Theology Survey I  

**Syllabus**

**Purpose and Objectives of Course**

The Gordon-Conwell Catalog states that this course is an “introduction to the study of theology. Topics treated include the nature of theology and theological method; revelation, inspiration, and the authority of scripture; the existence and attributes of God and God’s triune nature; creation and providence; human nature; original and actual sin.” The stated goal is that this course will assist the student in integrating “personal and professional concerns with a biblical worldview.”

This being the case, there are four general objectives which govern the teaching of the M.A. required courses in theology. These courses are to ensure:

1. that students know the biblical basis for each of the doctrines which make up the Christian confession;
2. that they know where the major lines of theological disagreement lie;
3. that they are able to think about the whole of life in a more consistently theological way;
4. that they are able to ground Christian practice in all of its variety on theological truth.

**Course Requirements**

**I. Reading Assignment**

All students must complete the following required reading.

II. Research Paper or Additional Reading
The research paper is intended to give students an opportunity to explore a topic in some detail. The topic must fall within the subject matter of this course. Students should aim at producing a paper of about 12-15 pages in length. Appropriate consideration must be given to both primary and secondary sources. Probably the easiest style manual to follow is Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. For more information on research and writing see the essay, “Helps in Research and Writing,” in the appendix, p. A-25 and following.

Students who would prefer to read more broadly may elect not to do a research paper and, instead, do additional reading. The additional reading should be on any of the themes within the course and should total no less than 750 pages. The student also needs to submit a brief reading report of about 7 pages. This report will be read by the professor but it will not receive a grade. A penalty may be imposed on those reports considered inadequate or where the reading chosen was inappropriate.

III. Final Examination
There will be no mid-term examination. The final examination will consist of essay type questions. The exam will be 2 hours long, and the student will need to answer 3 out of 5 possible essay questions. This means that the student will have 40 minutes to answer each question. The exam questions will be of a kind which will enable the student to use knowledge from both class lectures and the required readings in answering them. The use of computers during the exam is not allowed. The student may bring an unmarked, non-study Bible to the exam. The exam questions will be similar in format to the key or “Focus” questions asked at the beginning of each workbook section.

Note on Grading: For those electing to do the paper, the final grade will be made up of the grade from the paper (50%) and that from the final examination (50%). The final grade for those electing to do the additional reading will be the grade on the final examination because the reading report will not receive a grade.

IV. Interaction
Purpose
• To enhance distance learning by encouraging and providing a context for students to meet and interact with other students taking similar courses and with their course instructors as they work through their Semlink materials. Only Semlink students taking a course for credit are required to complete the interactive component of the course. Non-credit students who are taking Semlink classes for personal enrichment are ........ encouraged to contact the Semlink office (see the contact information section below) if .
they want to participate in these discussions.

- 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.

- It is highly recommended that you spread out your completion of the interactivity requirements outlined below over the six months you have to complete the course, rather than attempting to complete them all at once or very near your due date. By spreading out your completion of the requirements, you will be able to benefit fully from your interaction with other students and receive feedback from the course teaching fellow.

Requirements

The interaction requirement for Semlink courses is to be fulfilled in two ways:

1) **An online discussion forum:** converse with other students and with instructors.
   - Integration questions will be posted by the team of Semlink teaching fellows. These questions are designed to encourage you to analyze, synthesize, and apply what you are learning in your course in a cross-curricular environment. You will be interacting with other students who are taking this course and related courses.
   - Discussions may be based on current events, culture, literature, case studies, and scripture.
   - You are required to participate four (4) times in the discussions relating to your area of study. For example, if you were taking “The Church to the Reformation,” you would be required to participate in the Church History integration discussions four times during the six months you have to complete the course.
   - You may also submit an integration question for your course to your Semlink teaching fellow (see contact information section below). If your question is selected for use, it may fulfill one of your four required interactions in the discussion forums.
   - 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.
   - Please note that there are many ongoing discussions on the Semlink website. While you are welcome to participate in any of these discussions, only participation in the discussions listed for your course will be given course credit.

