Office Hours:  T 2:00–5:30; TH 5:00–6:30; Discussion Session: TH 9:40–10:40

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 and role of systematic theology in your Christian life and ministry.

• Gained a thorough understanding of the essential theological content of Christology, the doctrine of creation, theological anthropology, and the doctrine of sin; 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 Christian life, worship, and ministry.

• Become especially more familiar with the identity and centrality of the person of Jesus Christ as witnessed to both in Holy Scripture and by the Christian tradition; and also with the work of Jesus Christ as emphasized in His earthly life and ministry, and in His work of atonement and intercession.

• 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:


(Drawing from his own experiences as a German prisoner of war during WWII, this Protestant liberal theologian discusses who Jesus Christ is for a contemporary world that has witnessed so much suffering and conflict, and what should be the Christian’s proper response to a God who has suffered in solidarity with us.)


(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.)
(Considered by many to be Stott’s greatest work, this is a classic articulation of the person and work of Christ in the doctrine of the atonement, and with a focus on why and how the finished work of Christ on the cross is central to the Christian faith.)

(Drawing extensively on the history of Christian thought to address current concerns, this is an innovative contemporary study of the centrality of Jesus Christ for all Christian thought and life. Originally delivered as Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 2007.)

(As part of his important critical analysis of Christianity’s relationship to modern and postmodern thought and culture, Wells focuses here on Christology in his call for the Church to once again present a biblical view of Jesus Christ to the contemporary world.)

(Note: Students who did not read it for TH504 may choose to substitute: Fairbairn, Donald. *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers*. IVP, 2009.)

Additional supplemental readings are posted on CAMS.

**Optional Helpful Texts**


**Course Requirements**

**Reading Response Essay**

*2,000-word max (6–7 pages).* This as an essay responding to the whole of the course required reading. Please note that 2–3 pages of the essay must discuss the student’s choice of text from the list above. The Reading Response Essay will be evaluated on: 1) thoroughness, conciseness, and clarity of thought; 2) demonstrated significant, thoughtful, critical engagement with the reading; and 3) the quality of writing and presentation. The Reading Response Essay is due May 7 by 4:00pm.

**NOTE:** The Reading Response Essay must be a response to the course required reading, rather than merely a summary or explication of the reading. Students should seek to analyze the reading 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)

**Essay Exam (Take-Home)**

*3,000-word max (10 pages).* This take-home essay 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 Essay Exam is due May 7 by 4:00pm.

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 and the optional discussion session. 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 class attendance and completed reading on the Completed Reading Form available on CAMS. The Completed Reading Form is due May 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 through campus mail (Box #223), or slipped under/deposited in the box in front of my office door (GL108). 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 May 7 should include an Essay Exam, Reading Response Essay, and Completed Reading Form.

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

Grading

The relative weight of the course requirements will be distributed as follows:

• Essay Exam 50%
• Reading Response Essay 35%
• Completed Reading Form 15%

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.

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 Lecture Topics and Reading

1. **Course Introduction; Introduction to Christology**
   - Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Introduction; Part 1

2. **The Biblical Witness to the Identity of Jesus Christ**
   - Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Introduction; Part 1

3. **The Chalcedonian Tradition**
   - Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 2

4. **The Life of Jesus Christ: Humiliation and Exaltation**
   - Erickson, *Christian Theology*: ch. 36 OR Horton, *The Christian Faith*: ch. 16
   - Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 3
   - (READING WEEK — St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*: complete)

5. **The Work of Jesus Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King**
   - Kärkkäinen, *Christology*: Part 4

6. **The Identity of the Creator**
   - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: ch. 1

7. **The Act of Creation**
   - Erickson, *Christian Theology*: ch. 18 OR Horton, *The Christian Faith*: ch. 10
   - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 2–3

8. **Humanity as Created**
   - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: ch. 4
   - (READING WEEK — St. Basil the Great, *On the Human Condition*: complete)

9. **Humanity as the Image of God**
   - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: ch. 5

10. **Humanity as Fallen**
    - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: chs. 6–8

11. **Providence and Suffering**
    - Blocher, *In the Beginning*: ch. 9
    - Plantinga, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be*: complete

12. **Course Review**
    - Choice of Text: complete

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

2/21, 23; 3/27, 29 — Reading Weeks (see reading assignments above)
5/7 — Last day to submit written work (4/27 for May graduates)

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