

Education and Theology

EDEN

CE 560Z

Christian Education Elective. *Three Hours*
Professor: [Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.
Associate Dean of Christian Education
Professor of Christian Education
Room 14 Reid Hall

Please be sure to read and familiarize yourself with ALL content in this syllabus and in the online classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the EDEN course, Education and Theology. Although I can't give you a personal welcome, as I might do in my on-campus course, I do want to welcome you warmly to this vital learning experience. I want this course to be a significant and vital part of your seminary education. You are one of many students taking advantage of the alternative delivery of high quality theological education through our EDEN distance learning network. Please visit us online at <http://eden.erskine.edu>. I am available when you need me because we aren't limited by office hours or distance. I look forward to getting to know you better as we progress through the course materials. Anytime you experience difficulty or have a question about course content or course requirements, please use one of the communication means identified above to reach me. I pray God's wisdom as you expose yourself to the study of his Word.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to "educate persons for service in the Christian Church."

CONTACT INFORMATION



Email slowe@erskine.edu



Mail P.O. Drawer 668, Due West, SC 29639



Phone 864.379.8748



Website

<http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics/Faculty/SLowe.html>



Fax 864.379.8887

Course Description

This course examines the implications of theological propositions, assumptions, and traditions for the practice of Christian Education. Theological approaches to Christian Education are examined from the perspectives of knowledge about God, revelation, the nature of the church, the nature of humanity, and the mission of the church in the world. The aim of the course is to ensure consistency between theology and Christian Education in the Church's educational programs and ministries.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Explicate the relationship between theology and Christian Education.
2. Expose students to the literature of this relationship from a variety of theological and denominational perspectives.
3. Encourage students to think about how their theology can be applied to Christian Education ministry.
4. Facilitate the formation of each student's theology of Christian Education from within their own theological tradition.

Required Textbooks

There is no required textbook for the course. Instead you will read a selection of chapters and articles from a wide spectrum of theological perspectives each addressing the relationship between Christian Education and Theology. All of the reading selections are posted in the online classroom.

Course Format and Structure

The course Education and Theology will be taught as an online graduate level seminar. Instruction, dialogue, collaboration, reading, critique, presentations, and a lot of critical thinking characterize a graduate seminar. The seminar format lends itself to fostering discipline-specific skills that will enable a field practitioner to thoughtfully engage in effective Christian Education ministry. Students are viewed as co-learners and co-teachers and to that end are expected to take an active rather than a passive role in the course. The focus of the seminar is the relationship between Christian theology and Christian Education ministry practice (local church, Christian school, Christian college, theological school).

Assessing Learning Outcomes

The assessment process, like the rest of the course, will be a collaborative effort. I will assess you, you will assess me, you will assess other learners, and you will assess yourself. My assessment of you will take the form of grading course

projects and written submissions. Your assessment of me will take the form of the standard end-of-course evaluation. Your assessment of other students will take the form of feedback given to your reading of their postings or assignments. Your assessment of yourself will involve a special assessment instrument which I will construct that will enable you to thoughtfully reflect upon your own learning and effort.

Grading Criteria

Grading for all required assignments will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- A Level Work* = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work* = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work* = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work* = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Points to Grade Scale

100-95	A	79-77	C
94-92	A-	76-74	C-
91-89	B+	73-71	D+
88-86	B	70-68	D
85-83	B-	66-64	D-
82-80	C+	63-	F

FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachment (unless otherwise notified).
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, “Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program.” It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, “Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities.” You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High-speed access to the Internet

Theological Disciplines

The course description leaves undefined what is meant by “theology.” In this class you will be encouraged to come at the discussion about the relationship between theology and Christian Education ministry through one of many possible theological disciplines. Typically, the default setting for thinking theologically is systematic theology but that is not the only option. Some prefer to think and study in biblical theology categories that are quite different from a systematic theology approach. Still others may want to take a historical theology approach if they have a more historical interest in how theology has developed over the centuries. It is also possible to take a contemporary theology approach to the course and to think about theology in terms of specialized theologies such as liberation theology, postmodern theology, feminist theology, or any number of current theological trends. We will be reading from several of these theological disciplines but you may wish to specialize in one particular field of theology that is appealing or interesting to you. You will probably want to write your final paper from this perspective. In fact, you will need to decide before you write the paper what your theological discipline will be and write your paper from that perspective.

Strategies Employed to Achieve Learning Outcomes

- Some of our intended learning outcomes can be achieved by direct presentation of information in the form of lectures or other dissemination methods via the online classroom.
- Other outcomes will best be achieved by the use of collaborative techniques involving reciprocal interaction, discussion, dialogue, and debate.

- Some of the outcomes can be achieved individually as well as collectively. Individual reading, thinking, and writing will be an essential component. If each student doesn't engage the material and the course concepts then it will be difficult to achieve outcome # 4 for example.
- Each person's individual preparation will be shared collectively and the intersection of this encounter will spark further insight and deliberation among us. Part of my role, as I see it, is to stimulate, challenge, and prod you into higher levels of critical thinking and reflection about the implications of theology for Christian Education practice.

