COURSE SYLLABUS

TH 501—Theology Survey I
Patrick T. Smith, Course Instructor
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Fall 2011
October 31-November 4, 2011
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Email: ptsmith@gcts.edu

Course Description

This course is a study of theological method, revelation, inspiration, and canon of Scripture; existence and attributes of God; Trinity; creation and providence; human nature; original and actual sin.

Required Course Textbooks


Learning Outcomes

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 effectively read, understand, learn from and engage texts in theological studies.
3. To appreciate afresh the art of scripture meditation on key biblical passages that pertain to the doctrines of revelation; inspiration; the person, work, and majesty of God; human nature and the human condition.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the local church, local ministries, and in broader contemporary contexts.
Course Requirements

1. **Class Attendance/ Participation**—Students are required to attend and participate in all class sessions for the entire meeting times. This is imperative for a class of this format. 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 by the assigned dates stated below.
   
   b. **Reading Handouts**—students are also responsible for reading all handouts, essays, and articles reserved by the instructor.

   **NOTE:** Students are to indicate if they have completed the reading assignments for the course by attaching a statement to the final exam for the course. **Due on Monday, December 5, 2011.**

3. **Book Review**—Each student is to complete a book review of Dennis Hollinger’s *Head, Heart, & Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion and Action*. The review is to be 3-4 pages in total length (strictly enforced). In the paper provide a quick overview of the text. Then pick one issue that was particularly interesting or significant and interact with it. Conclude by highlighting what you understood to be the text’s strengths and its importance for the Christian life and ministry.

   The papers are to be typed, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced, neatly formatted, and free of any spelling and grammatical errors. The papers will be graded on their clarity and faithfulness to the assigned topic. This assignment is due on **Monday, October 31, 2011.**

4. **Final Exam**—each student enrolled in the course for credit is to take a final comprehensive examination over the material covered in the course. It will be a take home exam with integrative discussion questions. Each student is to write the exam using whatever resources provided by the course readings, lecture notes, class discussions, or personal resources. Be sure to properly cite any sources used, appealed to, or quoted directly in your written material. You will need to read the Oden text in preparation for your final exam as one of the questions is directly related to this material. The exam will be passed out during the last class session. The final exam along with a note indicating how much of the course reading was completed is due to the course instructor by **Monday, December 5, 2011.**
Course Grading

The student’s grade will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Report</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Grade** | **Achievement** | **Quality Points**
--- | --- | ---
A | 100-96 | Work of exceptional quality | 4.00
A- | 95-93 | 3.70
B+ | 92-90 | 3.30
B | 89-86 | Work of commendable quality | 3.00
B- | 85-83 | 2.70
C+ | 82-80 | 2.30
C | 79-76 | Work of acceptable but minimal quality | 2.00
C- | 75-73 | 1.70
D+ | 72-70 | 1.30
D | 69-66 | Substandard and barely passing work | 1.00
D- | 65-63 | 0.70
F | 62-below | Failure | 0.00

**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.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, October 31</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Erickson—Chapters 1-2, 4-5; Bediako—Chapters 1, 4, 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1:</td>
<td>Introduction to Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of Revelation/ Doctrine of Scripture (Part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, November 1</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Erickson—Chapters 6-11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 3:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of Scripture (Part 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 4:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of God (Part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, November 2</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Erickson—Chapters 12-17</th>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of God (Part 2)</td>
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<td>Session 6:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of Creation and Divine Providence</td>
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<th>Thursday, November 3</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Erickson—Chapters 18-20</th>
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<tr>
<td>Session 7:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of Humanity (Part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(The Doctrine of Creation and Divine Providence—continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 8:</td>
<td>The Doctrine of Humanity (Part 2)</td>
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Friday, November 4  

**Background Reading:** Erickson—Chapters 21-23

Session 9:  
The Doctrine of Sin (Part 1)

Session 10:  
The Doctrine of Sin (Part 2)

**NOTE:** Final Exam questions will be passed out at the end of the last class session

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**Assignments Due:**

Book Review of Hollinger, *Choosing the Good* Due: **Monday, October 31, 2011**

Oden, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind*, **Completed Reading** by **December 5, 2011**

Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa*, **Completed Reading** of selected chapters listed under course schedule by **December 5, 2011**

**Final Exam due on Monday, December 5, 2011**

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**SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ADDITIONAL READING**

**Prolegomena/ Theological Method**


Concerning Theology Proper:


Concerning Theological Anthropology and Sin:


Representative Systematic Theologies


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)*

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1 (* = Introductory. I am indebted to Professor Peter Anders for the categorization scheme.)


