue addressed in TH605 that is of particular importance to you, and discuss your position concerning its meaning, biblical support, and/or practical implications; 2) identify a serious objection to your position, stating how and why it is opposed to your view; and 3) clearly state your own answer to this objection and why you think your own position is correct, more biblically accurate, and/or more practically significant.

The theological position you take will not affect your grade, but rather the grade will be based on the clarity, thoroughness, and seriousness of thought that went into the presentation of your position, an objection, and your answer to that objection. Students should also seek to incorporate into these essays what they have learned from the lectures, discussions, and the required reading of this course. Scripture should also be engaged exegetically where appropriate.

The Theological Position Essay is **due on February 7 by 4:00pm.**

**GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL THEOLOGICAL POSITION ESSAY:**

- Keep your topic to a single issue. If you say that you want to argue this *and this*, you are most likely doing too much. **Your essay may not be longer than the strict five page limitation.**

- Stick as close as you can to the assigned structure: your clearly and precisely stated position; one concisely stated objection to your position; your answer to that objection.
• Give a topic sentence at the beginning of the essay that clearly lays out your goals strictly stated in terms of this structure, then let it guide you throughout. Ex: “In this essay I will state my position on the important issue of divine (im)passibility; I will state an important objection to my position from the theology of Jürgen Moltmann; and I will then answer this objection.”

• Give a clear, fair, and concise presentation of an objection to your position — 1 or 2 paragraphs in the body of your paper and no place else (this objection can be from a particular theology/theologian, a movement, a commonly held view, a view you used to hold, etc.), then answer this objection only.

• Remember that the TPE is not meant to be a research paper, however, if you chose to draw directly from work that is not your own be sure to give proper citation with footnotes/endnotes and bibliography.

• Samples of Theological Position Essays are posted on CAMS.

• Students should consult the Grading Rubric for Theological Position Essays posted on CAMS.

**Reading Response Essay (Option 2)**

**1,500-word max.** An essay responding to the text chosen from the list above: Helm, Morris, Plantinga, or Stott. Essays will be evaluated on: 1) clarity of thought; 2) demonstrated significant, thoughtful, and critical engagement with the chosen text; and 3) the quality of writing and presentation.

The Reading Response Essay must be a response to the text, rather than merely a summary or explication of the text. Students should seek to analyze the text as a whole, reflecting especially on key themes, arguments, issues, criticisms, and/or points that are of particular personal interest. The following examples of general critical questions may help guide your engagement with the text and the formulation of your response:

- What stands out to me? (Reflecting on interest)
- What surprises me? (Reflecting on distance)
- What puzzles me? (Reflecting on learning opportunities)
- What connections do I make? (Reflecting on integration)
- What implications are there? (Reflecting on application)

The Reading Response Essay is due **February 7 by 4:00pm**.

**Assignment #2:**

For Assignment #2 all students are required to complete a Final Exam.

**3,000-word max.** This take-home final exam will consist of integrative essay questions requiring students to draw on both the lectures and the course reading. You may use class notes and texts as you answer the questions (though each student's exam must clearly reflect their own thoughts).

You may simply number your answers to correspond to the questions on the exam handout (available on CAMS). Answers to the exam questions will be evaluated on: 1) thoroughness, conciseness, and clarity of thought; 2) demonstrated significant, thoughtful understanding of the key terms, concepts, and issues addressed in this class, and the biblical passages relevant to them; and 3) the quality of writing, and presentation.

The Final Exam is due **February 7 by 4:00pm**.
**Important Information Concerning Written Assignments**

- Written assignments should be typed in 12 point, Times New Roman-type font, double spaced, 1 inch margins, and with a cover page that clearly states your campus mailbox number. Students should make consistent use of a style manual of their choice.

- The preferred means of submitting assignments is in hard copy slipped under/deposited in the box in front of my office door (GL108), or sent through my campus mailbox (#223). Please submit assignments as an email attachment only when absolutely necessary, and do not assume the instructor has received an emailed assignment until a verification is sent in response.

  Final written work submitted on February 7 should include a Final Exam, a Completed Reading Form, and a Theological Position Essay or a Reading Response Essay.

- It is the GCTS Registrar’s policy that no written work may be accepted by the professor after 4:00pm on February 7 without an extension granted by the Registrar’s office.

**Participation**

You are expected to be faithful to your calling as a student through preparation, attendance, and involvement in the course. Significant learning will take place in the context of the classroom community. Assigned reading outside of class is meant to supplement the lectures and discussions and will provide a necessary aid for learning the material. You will have an opportunity to account for your attendance and completed reading on the Completed Reading Form available on CAMS.

The Completed Reading Form is **due on February 7 by 4:00pm**.

**Grading**

Students should consult the *Grading Rubrics Form* posted on CAMS. The relative weight of the course requirements will be distributed as follows:

- Assignment #1: TPE or RRE **30%**
- Assignment #2: Final Exam **50%**
- Completed Reading Form **20%**

**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. Website address: [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html).

**Personal Recorders and Computers**

Recording of lectures is normally not permitted. Exceptions are made on an individual basis and is generally granted to students for whom English is a second language. It is always agreed that tape recordings are for personal use only, will not be distributed without prior permission from the instructor, and will be erased at the end of the course.

Students are permitted to use laptop computers during class for note-taking and course related purposes only. Students who cause a distraction to the instructor and to fellow students by abusing this privilege will be asked to withdraw from the course.
Course Schedule

**DAY ONE — Course Introduction; Creation and Providence, I**

Blocher, *In the Beginning*: ch. 1

**DAY TWO — Creation and Providence, II**

Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 2–3

**DAY THREE — Creation and Providence, III**

Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 4–5

**DAY FOUR — Humanity and Sin, I**

Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 6–7

**DAY FIVE — Humanity and Sin, II**

Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 8–9

**DAY SIX — Christology, I**

Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Introduction; Part 1
St. Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*: Complete

**DAY SEVEN — Christology, II**

Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 2

**DAY EIGHT — Christology, III**

Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 3

**DAY NINE — Christology, IV**

Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 4

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to revise the contents of this course syllabus as necessary.
Representative Systematic Theologies

(Texts in **BOLD** are integrated into the Course Outline; * = Introductory.)


Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and others. Four volumes. T. & T. Clark, 1956–75. (Neo-Orthodox)


Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. Hendrickson, 2005. (Evangelical)


Other books listed include:


