Syllabus: CH/TH614

**Semlink**

at Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary

CH/TH614: Theology of Jonathan Edwards with Dr. John Gerstner

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[CH_TH614_CourseReqs.pdf]

Snapshot of Course Requirements

CH502 requires timely completion of the following *five* course requirements:

1. Required Reading
2. Completion of Study Guide Questions - 50% of the grade
3. Final Exam - 50% of the grade
4. Course Checkout/Reading Report (after you have finished all course requirements above)
5. Interactivity (required to pass the course)

Course Description

This course examines the theology of Jonathan Edwards in detail. Taking a topical approach, the course covers Edwards’s teachings regarding all the major points of Systematic Theology with particular emphasis on Edwards’s unique theological contributions.

Course Objectives

1. To familiarize the student with the life and ministry of Jonathan Edwards.
2. To acquaint the student with some of the primary debates among historians regarding the teachings of Edwards.
3. To explore with the student the details of Edwards’s teachings on the major points of Systematic Theology.
4. To lead the student to an appreciation of Edwards’s unique contribution to the Church of Jesus Christ.
5. To bring the student to see and embrace the beauty and glory of the God whom Edwards loved.

Course Texts

Required Texts:


Recommended Text:
Locke, John. The Reasonableness of Christianity, and A Discourse of Miracles (various versions)

Course Requirements

Students who are taking the course for credit will be asked to listen to all the audio lecture material, complete reading assignments from 2 texts, and complete the study questions in both the Programmed Lesson Plan (located in Resources) and at the end of each Lecture Outline (ITS Study Materials), and complete interactivity requirements.

1. **Lectures and Reading:** In addition to listening carefully to all of the 24 lectures by Dr. John H. Gerstner, the student is required to read all of Marsden and the sections of *Works* assigned in the Programmed Lesson Plan (located in Resources) lecture by lecture.

2. **Study Questions:** Complete the study questions in the Programmed Lesson Plan (located in Resources) and at the end of each Lecture Outline (see the Study/Learning Guide located in the ITS Study Materials). Please type your answers and submit them to the Semlink office by emailing them as an attachment to semlink@gcts.edu.

3. **Final Exam:** Take the final exam. It will be based on the study questions found in the Programmed Lesson Plans and at the end of each Lecture Outline.

   **Electronic Format:** Your exam may be taken online in Sakai. Use of a proctor is required. To request an exam, you must notify the Semlink office to provide your proctor's email address. An exam login and password will be sent directly to your proctor. Please go to the Modules menu (left) under Starting Point to request an exam.

   Click "Tests & Quizzes" to access your midterm or final exam (your proctor must be present and must have received a username/password from the Semlink office).

Taking an Exam

There are two ways you may take the exam for this course:

1. **Electronically** (preferred method): To take the exam electronically, click "Tests & Quizzes" on the left menu (under Project Tools).
   - Select the exam you plan to take. You must provide proctor information (including your proctor's email address) to the Semlink office prior to taking your exam. You cannot login to and/or take an exam without a proctor present.
   - Before taking your exam, your proctor will review important information with you and will then log you into the exam when you are ready to begin. Your proctor must remain present throughout the duration of the exam. You may use your own computer (e.g. a laptop) or a computer provided by your proctor.
   - Ensure you have a reliable internet connection.
   - This format allows you to type your essay responses directly into Sakai.

2. **Paper-based Exam:** To take your exam by paper, click "Tests & Quizzes" on the left menu (under Project Tools). Select the exam you plan to take (it will include "paper exam" in the title).
   - The exam will be available in PDF format. You will need to provide proctor information in order to access your exam (including your proctor's email address).
   - Your proctor will need to print your exam, and preferably have access to a scanner to submit your exam.
   - When you have completed your exam, your proctor may either 1) scan and upload your exam to Sakai, 2) email a scanned copy to the Semlink office; 3) mail to the address provided.
   - This format requires you handwrite your responses on notebook or blank white paper.