2) **Email-based conversation** with a Semlink teaching fellow.
   - Together with the lecturing professor and/or mentoring professor, the Semlink teaching
fellows have written a conversation starter, designed to tie together some of the overarching themes raised in the course.

- The conversation starter will be posted on the Semlink website. You will go to the Semlink website, navigate to your course homepage (see below), and submit your first response to the question via email. The submission will be read and responded to by your Semlink teaching fellow, who will take the conversation further based on your original thoughts and comments.
- 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.

To find the website and specific interactivity details for your course:
1) Log on to the Semlink website (www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/semlink) and enter the section for “Current Students.”
2) Select your course from the menu, and go to the homepage for your course. This page contains links to the specific interactivity requirements for your course and other Semlink resources.
3) If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the Semlink office (see the contact information section below) and alternative arrangements will be made.

Please Note: In the case of any differences between the specific interactivity requirements given for this course on the website and the information given in this workbook, the website takes precedence.

Evaluation of Submissions
- You will not be assigned a letter grade for your participation in Semlink interactivity, but completion of your interactivity requirements is required to receive credit for your course. If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements, you will fail your course.
- Your submissions will be evaluated as complete or incomplete based on quality of thought and clarity of expression (see the general guidelines described below and the specific guidelines found on your course home page on the Semlink website).
- 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. Submissions made after the course due date will be subject to penalty.
General Guidelines for Submissions

- 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. Please answer the questions fully and specifically.

If this requirement is not completed by the date on which your final assignment for the course is submitted to our office, 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. Once this requirement is completed, the professor will receive and grade the final assignment and you will be given a final grade for the course. If you have not completed all interactivity requirements within ONE MONTH from the end date of the course, you will automatically fail the course with no exceptions.

V. Workbook
As you listen to the lectures, you can answer the questions in the accompanying workbook. The workbook is provided as a resource for your study. The questions have been designed to help you to learn and process the information in this course. The completed workbook will also serve as an outline of the course for your future reference. You may find it helpful to stop the tape of the lecture at various times to consider the questions and answer them more fully. This is highly encouraged. You may also wish to take additional notes in the margins of the workbook or in the other spaces provided. You are not required to turn in your workbook.
## Course Outline

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<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Reading</th>
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<td>The Nature of Theology</td>
<td><em>Prophetic Untimeliness</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The Practice of Theology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Theology &amp; Apologetics</td>
<td>“The Theologian’s Craft”</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td><em>The Revelation of God</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td><em>The Revelation of God</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Nature and Function of Scripture</td>
<td><em>The Revelation of God</em></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Is God Male or Female?</td>
<td><em>Knowing God, Part I</em></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Trinity</td>
<td><em>Knowing God, Part II</em></td>
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<td>The Attributes of God</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>The Attributes of God (continued)</td>
<td><em>Knowing God, Part III</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td><em>The Providence of God</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Providence</td>
<td><em>The Providence of God</em></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>The Image of God Sin</td>
<td><em>Created in God’s Image</em></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Sin (continued)</td>
<td><em>The Seven Deadly Sins Today</em></td>
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Frequently Asked Questions

How do I arrange to take my exam?
1. Contact the Semlink office via email (semlink.office@gcts.edu) or phone (978-646-4144 or 1-877-736-5465, toll free). Please allow at least 48 hours to process your exam request as well as additional time for mailing to destination.
2. If you are a student at the Hamilton campus, your exam will be sent to Goddard Library.
3. If you are a student at CUME, Charlotte, or off-campus, you will need to find a proctor and provide proctor contact information when requesting your exam.
   a. Your proctor should be a church official, an education official, or a librarian. Your proctor cannot be a GCTS student or a family member.
   b. Your exam will be sent directly to your proctor, so you must provide a mailing address for him or her.
   c. Your proctor will be responsible for mailing your exam to the Semlink address provided in the contact information section. Please provide your proctor with an envelope with pre-paid postage for this purpose. The proctor must mail the exam so that it is postmarked by the course due date in order to avoid late penalty. Any work postmarked after the due date will be considered late.

