TH607-B: Systematic Theology III with Dr. Jack Davis

Table of Contents
Overview of Course
Course Requirements
  • Required Reading
    o Required Textbooks
  • Term Paper or Personal Statement of Faith
  • Final Exam
Submitting Assignments
Interactivity
Grading
Possible Topics for Your Research Paper
Course Outline

Overview of Course

Systematic Theology III is a continuation of Systematic Theology I and II and includes a study of the doctrines of soteriology (salvation and the Christian life), ecclesiology (the church and sacraments), and eschatology (death, the afterlife, and the millennium). The purpose of the course is to explore the biblical foundations of these doctrines and to understand their implications for the contemporary problems of church and society.

Course Requirements

Please Note: In the case of discrepancies between the course requirements mentioned in the audio material and the requirements given in this syllabus, the syllabus takes precedence. It is highly recommended that you do not turn in all of your written work at one time. Doing so will not allow you to benefit from the feedback of the instructor.

I. Required Reading
You are required to read 1250 pages total, including the textbooks below (about 850 pages) and reading completed for the paper or other additional reading (about 400 pages). Please report the number of pages you have read in the required textbooks, and list all additional reading (other than required textbooks) on the course checkout form. See the Appendix PDFs (under "Modules") for recommended reading on various topics.

Required Textbooks

  • Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Baker, 1998), chapters 41-60 - 402 pages
  **Read only the parts that correspond to the lecture topics (ISBN-13: 978-0801021824)**

Note: Since the course was taped, the reading has become a requirement that will count 10% of your grade. Please make note of this change.

II. Term Paper or Personal Statement of Faith
Papers must be 10-15 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced.

**Required Textbooks**

- **Option A: Term Paper**
  Topics for the research paper should be specific and well-focused, having been discussed in advanced with the instructor. In your bibliographic research you should include scholarly books, journal articles, and biblical commentaries as appropriate. See below for a list of possible topics for your research paper.

- **Option B: Statement of Faith**
  For the Statement of Faith option, you are to state clearly and concisely what you believe about each of the major theological topics covered in Systematic Theology I, II, and III. Those seeking ordination might want to give particular attention to such issues as the nature and mission of the church and the work of the Holy Spirit. You should include Scripture references, but you do not need to include secondary sources or a bibliography. The paper will be graded on the basis of literary style, Scripture references, clarity of language, and consistency. **There is a sample Statement of Faith in the “Supplemental Materials” booklet for use as a model. This booklet is available in the Resources section of this site.**

**III. Final Exam**

The final exam will be a comprehensive essay exam covering both lecture material and required reading. An unmarked, non-study Bible is allowed, but no notes or books.

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

1. **Electronically** (preferred method): To take an 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.

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.
   - 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.

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.

**TOP**

**Submitting Assignments**
Assignments can be submitted electronically through the Drop Box tool in Sakai. On the left menu, under "Project Tools," select "Drop Box." To add a file, click “Add” and upload from there.

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. 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.**

Grading

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper or Statement of Faith</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Completion Required</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Topics for Your Research Paper**

The following includes a list of 45 possible research paper topics. See above more further instructions on this assignment.

1. What about those who die never having heard the gospel?
2. What about the spiritual state of the profoundly mentally retarded?
16. Are all the gifts of the Spirit valid for today?
17. What do you think of Wimber’s “signs and wonders” emphasis?
30. How should a local church raise money? Are rummage sales acceptable?
31. Should churches borrow money to finance building programs?
3. Is there such a thing as a biblical “age of accountability”?

