Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Hamilton
WM/CH/TH 901: Research and Methods Seminar
Syllabus: Fall 2013
Friday 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Dr. Gordon L. Isaac
142 Academic Center
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Hamilton Campus
Office Hours: Tuesday 9am-12pm
           Friday 9am-12pm
           Or by Appointment
(978) 646-4099 e-mail gisaac@gcts.edu

Course Description

The Master of Theology Research Seminar is designed to instruct students in the area of research skills applying to the area of Christian Thought that includes such disciplines as church history, the history of doctrine, systematic and philosophical theology and missions. The course will consist of lectures, reading, writing, discussion and projects that will further students in their scholarly research and writing. CH/TH 901 is for Th.M. students and invited M.Div. students.

Course Relation to the Curriculum

The Master of Theology Research Seminar is required for the Master of Theology degree. The course serves as the foundational introductory course for all Master of Theology students.

Course Objective

As a result of this course students should: (1) Have working knowledge of databases and bibliographies in the area of Church History and Theology, (2) Have a developing sense of the most appropriate method for research in one’s chosen field. (3) Have exercised a close reading of high level theological texts with a discerning eye directed to interpretive (hermeneutical analysis) skills and the ability to place the material in the broader constellation of intellectual thought forms. (4) Have completed a few short writing assignments designed to stimulate and hone the student’s writing ability (Gordon-Conwell Mission Statement Articles 2, 3, 4, & 5).

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 Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source.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.

A Brief Note on Intellectual Property Rights

No audio or video recordings are allowed. Furthermore no publication (audio, video, written) or live transmission of classroom proceedings will be permitted. Any requests for such privileges must be made in writing and must receive written approval from the instructor.

A Brief Note Regarding Internet Usage

Please do not access the internet (email, apps, websites, etc.) for non-class activities during class-time. This can be extremely distracting to all parties and quite frankly it is unbecoming to do so. Exceptions may be made on occasion.

Regarding Extension Requests

No extensions will be granted on the assignments unless there is a “last-minute” event that was unavoidable and substantial (as determined by me). An extension request may not be granted, even in the event of an “unavoidable, substantial, last – minute circumstance,” if an appropriate amount of progress (determined by me) on the assignment has not been made prior to the request of the extension.

Course Readings

Required reading:


Recommended:


**Course Requirements and Grading**

1. **Attend** lectures.
2. **Read** required texts.
3. **Introduce and Lead** discussion of one day’s reading. Assignments to be arranged.
4. **Submit** three response papers. The response papers will be at least 5 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point Times or New Times Roman; no separate page for title or bibliography). These response papers will be discussed in
5. **Craft** one book review of a current topic of interest for evangelicalism (5 pages) and share substance of review in class.

6. Grading standards as outlined in the catalogue obtain. The percentages are as follows, 15% class participation, 10% book review and 75% response papers.

**Course Outline  (Subject to Change)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course and to the Th.M. program.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“Hermeneutical Theology,” “The Word of the Cross”</td>
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<td>“Justification as the Basis and Boundary of Theology”</td>
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<td>“Justification and Ontology”</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><em>Theology The Lutheran Way</em> pgs. 1-80</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>On Being a Theologian of the Cross</em> (entire)</td>
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<td><em>Theology The Lutheran Way</em> pgs. 125-170.</td>
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<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td><em>Theology the Lutheran Way</em> pgs. 171-209.</td>
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<td>“Poetical Theology,” “Poetical Doctrine of the Trinity”</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Book Reviews and further discussion</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>No Class Dr. Isaac out of town</td>
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<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Living By Faith: Justification and Sanctification (entire)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><em>Response in Freedom</em> pgs. 1-89</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td><em>Response in Freedom</em> pgs. 90-205</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td><em>Response in Freedom</em> pgs. 206 - 258</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
<td><em>That All May Believe</em> (entire)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Final comments and continued integration</td>
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