

Syllabus

Purpose and Objectives of Course

The Gordon-Conwell Catalog states that “this course studies God’s work in creation and providence, mankind as created and fallen and the person and work of Christ.” As such, it is a continuation of Systematic Theology I and leads on into Systematic Theology III. These three required courses in theology should be seen as an integrated whole. Together, they serve as an introduction to theology.

In covering the themes in this course, I will have four main objectives in mind:

- i) that students know the biblical basis for each of the doctrines which make up the Christian confession;
- ii) that they know where the major lines of disagreement lie where these are important;
- iii) that they are able to think about the whole of life in a more consistently theological way;
- iv) that the basis for Christian practice, including the ministry, is laid so that practice grows out of, and is disciplined by, theological truth.

Course Requirements

I. Reading Requirements

Students should read the following material carefully, integrating it with the material from the lectures.

- Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*.
- Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*.
- Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*.
- Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, chapters 16-20, 31-39

Please note that there are several editions of Millard Erickson’s *Christian Theology* available. The chapter numbers listed are for the first edition. If you have a later edition you should read the appropriate chapters (see the suggested reading schedule later in the syllabus for chapter titles).

- David Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in the Postmodern World*

II. Final Examination and Research Paper

Students are required to (i) write a research paper of approximately 12-15 pages and (ii) take

the final examination. There will be no mid-term examination. To pass, a student must get a passing grade on both the research paper and the final examination. The course grade will be a combination of the paper (50%) and the examination (50%).

The topic for the research paper should fall within the subject matter of the course and, if there is any doubt about a possible subject, the professor should be consulted. The paper should be approximately 12-15 pages long and should make appropriate use of primary and secondary sources.

III. 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 webspoken).
- 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 after the end date of the course, you will automatically fail the course with no exceptions.

IV. 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

| Lecture | Topic | Issues Covered |
|---------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Creation | The Fact, Source, and Meaning of Creation Western Attitude Toward Nature |
| 2 | Creation Providence | Western Attitude Toward Nature (cont.) Providence and Modern Dilemmas The Problem of Evil |
| 3 | Providence Human Nature | Suffering Modern Approach to Human Nature <i>Imago Dei</i> |
| 4 | Human Nature Sin | <i>Imago Dei</i> & Gender Roles Character & Definition of Sin Language for Sin |
| 5 | Sin | The State of Sin The Results of Sin |
| 6 | Christology | The Historical Jesus Christology in the Old Testament Repetition in the Acts of God |
| 7 | Christology | Repetition in the Acts of God (cont.) The Kingdom of God Two Age Terminology The Virgin Birth The Identity of Christ |
| 8 | Christology | The Humanity of Christ in Paul Historical Development Luther and Medieval Theology |
| 9 | The Work of Christ | Theories Justification |
| 10 | The Work of Christ | Justification Reconciliation Propitiation |

Suggested Reading Schedule

Please note that there are several editions of Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* available. The chapter numbers listed below are for the first edition. If you have a later edition you should read the appropriate chapters.

| Lecture | Suggested Reading |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1: Creation | Wells, <i>Above All Earthly Powers</i> (all) Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 16: God's Plan ch. 17: God's Originating Work |
| 2: Creation Providence | Helm, <i>The Providence of God</i> (all) Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 18: God's Continuing Work: Creation ch. 19: Evil and God's World: Providence ch. 20: God's Special Agents: Angels |
| 3: Providence Human Nature | Hoekema, <i>Created in God's Image</i> (chs. 1-6) |
| 4: Human Nature Sin | Hoekema, <i>Created in God's Image</i> (chs. 7-12) |
| 5: Sin | Hoekema, <i>Created in God's Image</i> (chs. 7-12) |
| 6: Christology | Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 31: Contemporary Issues in Christological Method ch. 32: The Deity of Christ |
| 7: Christology | Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 33: The Humanity of Christ ch. 34: The Unity of the Person of Christ ch. 35: The Virgin Birth |
| 8: Christology | No reading or catch up |
| 9: The Work of Christ | Morris, <i>The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross</i> (chs. 1-5) Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 36: Introduction to the Work of Christ ch. 37: Theories of the Atonement |
| 10: The Work of Christ | Morris, <i>The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross</i> (chs. 6-10) Erickson, <i>Christian Theology</i> ch. 38: The Central Theme of the Atonement ch. 39: The Extent of the Atonement |

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:

Course materials
Administrative issues
Exam requirements
Registration information
Extensions
Due dates
If you're unsure whom to call

Contact:**The Semlink Office**

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.

Phone: 978-646-4144 or 1-877-736-5465, toll free

Fax: 978-646-4565

Email: semlink.office@gcts.edu

Address: Semlink Office

130 Essex Street

S. Hamilton, MA 01982

Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

For Questions About:

Ordering textbooks

Contact:**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: gcts.christianbook.com

For Questions About:

Interactivity requirements

Contact:**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

For Questions About:

Course content

Paper topic approval

Suggested supplemental reading

Contact:**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