TH607 Systematic Theology III
Dr. Adonis Vidu
avidu@gordonconwell.edu
Office: Library, 109
Office Hours @ theologyofficehours.wordpress.com

TH607 Systematic Theology III

Syllabus
Fall 2016

Course description

TH607 is the capstone of the systematic theology classes at Gordon-Conwell. As a result, I am very intentional about making it an integrative experience. The following doctrines are explicitly covered: Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, salvation, church and sacraments, eschatology and final states. A very important objective of this class is to find the coherence between these doctrines and the rest of systematic theology, but also their significance for Christian life.

The doctrine of the person and work of the Holy Spirit grounds the rest of the discussion of soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. A specifically Trinitarian Pneumatology is determinative for one’s understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a Trinitarian Christology leads to overcoming some of the oppositions between ‘merely’ forensic and participationist understandings of salvation (justification and sanctification). Moving into the doctrine of the church, a robustly Trinitarian theology will be shown to mediate between highly individualistic and highly institutionalized ecclesiologies.

The format of the class includes lectures, but also class-wide debates, as well as small-group discussion and processing. The student should bring her or his personal Bible. Although these activities are not graded, all students are required to participate in them.

Learning outcomes

- To understand the systematic coherence of pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.

---

1 This version is still provisional. A final and definitive version will be provided on the first day of class. Potential changes will not affect the required reading and the evaluation.
• To understand the differences between major Christian confessions on the respective topics.
• To understand what is at stake in various soteriologies, including their practical implications for the life of the church.
• To gain a better understanding of the distinctive role played by the Holy Spirit in salvation and the life of the church.
• To gain a sense for the importance and reality of the church and its implications for the life of the congregation.
• To understand various ecclesiological assumptions made by the variety of worship styles and liturgical traditions.
• To gain an appreciation for the importance of catechetical formation for the life of the church.
• To understand the implications of each of these topics for the following areas: evangelism, worship, missions, discipleship etc.

Course outline

1. Person and Work of the HS
   a. Erickson, 771-788
   b. McFarlane
   c. Tanner ch. 1
2. Person and Work of the HS
   a. Erickson, 788-825
   b. Turner
   c. Tanner, ch. 2
3. Ascension and Pentecost
   a. Farrow, in toto.
   b. Tanner, ch. 3
   c. Schillebeeckxs on the Ascension [Sakai]
4. Theology of Grace I
   a. Tanner, ch. 4
   b. Leithart, part I
Reading Week I
5. Theology of Grace II
   a. Erickson 841-860
   b. Tanner, ch. 5
   c. Leithart, part II
6. Justification and Union with Christ
   a. Erickson 825-841; 860-949
   b. Tanner, ch. 6, 7.
   c. Leithart, part III
7. The Being of the Church/Marks of the Church/ Church Governance
   a. Erickson 949-1016
   b. Leithart, part IV
Reading Week II

8. The Sacraments
   a. Erickson 1016-1055

9. The Sacraments, Ordination, etc.
   a. Holmes, ‘Towards a Baptist Theology of Ordained Ministry’ [Sakai]
   b. Volf, After Our Likeness: The Church in the Image of the Trinity
      [excerpt, Sakai]

10. Eschatology
    a. Erickson 1055-1124
       [Sakai]

11. Eschatology and Summary/Conclusion
    a. No readings

12. Final Exam

Evaluation

- **50% Final exam.** The final will consist of a combination multiple-choice/short answer and short essay questions. Much of the exam will verify one’s engagement with the required reading, in addition to the lectures.

- **50% Personal statement of faith.** This is a reflective exercise, covering all three systematic theology classes, in which the student integrates all the loci into a coherent statement of faith. While biblical references are required, it is preferable to avoid proof-texting and refer instead to wider biblical theology. Length: minimal 10-12 pages, at 1 ½ spacing (feel free to go as long as you need: this exercise is primarily for your benefit). My grading criteria include:
  - Comprehensiveness: The full extent of systematic theology should be covered.
  - Synthetic ability: clear perception of connections between various doctrines.
  - Clarity: I value both conceptual as well as literary clarity.
  - Foundation: The ability to demonstrate the biblical bases for particular theological positions.

Required Reading

Books

- Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd edition, 978-0801036439
**Articles and Excerpts (available through CAMS)**

- Bruce McCormack, ‘Incarnation and Atonement in the Reformed Tradition’
- J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (excerpt).

**Additional bibliography**


