TH 605—SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY II
Patrick T. Smith, Course Instructor
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Winterim Term, January 11-15, 2010*
(Monday—Friday: 9:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:30 pm-4:30 pm)
Email: ptsmith@gcts.edu

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

This course is designed to be a study of the doctrines of creation, providence, the image of God, human nature, original and actual sin, and the person and work of Christ.

Course Textbooks

Required:


Course Objectives

The student who successfully completes this course should have the ability:

1. To understand the importance and necessity of doctrine for Christian life and community.
2. To develop the skill of learning from and engaging texts in theological studies.
3. To think critically about theological issues discussed and relate them to other areas of doctrine.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the context of the local church, parachurch ministries and the broader contemporary culture.

Course Requirements

1. **Assigned Readings**—some of the reading material is covered in class. However, there are elements that will not be brought out in class but are still essential to gaining an understanding of the material and successfully completing the course. Therefore, the reading provides a rich and necessary component of the learning experience.

* Students should keep in mind when registering for the course that in the case of a class cancellation due to weather the class will meet on Tuesday, January 19th to make up for the missed day.
a. **Pre-Course Reading**—Students are to read as much as possible from Part 4 through Part 8 in Millard Erickson’s *Christian Theology, Second Edition* in order to prepare for the one-week intensive. Students will submit a note on the first day of class informing the instructor how much of this reading was completed before the course. For those students who have previously read Erickson, they can begin with Helm’s *The Providence of God* and then move to Hughes’ *The True Image*. In preparation for the course.

b. **Textbook Reading**—The students will also be responsible for reading the remaining assigned textbooks and handouts designated in the course schedule by **February 9, 2010 by 4:00 PM**. A final reading report should be submitted along with the final course assignment that indicates what percentage of the course reading was completed.

2. **Theological Discussion Groups**—There will be periodic discussion groups in class to “talk” theology and engage in theological reflection. Students are to use the time to reflect on particular readings or topics identified by the course instructor. This assignment requires that students should read particular essays or chapters before the class session. Students are graded on their participation in discussion and reflection with the other group members. The instructor will observe and monitor some of the discussions taking place in these groups. Also, students are to hand-in on the last day of class (**Friday, January 15, 2010**) an evaluation of other members in the group. This report is to simply indicate from your perspective that the other members actively participated in the group conversations. Participation does not mean that there was full agreement among the members on the issues discussed.

3. **Thielicke Reflection Paper**—This assignment is to summarize the general thrust of Thielicke’s essay *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. In the paper students are to indicate some of the insights gained from reading the booklet in light of some of the other class discussions and readings from the course. The papers are to be 2 typed pages (strict limit), double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, neatly formatted, stapled and free from any spelling and grammatical errors. The papers will be graded on their clarity, accuracy, rigor and faithfulness in addressing the issue. The assignment is due on **Friday, January 15, 2010** at the beginning of class.

4. **Theological Position Essay**—This assignment is a 5-page (*no more than five pages*) essay that will concisely state a point of doctrine covered in this course and develop it in conversation with a concisely stated opposing point of view. This essay should address a doctrine and issue in the Doctrines of Creation/Providence, Theological Anthropology, Doctrine of Sin, or Christology. Some indication that students have interacted with Erickson’s *Christian Theology*, Helm’s *The Providence of God* and/or the Hughes’s *The True Image* should be evident in the papers.

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1 The details of this assignment stated in the syllabus are used by permission from Professor Peter Anders, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.
INSTRUCTIONS:

Students are required to: 1) chose a doctrinal issue of particular importance to you, discuss its meaning, biblical support, and practical implications; 2) identify a serious objection to your position, stating how and why it is opposed to your view; and 3) clearly state your own answer to this objection and why you think your own view is correct, more biblically accurate, or more practically significant. The theological position you take will not affect your grade, but rather, the grade will be based on the clarity, thoroughness, and seriousness of thought that went into the presentation of your position, an objection, and your answer to that objection. Students should also seek to incorporate into these essays what they have learned from the lectures, discussions, and the required reading of this course. Scripture should also be engaged exegetically where appropriate.