How do I send in written work?
1. All course work is due by the course due date.
2. Course materials should be sent to the Semlink office address provided in the contact information section.
3. Any course work that is mailed to the Semlink office must be postmarked by your due date to avoid penalty.
4. Please include the address to which you would like your work sent. For Hamilton students, please use your campus box number.

How do I request an extension?
1. For Hamilton, Charlotte, or CUME students, extensions should be requested through your home campus’ registration office.
2. For off-campus students, extensions should be requested through the Semlink office.
3. Extension requests must be made in writing and must be submitted on or before the due date of your course. Your extension request should include the unavoidable/avoidable circumstances that have prevented you from completing
your course and the amount of time lost due to those circumstances. You should also state what work you have completed and what is still unfinished. Please state which course work you are seeking an extension for.

4. Off-campus students who have not matriculated on to a campus should submit extension requests with a $25 processing fee per course.

5. Generally, extension requests based on avoidable circumstances are granted with a grade penalty.

6. Extensions cannot be granted after the due date.

7. You cannot withdraw from a course after receiving an extension.

**How do I withdraw from a course?**

1. You can withdraw from your course up to the due date.

2. For Hamilton, Charlotte, and CUME students, requests to withdraw must be in writing and are to be submitted to your home campus registration office.

3. For off-campus students, requests to withdraw must be in writing and are to be submitted to the Semlink office.

4. Should you withdraw from the course, the tuition refund policy is as follows:
   a. 100% up to 15 days, 50% up to 30 days, no refund after 30 days.
   b. Material cost is non-refundable.
   c. Courses dropped prior to the 15 day deadline will not appear on your transcript. A “W” (withdrawn) will appear on transcripts for courses dropped after 15 days.

**What is the penalty for late work?**

All course work submitted to the Semlink office after the due date will be assessed a grade penalty. On-campus students should contact their home campus’ registration office for more information on the specific grade penalty that will be applied. Off-campus students should contact the Semlink office.

**When is my course due?**

1. Your course due date can be found on the confirmation sheet sent to you separately. We highly recommend that you make this sheet a part of your course materials.

2. Your course is due six months after your start date which is based on the date you registered for the course allowing time for preparation of the course materials by the Semlink office and shipping the materials to you.

3. Graduating seniors should note that during their final semester the due date for Semlink courses will be the due date for course work for seniors.
Contact Information

At Semlink, there are a number of different offices working together as a team in order to care for you as a student. Please read the following descriptions and contact the appropriate office when questions arise.

For Questions About:  Contact:

Course materials  The Semlink Office
Administrative issues  The Semlink office handles your registration, course materials, and exams. They also handle extensions and other administrative issues. If you are unsure whom to call, the Semlink office will be able to direct you.
Exam requirements  Phone: 978-646-4144 or 1-877-736-5465 (toll free)
Registration information  Fax: 978-646-4565
Extensions  Email: semlink.office@gcts.edu
Due dates  Address: Semlink Office
If you’re unsure whom to call  130 Essex Street
                           S. Hamilton, MA 01982
                           Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

For Questions About:  Contact:

Ordering textbooks  The Gordon-Conwell BookCentre
The BookCentre stocks the required textbooks for every course.
Phone: 1-888-252-4287 (toll free) or 978-646-4017
Email: books@gcts.edu
Website: www.gordonconwell.edu/bookcentre
The Semlink Teaching Fellows
The Semlink teaching fellows have been selected for demonstrated proficiency in a particular subject area. The teaching fellows work closely with the mentoring professor to help you to interact at a deeper level with the course content and to provide you with opportunities to interact with other students and instructors in an area related to this course.
Email: semlink.theology@gcts.edu
Website: www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/semlink

The Mentoring Professor
The mentoring professor grades your course work, sets the course syllabus, approves paper topics, and can answer questions about the course content. Please contact the mentoring professor only with the above type of questions.
Name: Dr. David Wells
Phone: 978-646-4094
Email: dwells@gcts.edu
Address: Dr. David Wells
130 Essex Street
S. Hamilton, MA 01982