4. What does it mean to be “born again”?

5. What is the Old Testament background for the concept of regeneration?

6. Are there unmistakable signs of the new birth?

7. Is there a biblical basis for the idea of baptismal regeneration?

8. What are the signs of true saving faith? Is there a “counterfeit” faith?

9. What are the biblical components of true repentance?

10. What implications does New Testament discipleship have for today’s American church?


12. Are there still substantial differences between Catholics and Protestants on the issue of justification?

13. Is it possible to lose one’s justification?

14. What three “models” of sanctification have been prominent in church history?

15. Should every believer seek the gift of tongues?

16. Should every church have a ministry of spiritual healing?

17. What role should the Mosaic law play in the Christian life?

18. What is your evaluation of the “theonomy” movement?

19. Should Christians try to legislate morality in a pluralistic society?

20. What “models” of the church are important in the New Testament?

21. What type of church government do you favor and why?

22. What is the nature of ordination in the New Testament? the early church?

23. Should women be ordained as pastors and elders?

24. Should the mission of the church include social action? Political lobbying?

25. Should the mission of the church include social action? Political lobbying?

26. Should the mission of the church include social action? Political lobbying?

27. What do you think of Ralph Winter’s “hidden peoples” emphasis?

28. Do you think that the “homogeneous unit” principle of the church growth movement is a biblical concept?

29. Is it valid to use secular concepts of marketing and advertising to help the local church grow?

30. What spiritual benefit, if any, does the believer obtain from communion that is not available from preaching?

31. What spiritual benefit, if any, does the believer obtain from communion that is not available from preaching?

32. What types of church discipline should be exercised by the local church? Is excommunication ever valid?

33. Should infants be baptized?

34. What is the basic theological meaning of baptism?

35. Is it valid to rebaptize an individual?

36. Does the New Testament prescribe baptism by immersion?

37. What view of the Lord’s Supper - Zwinglian, Lutheran, Calvinistic - do you consider to have the most support from the New Testament?

38. Should only ordained ministers serve communion or officiate at such a service?

39. How often should communion be served in the church?

40. What spiritual benefit, if any, does the believer obtain from communion that is not available from preaching?

41. What happens to believers when they die?

42. Is there any room for reincarnation in a New Testament theology?

43. Does the New Testament teach eternal conscious punishment for the wicked? Annihilation?

44. What is the proper interpretation of the “millennium” in Revelation 20:4-6?

45. What will heaven be like? Will there be work in heaven? Will there be animals in heaven?

Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Suggested Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction, Calling, and Regeneration</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 43, 44, and 45</td>
<td>Week One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Faith, Repentance, Discipleship, Justification, and Sanctification</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 46, 47</td>
<td>Week Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sanctification and the Works and Gifts of the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 41, 42 Stott, Baptism and Fullness</td>
<td>Week Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Role of the Law in the Christian Life, Perseverance of the Saints, and the Doctrine of the Church</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 48, 49, and 50</td>
<td>Week Four Begin research for paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Doctrine of the Church, Church Leadership, and the Ordination of Women</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 51</td>
<td>Week Five</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Text Sources</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Church Government, Social Action, Evangelism, and Church Growth</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 52 Chan, Liturgical Theology</td>
<td>Week Six</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Baptism</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 53, 54</td>
<td>Week Seven</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Lord’s Supper and the Afterlife</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 55, 56, and 57</td>
<td>Week Eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Death and Dying, Israel’s Role in God’s Plan, and the Millenium</td>
<td>Erickson, chs. 55, 56, and 57</td>
<td>Week Nine</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Finish Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Death and Dying, Israel’s Role in God’s Plan, and the Millenium</td>
<td>Erickson, ch. 60 Davis, Christ’s Victorious Kingdom</td>
<td>Week Ten Take</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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*Note: The Suggested Schedule is provided to help you to organize the way that you proceed through the material. It is based upon a ten-week semester; however, keep in mind that students on campus are given two Reading Weeks during the course of the semester: one around the fourth week of the semester and one around the eighth week. You may want to insert two such Reading Weeks into your schedule in order to give yourself time to catch up on reading or paper assignments. In any case, it is recommended that you maintain a consistent schedule in order to allow adequate time to complete all lectures, reading, and assignments.*