If you plan to take an exam in one of the GCTS libraries, you do not need to request your exam through the Semlink office. You may take the exam any time provided the library is open and able to accommodate your request. Library computers can be used to take the exam, but are limited and not always available at all times of day. Use of your own laptop computer is highly recommend. Check with the library also for special summer and holiday hours, or other changes to their schedule that may affect your ability to take your exam. Boston/CUME, Charlotte, and Jacksonville students may need to contact the library to set up a time to take an exam.

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Submitting Assignments

Assignments for your Semlink course(s) can be submitted electronically through the Drop Box tool in Sakai. On the left menu, under "Project Tools," select "Drop Box." You will click "Add" then "Upload Files." Some guidelines for this process:

- Paper submissions should be in either .doc, .docx or .pdf format.
- Submitting your work through drop box is considered a formal (and final) submission. Nothing further will be needed on your part.
- All submissions are time/date stamped and will be retrieved by the Semlink office and routed to your professor for grading.
- Assignments may be returned to you electronically, in most cases through your Sakai drop box or via email. If your assignment was graded by hand, it will be scanned and delivered to you as a PDF file.
- Remember to use a full heading, including your name, professor, course, and date.

Please let the Semlink office know if you have any further questions about electronic submission. semlink@gordonconwell.edu or 978-646-4144.

Interactivity

As a member of the Association of Theological Schools, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary recognizes the value of interactivity in distance learning and complies with the standards for accreditation set by ATS which include interactivity as a compulsory component of any distance learning program that wishes to continue granting credit for its courses. The purpose of Semlink interactivity is to enhance learning by providing an online environment for students to engage meaningfully and substantively with professors, teaching fellows, and other students in order to achieve an enriching and academically challenging distance learning experience.

There are two interactivity requirements for this course:

1. **An online discussion forum**: converse with other students and with instructors on the Semlink forum. You are required to participate four (4) times in the discussions relating to your area of study (Theology). To ensure successful completion of this requirement, please complete your participation in the discussion forums at least one week prior to your course due date. This will allow sufficient time for you to resubmit any responses if necessary.

2. **Email-based conversation** with your Semlink teaching fellow. You are required to email a total of three (3) times, including your original response to the conversation starter. Please allow a minimum of one month to complete this conversation to allow time for the teaching fellow to respond. Allow five business days for a response to each of your submissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semlink Forum</th>
<th>Conversation Starter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Semlink Forum is an online interactive learning environment that allows students to post responses to threaded discussions on topics pertaining to their course. Forum topics are developed by professors and Semlink Teaching Fellows. The forum is moderated by the Teaching Fellow. <strong>You are required to post four (4) responses to discussions relating to your area of study.</strong> Theology is the required forum for this course (See link under Integration Questions). You may also submit an integration question suggestion for your course to your Semlink teaching fellow. When you post has been approved, it will be marked accordingly by the Teaching Fellow.</td>
<td>The Semlink teaching fellow will facilitate a one-on-one email-based conversation with you designed to tie together some of the overarching themes raised in the course. <strong>You are required to email with the teaching fellow a total of three (3) times,</strong> including your original response to the conversation starter. Please allow a minimum of one month to complete this conversation to allow time for the teaching fellow to respond. Also, please allow five business days for a response to each of your submissions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Credit for Semlink interactivity is by completion. While you will not be assigned a letter grade for your Semlink interactivity, completion of all course interactivity is required to receive credit for your course. If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements by the due date, you will fail your course.

Your submissions will be evaluated as complete or incomplete based on quality of thought and clarity of expression. In the event of an unacceptable response, you will be informed and given the opportunity to expand or re-submit your thoughts, provided that your final submissions are made before the course due date.

**General Guidelines for Submissions**

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration as you draft your interactivity responses:

- Use proper grammar and punctuation are required (no webspeak).
- Your response should demonstrate original thought and interaction with the issues being addressed, including a coherent flow of thought or argument.
- Read the question(s) carefully, and answer the questions fully and specifically.
- If you reference a source (e.g. book, article), please include a full bibliographic reference.

If the interactivity requirement is not completed by your due date for the course, the final assignment will be held and will not be submitted to the professor for grading until the interactivity requirement is complete. Therefore, there will be no final grade given for the course until the interactivity requirement is fulfilled. If a student has not completed all interactivity requirements within ONE MONTH after the end date of the course, the student will automatically fail the course with no exceptions.

