Syllabus: TH605

Semlink
at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

TH605: Systematic Theology II with Dr. Adonis Vidu

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Snapshot of Course Requirements
TH605 requires timely completion of the following four course requirements:

1. Required Reading (25% of grade)
2. Three Papers on Assigned Topics (75% of grade)
3. Fill out my form!" target="_blank">Online Course Checkout/Reading Report (after you have finished all course requirements above)
4. Interactivity (required for course grade to be submitted to registration office)

Purpose of Course
Systematic Theology II discusses the following theological loci: creation, sin, Christology, and the atoning work of Christ. While most of its concentration will be on the person and work of Christ, it will integrate these within the larger pattern of God's work starting with creation.

The integrating motif of this particular class is the notion of the relation between God and the world. How might we conceive of the action of God in the world (creation, providence, divine presence in Christ) in light of the ontological distinction between God and creation? Systematic Theology II has to walk a fine line between maintaining the ontological distinction and affirming that God remains personal. It also refuses to dissolve the paradox of divine providence and human freedom in either direction. God's providential care for the world does not deny the reality of human causes, or a minimal human freedom.

Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the historical development of key doctrines, their biblical foundations, and the critical issues associated with them.
- Envision the coherence and mutual relationship between the various doctrines studied.
- Name the significance of ‘creation out of nothing’ toward a deeper understanding of humanity’s proper relationship to God.
- Approach the problem of evil with informed understanding for greater effectiveness in apologetics and evangelism.
- Navigate the complexities of the relationship between divine and human action (e.g. how the two are related and how the two are not opposed to each other).
- Grasp further the sense in which humanity is naturally oriented towards God, yet in such a way that it cannot achieve its destiny apart from the grace of God.

Required Texts
This course requires you read the following books and article (click the links below to access those readings available electronically).

Books:
- Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. Baker, 1998. (Select chapters, see Reading Schedule below)

### Articles and selections:

- Anselm. *Cur Deus Homo*, chs. XI, XII, XIII, XIX, XX
- Blocher, *Biblical Metaphor and the Doctrine of the Atonement*

### Recommended Reading:

- McKnight, Scot. *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005.
- N. T. Wright. ‘The Cross and the Caricatures’

### Course Requirements

The course requirements are substantial and although the books are at a very basic, introductory level, they nevertheless require a graduate level of reading, not simply skimming the material.

1. **Required Reading and Reading journal** (25% of your grade): Reading reflections must be turned in at the end of the course. Each reading reflection should be around 3-5 pages (per week). You are strongly advised to read the assigned pages prior to each lecture, and write down your reflection immediately, in order to make the most of the lectures, and to prevent cramming it all at the end of the course.
   - For your reading journals, you are expected to be attentive to two things:
     1. Read the assigned material carefully;
     2. Reflect on what you have read substantively.
You are expected to complete 3 to 5 pages of reading reflections for each lecture with assigned reading regardless of how many pages and authors have been assigned.

2. Three papers (3 x 25%)
   1. Topic #1: Theological voluntarism. Discuss Euthyphro’s famous dilemma: ‘Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?’
      - You are to write a 7 page paper in which you engage this discussion by drawing on: relevant biblical passages, important figures in the history of theology and philosophy (e.g., Duns Scotus, Thomas Aquinas).
      - Reflect on the systematic significance of this topic. How does it connect to other systematic loci?
   2. Topic #2: Christology. Write a 7 page paper on the question of the continuing relevance of Chalcedonian Christology.
      - Draw on relevant biblical discussion.
      - Draw on recent critiques of Chalcedonian Christology.
      - Reflect on the pastoral significance of this debate.
   3. Topic #3: Atonement. Write a 7 page paper defending your choice of atonement theory.
      - Discuss relevant biblical material.
      - Respond to historical critiques of the theory.
      - Assess the practical difference your theory makes in the life of the church.

3. Online Course Checkout/Reading Report

4. Interactivity (see below)

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. 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.

To begin your interactivity (and for more details about this requirement), see the Interactivity section under Modules. This section will explain in more detail what is expected for this requirement.

If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements, you will fail your course.

Reading Schedule

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<th>Topic and Readings</th>
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| 1       | • Erickson chs. 14, 15, 18  
          | • Helm 69-93         |
| 2       | • Erickson chs. 17, 19  
          | • Hughes 143-200     
          | • Helm 15-69; 93-193; 217-235 |
| 3       | • Erickson chs. 20, 21  
          | • Hughes 77-107; Helm 193-217 |
| 4       | • Erickson chs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26  
<pre><code>      | • Hughes 1-71         |
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