TH607 Systematic Theology III
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Syllabus
Fall 2014

Course description

TH607 is the capstone of the systematic theology classes at Gordon-Conwell. As a result, I am very intentional about making it an integrative experience. The following doctrines are explicitly covered: Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, salvation, church and sacraments, eschatology and final states. A very important objective of this class is to find the coherence between these doctrines and the rest of systematic theology, but also their significance for Christian life.

The doctrine of the person and work of the Holy Spirit grounds the rest of the discussion of soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. A specifically Trinitarian Pneumatology is determinative for one’s understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a Trinitarian Christology leads to overcoming some of the oppositions between ‘merely’ forensic and participationist understandings of salvation (justification and sanctification). Moving into the doctrine of the church, a robustly Trinitarian theology will be shown to mediate between highly individualistic and highly institutionalized ecclesiologies.

The format of the class includes lectures, but also class-wide debates, as well as small-group discussion and processing. The student should bring her or his personal Bible. Although these activities are not graded, all students are required to participate in them.

Learning outcomes

• To understand the systematic coherence of pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.
• To understand the differences between major Christian confessions on the respective topics.

1 This version is still provisional. A final and definitive version will be provided on the first day of class. Potential changes will not affect the required reading and the evaluation.
• To understand what is at stake in various soteriologies, including their practical implications for the life of the church.
• To gain a better understanding of the distinctive role played by the Holy Spirit in salvation and the life of the church.
• To gain a sense for the importance and reality of the church and its implications for the life of the congregation.
• To understand various ecclesiological assumptions made by the variety of worship styles and liturgical traditions.
• To gain an appreciation for the importance of catechetical formation for the life of the church.
• To understand the implications of each of these topics for the following areas: evangelism, worship, missions, discipleship etc.

Course outline

1. The person of the Holy Spirit
   a. Erickson, 771-788
   b. McGrath 227-234
   c. McFarlane

2. The work of the Holy Spirit
   a. Erickson, 788-825
   b. Turner

3. Calvinism v. Arminianism
   a. Erickson 841-860
   b. McGrath 365-371
   c. Olson

4. Justification
   a. Erickson 825-841; 860-949
   b. McGrath 348-365
   c. McCormack

5. Union with Christ
   a. Horton, excerpt from Covenant and Salvation
   b. J. Todd Billings, excerpt.
   c. Zizioulas, excerpt.

6. [Midterm Oct 20th] The being of the church
   a. Erickson 949-971
   b. McGrath 375-390
   c. Karkkainnen,
7. **The marks of the church**  
   a. McGrath 390-400  
   b. Erickson 971-989

8. **Sacraments: Baptism**  
   a. Erickson 1016-1033  
   b. McGrath 400-414; 421-424  
   c. Horton, *People and Place* (excerpt)

9. **Sacraments: The Eucharist**  
   a. Erickson 1033-1055  
   b. McGrath 414-420  
   c. Horton, *People and Place* (excerpt)

10. **Church Governance**  
    a. Erickson 986-1016

11. **Eschatology and final states**  
    a. Erickson 1055-1124  
    b. McGrath 424-465

12. **Final Exam Dec 8**

**Evaluation**

- **50% Final exam.** The final will be a multiple-choice/short answer.
- **50% Personal statement of faith.** This is a reflective exercise, covering all three systematic theology classes, in which the student integrates all the loci into a coherent statement of faith. While biblical references are required, it is preferable to avoid proof-texting and refer instead to wider biblical theology. Length: minimal 10-12 pages, at 1 ½ spacing (feel free to go as long as you need: this exercise is primarily for your benefit). My grading criteria include:  
  o Comprehensiveness: The full extent of systematic theology should be covered.  
  o Synthetic ability: clear perception of connections between various doctrines.  
  o Clarity: I value both conceptual as well as literary clarity.  
  o Foundation: The ability to demonstrate the biblical bases for particular theological positions.

**Required Reading**

**Books**

Articles and Excerpts (available through CAMS)

• Michael S. Horton, *People and Place* (WJK, 2008, excerpt)
• Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation* (excerpt)
• Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (IVP, 2006, excerpt)
• Miroslav Volf, *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (excerpt)
• John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (excerpt)
• Bruce McCormack, ‘Incarnation and Atonement in the Reformed Tradition’
• J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (excerpt).

Additional bibliography