**Conversation Starter Guidelines**

Typically, responses to the conversation starters should range between three hundred (300) and five hundred (500) words. You will not automatically fail if you only write 299; you will not automatically pass if you write 300. These are general guidelines and ought to be treated as such.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration as you draft your email correspondence(s):

- In regard to content, above all else the student should answer the question. Many students do not receive credit simply because they do not answer the question. The response should also be thoughtful and engaged.
- After you read the question, take some time to ponder an answer. You do not have to do extensive research, but you should think about the question and the issues raised for a while. After you have had time to think and perhaps even crafted a rough draft, then you should sit down to begin the conversation.
- Please make sure you take the time to edit your response for grammatical and spelling errors. There are three essential qualities of a good conversation starter: communication, clarity, and critical reflection. If any of these are missing, then it will be much more challenging to receive credit.

**Semlink Forum Guidelines**

These conversations are focused on the area of theological education associated with the course you are taking. For example, students in *Introduction to Christian Apologetics* will participate in Integration Discussions focused on the broader area of applied theology in ministry in general. Discussions include reference to current events, culture and literature, case studies and discussions based on Scripture. Discussions will take place primarily among students, but the forums are moderated by the Semlink Teaching Fellows, and hopefully an occasional professor will wander in and put on the gloves.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration as you draft your forums post(s):

- Most questions require that you interact with other students' posts, so be sure to give clear indication that you have read and are responding to others (e.g. Include in your post something like, "Steve Smith raises an interesting point when you states...").
- You may want to review other posts that have already been approved (they will be in red) to gain a sense of what is expected.
- Generally, Teaching Fellows look for integration posts to be right around fifteen lines. Students will not fail if you only do fourteen, but you will not automatically pass if you write fifteen.
- Students often err on the side of brevity when they answer the questions without attempting to explain why they have arrived at their conclusions. Making bold assertions probably will not warrant credit; making assertions that are supported by evidence or argumentation will. Another mistake involves students who simply agree with previous posts.
- Creditable posts will also discuss why previous posts are helpful or otherwise. Essentially, we are looking for a discussion of the matters at hand - argue with somebody, agree with somebody (but explain why), post your own unique thoughts - just make a post that clearly states your position and explains your thought process.
- The best posts will answer the initial question, respond to previous posts, and maybe even redirect the discussion by asking a related question.
- Remember, the purpose of all this is dialog. If you do not say very much, conversation becomes very difficult.
The Integration Questions are part of your course requirements. You must participate in a significant way a minimum of four (4) times in the broader area of study of your Semlink class (Church History, Theology, Ministry of the Church, Applied Theology in Ministry, Old Testament, or New Testament Studies).

It is our goal to make the interactivity components engaging and stimulating. If there is a topic you are interested in exploring with fellow students and faculty, please email your suggestion to your Teaching Fellow. If your question is selected for use, it may fulfill one of your four required interactions in the discussion forums.

To begin your interactivity (and for more details about this requirement), see the links in the Resources section under "Important Course Links."

Grading

Your final grade for the course will be computed on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Questions</th>
<th>50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Completion Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The seminary has adopted an official numerical equivalence for the letter grades that students are assigned. Published annually, these are as follows: A+=4.0; A=4.0; A-=3.7; B+=3.3; B=3.0; B-=2.7; C+=2.3; C=2.0; C-=1A” means "conspicuous excellence"; “B” means "exceeding the minimum"; “C” means "satisfactory work"; “D” means "passing but unsatisfactory"; and “F” means "course has been failed."

Based on the above percentages and numerical equivalences, the student’s grade for this course will be computed on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Point Total</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.85 to 4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.65 to 3.84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 to 3.64</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 to 3.29</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 to 2.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 to 2.69</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 to 2.29</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 to 1.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 to 1.69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 to 1.29</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7 to 0.99</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0 to 0.69</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to achieve a particular grade, the student must fall exactly within the above scale. No rounding-off is allowed.