TH 605—SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY II
Patrick T. Smith, Course Instructor
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Spring Semester 2011
Mondays, 9:15 AM—12:15 PM
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Phone: 978-646-4120

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description
This course is designed to be a study creation, providence, the image of God, human nature, original and actual sin, and the person and work of Christ.

Course Textbooks
Required:

Course Objectives
The student who successfully completes this course should have the ability:
1. To understand the importance and necessity of doctrine for Christian life and community.
2. To develop the skill of learning from and engaging texts in theological studies.
3. To think critically about theological issues discussed and relate them to other areas of doctrine.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the context of the local church, parachurch ministries and the broader contemporary culture.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Class Attendance/ Participation**—Students are required to attend and participate in all class sessions for the entire meeting times. The instructor will carefully monitor the in-class participation of each student and this will factor into the student’s final grade.

2. **Assigned Readings**—Some of the reading material is covered in class. However, there are elements that will not be brought out in class but are still essential to gaining an understanding of the material and successfully completing the course. Therefore, the reading provides a rich and necessary component of the learning experience.
   
   a) **Textbook Reading**—The students will be responsible for reading the assigned sections of the course textbooks stated below.
   
   b) **Reading Handouts**—Students are also responsible for reading all handouts and essays passed out in class by the instructor. There will be some topics not fully discussed in the textbooks. These essays serve as a necessary supplement to the material discussed in class and in the assigned texts.

   Students are to indicate if they have completed the reading assignments for the course by attaching a statement to the final projects to be turned in for the course.

3. **Scripture Meditation**—a much-neglected spiritual discipline of the Christian life is Scripture meditation. Essentially Scripture meditation involves: (1) a continuous process of remembering and musing over Scripture’s teaching, and (2) a reassessment and a reshaping of one’s life in light of that teaching. [This description of the nature of Scripture meditation comes from Dr. Bruce Ware.]

   In this course, students are encouraged to grow in the spiritual discipline by engaging their minds and hearts in consistent Scripture meditation. Students are to submit a total of two reflection papers over the semester to be turned in at the beginning of the designated class session. The assignment is to read thoughtfully and prayerfully the assigned passages of Scripture once a day, two times a week, for five weeks. At the end of each five-week section, each student will write, in **two (2) pages**, his or her personal reflections on these passages, focusing especially on how his or her life has been challenged or needs to be challenged by these texts of Scripture. This exercise should not be seen as an exegetical paper, though it may obviously include some of that. Instead it should focus on the practical application of the text to one’s personal life and ministry. For example, how has what you’ve read and meditated on impacted your prayer life?
The following passages are assigned for meditation and reflection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creation, Providence, and Humanity</th>
<th>Sin and the Person and Work of Christ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 40 (all)</td>
<td>Romans 3:9-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalm 8 (all)</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:1-14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Isaiah 52:13-53:12</td>
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**Reflection Paper (1) Due:** WEEK 5  
**Reflection Paper (2) Due:** WEEK 10

The students should hand in each of their personal reflections papers by the beginning of class on the due dates listed above. The papers are to be typed, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced, neatly formatted, stapled (no binders or folders), and free of any spelling and grammatical errors. The papers will be graded on their clarity and faithfulness to the assigned topic.

4. **Thielicke Reflections**—This assignment is to reflect on the general thrust of Thielicke’s essay *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. In the write-up students are to indicate some of the insights gained for Christian ministry from reading the booklet. The reflections are to be 1 typed page (strict limit), double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, neatly formatted, stapled and free from any spelling and grammatical errors. The papers will be graded on their clarity, accuracy, rigor and faithfulness in addressing the issue.

5. **Theological Position Essay**—This assignment is a 4-page (*no more than four pages*) essay that will concisely state a point of doctrine covered in this course and develop it in conversation with a concisely stated opposing point of view. This essay should address a doctrine and issue in the Doctrines of Creation/Providence, Theological Anthropology, Doctrine of Sin, or Christology. Some indication that students have interacted with the required course texts should be evident in the papers.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Students are required to: 1) choose a doctrinal issue of particular importance to you, discuss its meaning, biblical support, and 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 view is correct, more biblically accurate, 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. Use of pejorative language or caricatures of

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1 The details of this assignment stated in the syllabus are used by permission from Professor Peter Anders, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
theologians and their respective positions will adversely affect the final grade of the assignment.

