Instructor: Peter D. Anders
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Office / Hours: GL108 / Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 9:00–10:30; and after class.

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:

• Cultivated the life of the mind in your own relationship with God through an increasing understanding of the nature, role and content of theology for 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.

• Sharpened your understanding of the key issues and viewpoints in the doctrines of creation, providence and humanity; and defined, biblically supported, and confidently articulated your own theological positions.

• 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


A Systematic Theology Text of the Student’s own choosing (see sample list below).

Additional supplemental reading is posted on CAMS.
Optional Helpful Texts


Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. How to Read a Book. Rev. ed. Touchstone, 1972. (Described as a classic guide to intelligent reading, this book has proven very helpful for developing better reading skills.)

Contours of Christian Theology — The following three volumes from this series published by InterVarsity Press provide thoughtful, thorough and readable supplemental studies to doctrines covered in this course:

MacLeod, Donald. The Person of Christ. IVP, 1998.


Moltmann, Jürgen. Jesus Christ for Today’s World. Fortress, 1994. (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.)

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 words such as redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation.)

Muller, Richard. Dictionary of Latin & Greek Theological Terms. Baker Books, 1985. (A helpful reference that makes accessible the Greek and Latin terms and concepts found in works of dogmatics drawing from our rich heritage in Protestant Scholastic theology.)

Stevenson, Leslie and David Haberman. Ten Theories of Human Nature. Fourth ed. Oxford University Press, 2004. (An introductory comparative analysis of critical thought about human nature that discusses the essence of theories from thinkers and traditions as varied as Hinduism, the Bible, Plato, Marx, Darwinism, and Freud.)

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.)

Course Requirements

Required for the course are three short written assignments, a final exam, and a completed reading form.

Responses to the Required Reading

For the first two writing assignments, students may choose to write either a 1000-word Book Review or a less formal 4–5 page Reading Response Essay on any two of the required course texts (excluding the chosen systematic theology). Students may write two Book Reviews or two Reading Response Essays, or one of each. Please clearly indicate on the cover page which assignment and text you chose. These assignment are due at the last class meeting.

These two written assignments 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.

NOTE: Students choosing to write the Book Review will find many good examples in the theological journals located online and in the Goddard Library.

NOTE: Students choosing to write a Reading Response Essay must be sure that it is 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)

**Theological Position Essay**

The third written assignment will be a 5 page (no more than five 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 Doctrine of Creation/Providence, Theological Anthropology, Doctrine of Sin, or Christology. This assignment is due at the last class meeting.

**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. An example of a Theological Position Essay is posted on CAMS.

**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 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 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.
Additional Information Concerning Written Assignments

- Written assignments should be typed in 11-12 point, Times New Roman-type font, approximate double spacing (not more), at most 1 inch margins, and with a cover page that clearly states your campus mailbox number.

- The Book Review/Reading Response Essay and the Theological Position Essay due at the last class meeting may be submitted earlier in the term in order to leave time for grading (at least one week) and one revision/resubmission to count as the final grade for those assignments. Assignments submitted after November 21 cannot be revised and resubmitted.

- The preferred means of submitting assignments is in hard copy at the beginning of class, in my campus mailbox (#223), or slipped under 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.

- Late assignments will normally not be accepted. Exceptions will be subject to a grade reduction penalty at the discretion of the instructor.

Final Exam

There will be an in class Final Exam scheduled during final exam week. The exam will consist of both objective and short answer/essay questions covering the course lectures and required texts (the essay questions and a study list of terms will be distributed in advance). You are encouraged to discuss the essay questions and the study list with other students in the class before the exam date. You will be given three hours to complete the exam. Bluebooks will be supplied for the essay portion of the exam.

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. Students will be able to account for their attendance and completed reading on a form to be submitted at the last class meeting.

Grading

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

- Book Reviews/Reading Response Essays 30% (15% each)
- Theological Position Essay 25%
- Final Exam 35%
- Participation 10%

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. In order to save paper, we have provided you with the 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.

Recommended Links (additional links may also be found at these sites)

Catholic Encyclopedia: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/
Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics: http://www.reformed.org/
Christian Classics Ethereal Library: http://www.ccel.org
The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/
MIT’s Internet Classics Archive: http://classics.mit.edu/
Modern Reformation: www.modernreformation.org
The Perseus Digital Library: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/
http://www.religion-online.org

Course Schedule and Lecture Topics

WEEK ONE (9/12) — Course Introduction;
   The Identity of the Creator

Erickson, Christian Theology: ch. 17; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 100–125

WEEK TWO (9/19) — The Act of Creation

Erickson, Christian Theology: ch. 18; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 126–164
Blocher, In the Beginning: chs. 1–3

WEEK THREE (9/26) — Creation and Providence

Erickson, Christian Theology: chs. 19–21; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 165–180
Helm, The Providence of God: Complete

WEEK FOUR (10/3) — Theological Anthropology

Erickson, Christian Theology: chs. 22–26; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 181–210
Blocher, In the Beginning: chs. 4–5
WEEK FIVE (10/10) — Creation, Humanity, and Sin

Erickson, Christian Theology: chs. 27–29; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 211–261
Blocher, In the Beginning: chs. 6–9

WEEK SIX (10/24) — Satan, Sin, and Reconciliation

Erickson, Christian Theology: chs. 30–31; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 262–304
Blocher, In the Beginning: Complete
Plantinga, Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: Complete

WEEK SEVEN (10/31) — The Person of Jesus Christ: The Witness of Holy Scripture

Erickson, Christian Theology: chs. 32–34; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 305–320
St. Athanasius. On the Incarnation: Complete

WEEK EIGHT (11/7) — The Person of Jesus Christ: The Witness of Tradition

Erickson, Christian Theology: ch. 35; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 321–330

WEEK NINE (11/21) — The Life of Jesus Christ

Erickson, Christian Theology: ch. 36; Berkoff, Systematic Theology: pp. 331–355

Last day to submit an assignment in time for revision/resubmission

WEEK TEN (12/5) — The Work of Jesus Christ

Kärkkäinen, Christology: Complete

Book Reviews/Reading Responses Due

Theological Position Essay Due

Completed Reading Form Due

IMPORTANT DATES:

10/17 — READING WEEK

11/14 — READING WEEK

11/28 — NO CLASS, HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

12/10–12 — FINAL EXAMS

12/16 — LAST DAY TO SUBMIT WRITTEN WORK
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)*


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


