

Survey of Systematic Theology Online ST 551Z

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M. Div. and M.A.T.S. students may not take this course. Required for M.A.E.M., M.A.P.M., and M.C.M. students. Three hours.

Course Description

Using both historical and modern materials, this course aims to deepen awareness of the major doctrines of Christian theology and the current discussion of them.

Course Objectives

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. Fundamental to that task is helping our students to know and understand the things which have been revealed to us by God. This course is a survey of the major doctrines of Christian theology. Its aim is to introduce students to the discipline of systematic theology and to show its place and importance for the ministry of the word in the church. From the lectures, readings, classroom discussion, and writing assignments, diligent students should acquire the foundational knowledge needed for beginning the study of systematic theology, and for understanding what God has revealed in the Scriptures. A student successfully completing this course should be able to:

1. Understand and explain the nature of theology and some basic concepts involved in it.
2. Understand and explain the importance of systematic theology for a right interpretation of Scripture, and for preaching and teaching the word of God.
3. Understand the basic steps involved in moving from the text of Scripture to a statement of the Bible's teaching in a sermon or essay.
4. Understand and explain the "four-fold curriculum," *i.e.*, the connection between exegesis of the Scriptures, systematic theology, historical theology, and practical theology.
5. Understand and explain the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

Required Texts

Students continue to be responsible for securing their own required textbooks. As a convenience, there is a bookstore on the seminary's home page. To access this site and its information, locate textbooks, and compare prices, go to <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>

The online bookstore will be a portal with links to Amazon, CBD, Barnes & Noble, the Erskine Campus Bookstore, and perhaps others. A limited number of copies of each textbook may be available from the Erskine Campus Bookstore, and copies may be ordered through that Bookstore.

1. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. ISBN: 0-310-28670-0.
2. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by Tony Lane and Hilary Osborne. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1987. ISBN: 0-8010-2524-9.

Recommended Reading

J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993. ISBN: 0-8423-3960-4.

Grading Criteria

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog is used to assign a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores are weighted equally. Your final grade is the average of each grade received. A letter grade will be computed on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale recently adopted by the Seminary faculty:

- 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.

Erskine Seminary Grading Scale:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

Course Components

FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachments 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. Failure to include this information will result in a returned assignment.

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

Course Assignments

Community – There is evidence to suggest that students who actively engage online earn higher scores than other students. Online activities provide a rich and stimulating environment of collaboration, interaction, and community building. Students participating online tend to provide more thought-provoking comments, richly detailed responses, and insightful observations. The student

will participate in an online journal. Each student is expected to actively participate in ongoing journal postings in the online classroom for this course located on the EDEN web page.

Unit Exams – There will be three unit exams on the material covered in the lectures and readings assigned in Grudem and Calvin. There will be 20 short answer questions on each exam, each requiring a sentence or two to answer. There will also be one essay question, requiring three to four paragraphs to answer. Each exam will be worth 25% of your grade: 1% for each short answer question and 5% for the essay.

Major paper – *IMPORTANT: Before writing a paper, each student should consult the seminary's approved paper on "Writing Theological Papers" by Dr. Fairbairn. This can be located on the seminary's web page at: <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/fairbairn/>.*

The major paper will consist of a statement of faith (one or two pages, single-spaced), covering the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. This will be accompanied by a paper of 12-15 pages providing further explanation for the statement of faith, giving appropriate Biblical support, and using suitable quotations from the theologians you have read.

IMPORTANT: All papers must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the "Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs" (Erskine Seminary). This document is available on the seminary's web page at <http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/fairbairn/>. In this course, footnotes and a bibliography are required in each paper. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted towards page requirements.

OPTIONAL: Comprehensive Final Exam – **For students who would like an opportunity to improve their grade, a comprehensive final exam will be available. The comprehensive final will include the last unit exam and also forty short answer questions and two essay questions on the material covered in the first two unit exams. It will be worth 75% of your final grade.**

These three components will provide a well-rounded learning experience for the thoughtful and diligent student producing a time commitment of approximately 120 contact hours to complete the course.