Course Components

1. One of the central strategies for this course will be the ongoing process of "*Memo'ing*". The memo written to oneself is a central piece of the development of grounded theory in the conduct of action or qualitative research in the social sciences. I want to borrow this technique and use it in the context of this course to assist you in the process of formulating your own theology of Christian Education. The *first step* in the process is to keep a few 3x5 cards with you at all times or have some other mechanism for recording your thoughts. As you read literature for this course and others you are taking jot down ideas, thoughts, concepts, or questions that hit you about the relationship between theology and education.
2. The *second step* is to collate the accumulated cards into a one page *Memo to Myself*. There are no rules for how to write this Memo but use the writing of it as an opportunity to focus your attention on one or two issues, problems, concepts, or ideas that have been percolating in your mind as a result of your reading and class experiences. You will be expected to write and turn in a series of Memos that encourage you to put your thoughts in written form.
3. The *third step* is to place all of the Memos that you write during the course of the semester before you on a table and begin the process of identifying interlocking themes, concepts, problems, or patterns that emerge from your protracted observation of your Memos.
4. After this, begin writing your final theological paper for the course. If you've done your homework all along, you will have an easier time writing this final paper and have a sense of closure to the course.

Course Learning Experiences

1. Read all assigned materials critically, carefully, and thoughtfully.
2. Write three (3) Critical Reaction Memos. Make two copies of your Memo. Give one copy to me electronically via email attachment. Upload* a copy into the online classroom (Memo Depot) for other students to read and react to. The three Memos should be spaced out with one toward the

beginning, one in the middle, and one toward the end of the semester. Your Memo should be a critical reaction to your reading of the chapters or articles assigned.

3. Read three (3) Critical Reaction Memos over the semester written by other students and give honest and helpful feedback by posting a response in the online classroom marked Memo Depot.
4. Regularly participate in and contribute to the discussions in the online classroom. You are expected to make at least one contribution or response each week of the semester except for the week of Thanksgiving Break and Easter Break. These contributions will be made in the Going Deeper section for each week in the semester. No makeup is permitted. The contribution must be made the week it is due or it does not count. The course management software tracks when your postings are made.
5. Write a final critical integration paper that addresses the relationship between Christian Education and theology. The paper should be between 10-15 pages in length, double-spaced, and follow either Turabian or APA style format. The paper should reflect your best thinking and give evidence of your exposure to the required readings in the course and other outside reading you do on your own. At least five appropriate resource citations should appear in your bibliography and give evidence of your interaction with them. Quotations should be limited in use to the support of claims or assertions made by you in the body of your paper. Do not use them to fill space. They must *advance* your argument in a coherent and logical manner. Be sure to edit your submission prior to turning it in for evaluation. The editing process should eliminate typographical errors, grammatical mistakes, and spelling errors. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the seminary policy on plagiarism. Those who violate the plagiarism policy will face stiff sanctions. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism after reading the seminary policy, please contact me and clarify any questions you may have *prior to* submitting your work. The paper is due the Monday *prior to* final exam week as stipulated in the seminary catalog.

* Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the "Memo Depot" discussion forum on weeks 1, 5, and 11 of the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find the assignment listed.
3. Click on "Add a new discussion topic" - this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith's Memo) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Memo 1)
6. Click on the "browse" feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select "post to forum" shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others' assignment:

1. Find the "Memo Depot" discussion forum on weeks 1, 5, and 11 of the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select "open" to read the document instantly or "save" to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting "reply" on the discussion board. Enter your comments in message section. Hit "post to forum" when finished.

COURSE RESOURCES

Click on the links below for information relevant to seminary policies

[Writing Theological Papers](#)

[Style & Form Standards](#)

Relevant Institutional and Course Policies

1. From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." For further details, please read page 71 of the current Seminary Catalog.
2. Inclusive Language Policy. The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.
3. Once you have completed, signed, and submitted a registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and business office billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a drop/add form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.
4. Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the [Student Handbook](#) and *Seminary Catalog*. It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission. The penalty for an infraction of the

plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.

Recommended Literature

Religious Education and Theology. Norma H. Thompson (ed). Religious Education Press, 1982.

Theologies of Religious Education, Randolph Crump Miller (ed). Religious Education Press, 1995.

Theological Approaches to Christian Education. Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller. Abingdon Press, 1990.

Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on theology and Christian

education. Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis and Colin Crowder (eds). Eerdmans, 1996.

The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education. Walter Brueggemann. Fortress Press, 1989.

Biblical Theology and Christian Education. Randolph Crump Miller. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956.

A Theology of Christian Education. Lawrence O. Richards. Zondervan, 1975.

Education That is Christian. Lois E. LeBar. Victor Books, 1989.

A Biblical Theology of Missions. George W. Peters. Moody Press, 1972.

The Shape of Religious Instruction, James Michael Lee. Pflaum, Dayton, Ohio, 1971.