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL ESSAY:

• Keep your topic to a single issue. If you say that you want to argue this and this, you are most likely doing too much and the paper will be longer than the strict five-page limitation.
• Stick as close as you can to the assigned structure: your clearly and precisely stated position; one concisely stated objection to your position; and your answer to that objection.
• Give a topic sentence at the beginning of the essay that clearly lays out your goals strictly stated in terms of this structure, then let it guide you throughout.
• Give a clear and concise presentation of an objection to your position — 2 or 3 paragraphs in the body of your paper and no place else (this objection can be from a particular theology/theologian, a movement, a commonly held view, a view you used to hold, etc.), then answer this objection only.
• The assignment should be typed, double-spaced in 12 point, Times New Roman-type font, at most 1-inch margins, and with a cover page that clearly states your campus mailbox number.

Course Grading

The student’s grade will be determined as follows:

- Reading Report
- Theology Discussion Groups
- Thielicke Reflection Paper
- Theological Position Essay

Grading Rubric: After all the requirements of the course have been completed, the instructor will use the following rubric for the assignment of grades, based on the overall performance of the class. The grades assigned will represent the instructor’s interpretation of the following standard:
Outstanding mastery of the subject: excellence is evident in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; unusual ability to retain, analyze and synthesize the material; with a positive attitude making productive contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

Superior mastery of the subject: sincere effort in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; ability to master the essential aspects of the material; with a mostly consistent attitude in making contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

Basic mastery of the subject: inconsistent effort in preparation for and attendance in class sessions; engagement with the material but difficulty in grasping some of its aspects; with occasional contributions to the learning community in the classroom.

Inadequate mastery of the subject.

Failure: course must be repeated.

Warning on Plagiarism: Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found on the Indiana University website http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagarism.html. This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare for your assignments. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student will receive the consequences of this act according to the process established by the seminary.

Intellectual Property Rights: To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content, students are asked to refrain from audio and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings.

Internet Usage: Students are asked to refrain from accessing the Internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.

Course Schedule

JANUARY 11    Background Reading: Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, Part 4

Session 1:      The Doctrine of Creation

Session 2:      The Doctrine of Providence (Part 1)
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<th>Date</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Millard Erickson, <em>Christian Theology</em>, Part X</th>
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<td>JANUARY 12</td>
<td>Session 3: The Doctrine of Providence (Part 2)</td>
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<td>Session 4: The Doctrines of Humanity &amp; Sin (Part 1)</td>
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<th>JANUARY 13</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Millard Erickson, <em>Christian Theology</em>, Part Y</th>
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<td>Session 5: The Doctrines of Humanity &amp; Sin (Part 2)</td>
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<td>Session 6: The Doctrines of Humanity &amp; Sin (Part 3)</td>
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*Theology Discussion Group Reading:* Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham City Jail”; Erickson, chapter 31, “The Social Dimension of Sin”

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<th>JANUARY 14</th>
<th><strong>Background Reading:</strong> Millard Erickson, <em>Christian Theology</em>, Part Z</th>
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<td>Session 7: The Doctrines of the Person &amp; Work of Christ (Part 1)</td>
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<td>Session 8: The Doctrines of the Person &amp; Work of Christ (Part 2)</td>
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<th>JANUARY 15</th>
<th><strong>Reading:</strong> Millard Erickson, <em>Christian Theology</em>, Part AA</th>
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<td>Session 10: The Doctrines of the Person &amp; Work of Christ (Part 4)</td>
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*Theology Discussion Group Reading:* Helmut Thielicke’s *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*

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**Select Additional References for Further Study**

**Representative Systematic Theologies ( * = Introductory)**


Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and others. Four volumes. T. & T. Clark, 1956–75. (Neo-Orthodox)


Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*. Hendrickson, 2005. (Evangelical)*


Ed. by John F. Walvoord, Donald K. Campbell, and Roy B. Zuck. 1988. (Dispensational)


Grenz, Stanley J. *A Theology for the Community of God*. Broadman/Holman, 1994. (Neo-Evangelical)*