Please Note: Successful completion of this distance learning course will require that you set your own schedule and discipline yourself to stay on schedule. If you are taking this course in Summer Term you will need to adjust the due dates to conform to the beginning and ending dates for Summer Term set by the seminary catalog.

Reading/Lecture Schedule

The following course management system is designed to provide you an advance organizer of course assignments.

MODULE #1

All work for the first module should be completed five weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Lecture	Assignments
1	Lectures 1-3	Introduction to Systematic Theology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 15-43 • Read Calvin, pp. 11-35 • Read in your theologian on introduction to systematic theology • Work on major paper • Online journal
2	Lectures 4-6	The Doctrine of Revelation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 47-138 • Read Calvin, pp. 39-47 • Read in your theologian on the doctrine of revelation • Work on major paper • Online journal
3	Lectures 7-9	The Doctrine of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 141-225 • Read in your theologian on God's being and attributes • Work on major paper • Online journal
4	Lectures 10-12	The Doctrines of the Trinity, Creation, and Providence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 226-273, 315-354 • Read Calvin, pp. 51-60, 69-82 • Read in your theologian on these doctrines • Work on major paper • Online journal
5	Lectures 13-15	The Doctrine of Humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 439-525 • Read Calvin, pp. 60-65, 85-106 • Read in your theologian on the doctrine of humanity • Work on major paper • Online journal • First Exam: Lectures and assignments weeks 1 – 5.

MODULE #2

All work for the second module should be completed ten weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Lectures	Assignments
6	Lectures 16-18	The Doctrine of the Person of Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 529-567 • Read Calvin, pp. 125-127 • Read in your theologian on the person of Christ • Work on major paper • Online journal
7	Lectures 19-21	The Doctrine of the Work of Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 568-633 • Read Calvin, pp. 127-140 • Read in your theologian on the work of Christ • Work on major paper • Online journal
8	Lectures 22-24	The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 634-653 • Read Calvin, pp. 143-144 • Read in your theologian on the Holy Spirit • Work on major paper • Online journal
9	Lectures 25-27	The Doctrine of Salvation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 692-745 • Read Calvin, pp. 144-193 • Read in your theologian on the doctrine of salvation • Work on major paper • Online journal
10	Lectures 28-30	The Doctrine of Salvation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 746-809 • Read Calvin, pp. 194-227 • Read in your theologian on the doctrine of salvation • Work on major paper • Online journal • Second Exam: Lectures and assignments, weeks 6 - 10

MODULE #3

All work for the third module should be completed fourteen weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Assignments
11	The Doctrine of the Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 853-903

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Calvin, pp. 231-250 • Read in your theologian on the church • Work on major paper • Online journal
12		<p>The Doctrine of the Sacraments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp. 950-1002 • Read Calvin, pp. 253-271 • Read in your theologian on the sacraments • Work on major paper • Online journal
13		<p>The Doctrine of the Last Things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Grudem, pp.810-839, 1091-1167 • Read Calvin, pp. 224-227 • Read in your theologian on the last things • Work on major paper • Online journal
14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final exam period: Last unit exam and optional final are given. • Major paper is due.

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

Conduct in Theological Discussions: Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

Language about God and Humanity: Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Late or Incomplete Work: The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the

discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F."

Drop/Add/Withdrawal: Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community:

Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered 'documented' when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred, and when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism was motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own. Where such plagiarism involves the theft of the academic work of another student, whether at Erskine or any other institution, it shall be designated 'documented theft of another student's work.'

The instructor involved, in consultation with the Dean, may recommend measures deemed appropriate. In cases of documented plagiarism or documented theft of another student's work, the offending student will automatically receive the following penalties:

- Failure of the course(s) in which plagiarized or stolen work is submitted
- Dismissal from the Seminary for a minimum of one semester
- Forfeiture of the right to tuition refunds during the semester(s) affected

Before such penalties are imposed, a committee of at least three faculty members must agree that they are appropriate to the case. Appeals in such cases may only be addressed, in writing, to the President of Erskine College and Theological Seminary.