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL 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 and the paper will be longer than the strict four-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; and 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.
• Give a clear and concise presentation of an objection to your position — 2 or 3 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.
• The assignment should be typed, double-spaced in 12 point, Times New Roman-type font, at most 1-inch margins, and with a cover page that clearly states your campus mailbox number.

The papers are to be typed, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced, neatly formatted, stapled (no binders or folders), and free of any spelling and grammatical errors. The papers will be graded on their clarity and faithfulness to the assigned topic.

6. Take Home Final Exam—Each student will be responsible for a final exam. It will be either a written exam or a multiple-choice exam to be taken on-line.

Course Grading

Discipline is an important part of all aspects of life whether spiritual, physical, or mental. The course is designed in such a way that faithfulness and diligence on your part will be rewarded. The student’s grade will be determined as follows:

- Required Readings/Participation
- Thielicke Reflection Assignment
- Scripture Meditation Papers (2)
- Theological Position Essay
- Final Exam

10% 10% 20% 30% 30%
The following letter grades and their achievement equivalents are used by the instructor to reflect a student’s performance in the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Work of exceptional quality</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>100-96</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Work of commendable quality</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>89-86</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Work of acceptable but minimal quality</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>79-76</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Substandard and barely passing work</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>69-66</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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**Grading Rubric:** After all the requirements of the course have been completed, the instructor will use the following rubric for the assignment of grades, based on the overall performance of the class. The grades assigned will represent the instructor’s interpretation of the following standard:

A = Outstanding mastery of the subject: excellence is evident in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; unusual ability to retain, analyze and synthesize the material; with a positive attitude making productive contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

B = Superior mastery of the subject: sincere effort in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; ability to master the essential aspects of the material; with a mostly consistent attitude in making contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

C = Basic mastery of the subject: inconsistent effort in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; engagement with the material but difficulty in grasping some of its aspects; with occasional contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

D = Inadequate mastery of the subject.

F = Failure: course must be repeated.

**Warning on Plagiarism:** Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found on the Indiana University website [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagarism.html). This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare for your assignments. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the
student will receive the consequences of this act according to the process established by the seminary.

**Intellectual Property Rights:** To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content, students are asked to refrain from audio and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings.

**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.

### Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>January 31, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creation &amp; Providence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>February 7, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creation &amp; Providence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>February 14, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creation &amp; Providence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Week #1</strong></td>
<td><strong>February 21-25, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read Ahead or Catch-Up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>February 28, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theological Anthropology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>March 7, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theological Anthropology</strong></td>
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**Background Reading:**
- Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 17-19
- Carson, *How Long O’ Lord?*, Part 1

**Background Reading:**
- Erickson, *Christian Theology*, ch. 20

**Background Reading:**
- Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 22-24
- Begin reading Plantinga’s *Not the Way...*

**DUE:** *Scripture Meditation Paper (1)*
| Week 6  | March 14, 2010 | Theological Anthropology | **Background Reading:**  
• Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 28-30  
• Continue reading Plantinga’s *Not the Way*… |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Week #2</strong></td>
<td><strong>March 21-25, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read Ahead:</strong> (Try to complete or begin St. Athanasius’ <em>On the Incarnation</em>)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Week 7  | March 28, 2011 | Theological Anthropology | **Background Reading:**  
• Erickson, *Christian Theology*, ch. 31  
• Completed reading of Plantinga’s *Not the Way*…  
• Martin L. King, Jr. “Letter from a B’ham City Jail” (CAMS) |
| Week 8  | April 4, 2011 | Issues in Christology | **Background Reading:**  
• Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 32-34  
**DUE:** *Theological Position Essay* |
| Week 9  | April 11, 2011 | Issues in Christology | **Background Reading:**  
• Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 35-37 |
| Week 10 | April 18, 2011 | Issues in Christology | **Background Reading:**  
• Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chs. 38-40  
• Completed Thielicke’s *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*  
**DUE:** *Scripture Meditation Paper (2) & Thielicke Reflections Assignment* |
| Final Exam | April 25, 2011 |  | **DUE:** *Final Exam* |

**For Further Study**

**Highly Recommended:**


**Representative Systematic Theologies (\* = 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)*


Grenz, Stanley J. *A Theology for the Community of God.* Broadman/Holman, 1994. (Neo-Evangelical)*


