



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

## **Systematic Theology I**

**ST 601**

**Fall, 2011**

Richard E. Burnett, Ph.D.

Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Bowie Divinity Hall

**Erskine Theological Seminary**

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**Office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays, 2:30-5:30 p.m.** I will make every reasonable effort to be in my office during these hours. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, please contact me by email or telephone to schedule an appointment.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course begins a systematic presentation of the Christian faith. Using Biblical constructs, historical developments, and confessional statements, students explore Introduction to Systematic Theology (including concepts, methodology, and systems) and the Doctrines of Revelation and Scripture.

*Required for M.Div. and M.A.T.S. students. Three hours.*

### **COURSE PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of the basic teachings of the Christian Church and essential concepts of Christian theology. In accord with the seminary's mission statement, one of the goals set for students in this course is that they will be prepared to utilize the Church's historical and theological heritage as an important resource in their personal spiritual development and ministry.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will be able to:

1. **Define** key terms and concepts necessary for understanding standard theological literature and engaging in faithfully informed theological conversation.
2. **Understand** how such terms and concepts relate to Holy Scripture and how they emerged and have developed in the life of the Church.
3. **Grasp** something of the interconnectedness and beauty of the various doctrines of the Church.

4. **Evaluate** at least some of the Church's major theological claims in light of the criticisms of voices both within and without the Church and in light of the demands of pastoral ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
5. **Experience** something of the joy and rigor of theological inquiry.

### **COURSE METHOD:**

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's familiarity with the vocabulary, themes and concepts of Systematic Theology. This will be accomplished through readings, independent research, class lectures and discussion. Students will demonstrate their familiarity with this material by completing the course requirements as stated below.

The second component is **Classroom Participation**. A vital exchange of ideas is essential to the process of exploration, and all students are to be prepared for class discussions by completing the assigned readings prior to class. To ensure and gauge such participation, 5 or 6 pop-quizzes will be given throughout the course of the semester.

The third is the **Reflective Component**. With the first two volumes of Donald Bloesch's *Christian Foundations* series and John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as its primary texts, this course invites students to engage in a vigorous, wide-ranging discussion informed by both ancient and modern concerns. An effort will be made in class to relate readings in Bloesch and Calvin, but close, detailed readings in Bloesch will be expected on a week-to-week basis and will be the primary focus of each quiz. However, each student will also be expected to have read Book I of Calvin's *Institutes* by the end of the semester and will write a paper that demonstrates a sincere and thoughtful effort to integrate insights from the assigned readings in Bloesch and Calvin. Each student will also complete a final examination.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks (below). As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Bloesch, Donald G. *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology*.  
Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1992. ISBN 0-8308-1411-6

Bloesch, Donald G. *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration and Interpretation*.  
Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1994. ISBN 0-8308-1412-4

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I-II. Ed. John T. McNeill. Trans. Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960. ISBN 0-664-21882-2

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:**

Elwell, Walter A. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Grand Rapids: Baker. 2001. ISBN 1-84227-082-8

Ferguson, Sinclair and Wright, David F. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove, Illinois. InterVarsity. 1988. ISBN 0-8308-1400-0

Harvey, Van. A. *A Handbook of Theological Terms*. New York: Macmillan. 1964. ISBN 0-02-085430-7

Mannion, James. *The Everything Philosophy Book: Understanding the Basic Concepts of Great Thinkers-Socrates to Sartre* (Avon, Massachusetts: Adams Media, 2002). ISBN 1580626440

Richardson, Alan and Bowden, John. *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster. 1983. ISBN 0-664-22748-1

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Requirement One (25% of total grade):** Each student will write a 12-point type, 10 page, double spaced paper, following the standards in Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> edition, on a common topic discussed by both Bloesch and Calvin in the assigned readings. The paper topic must be approved by the professor and will consist of a clearly stated thesis, antithesis, and synthesis: 1) a *comparison* of Bloesch and Calvin on a specific point or theme, i.e., a discussion of how and why they appear to agree or disagree about a specific point or theme (thesis); 2) a well-crafted, well-researched, well-documented *objection to or qualification* of their individual teachings on this particular point or theme (antithesis); 3) and a *critical theological evaluation* of the objection to or qualification of their teachings on this particular point or theme (synthesis). For further assistance in writing this paper, please see “Writing Theological Papers” located under “Other Sources” on the page located at: <http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics/MDIV.html>  
This paper will be due on Dec. 2.

**Requirement Two (25% of total grade):** Each student will complete a final exam that will cover material from reading assignments, lectures and classroom discussion. The final exam will be on Dec. 6.

**Requirement Three (50% of total grade):** Each student will be expected to have read and be able to discuss the reading assignments each week. To ensure and gauge such participation, 5 or 6 “pop-quizzes” will be given throughout the semester. These quizzes will consist of 10 basic questions (and one extra credit question) on the required reading

material assigned for that day. The questions will be basic, content-oriented questions that most any attentive reader should be able to answer.

**OVERALL GRADING SCALE:**

See Seminary Catalogue, 85-86.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

Evaluation of your work in this course will be based on *completion* of all assignments and participation in class sessions. The distribution of weight for grades is:

Requirement One (Paper)	25%
Requirement Two (Final examination)	25%
Requirement Three (Classroom Participation & Quizzes)	<u>50%</u>
	100%

The criteria for evaluation are grasp of material covered, sensitivity to the theological issues involved, originality and creativity in doing the assignments, correct use of written English, and overall contribution to the class.

Written work is due at class time on the date scheduled in the syllabus unless re-negotiated in class. Written work turned in late is subject to grade reduction. Written work turned in excessively late is subject to refusal.

**SEMINARY POLICIES:**

Click this link and read carefully as a part of this course syllabus contract:  
[http://seminary.erskine.edu/content\\_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf](http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf)

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Aug. 31 Introduction: Why Study Systematic Theology?**

Recommended Reading:

Chesterton, G.K. *Orthodoxy*. London: The Bodley Head, 1909.

Wells, David F. *No Place For Truth, or, Whatever Happened To Evangelical Theology?* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993. ISBN 0-8028-3713-1

**Sept. 7 Where To Begin? The Crisis of Authority in the Modern World**

**NB: Given the significance of the material presented this day class**

**may extend to 5:00 p.m.!**

Bloesch, A *Theology of Word & Spirit*, 11-33

Allen, Diogenes. "The End of the Modern World" in *Christian Scholar's Review*, 20, June 1993, 339-347.

Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 10-13, "Dogma and Doubt in a Pluralist Society" and pp.14-26, "The Roots of Pluralism"

Recommended Reading:

Lohse, Bernard. "Introduction: Dogma and the History of Dogma" in *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*. Trans. F. Ernest Stoeffler. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, 1-22.

Mills, David. Editor. Touchstone, "Necessary Doctrine: Why Dogma is Needed & Why Substitutes Fail"  
<http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=15-02-023-f>

Okholm, Dennis L. & Phillips, Timothy R. *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation*. Downers Grove, Illinois. IVP. 1996.

Sauter, Gerhard. *Gateways to Dogmatics: Reasoning Theologically for the Life of the Church*. Trans. Geoffrey Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003.

Sayers, Dorothy, L. *Creed or Chaos?* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949).

**Sept. 14      **Big Questions in Modern Theology: Faith and Reason; Theology and Philosophy; Revelation and History, etc.****

Donald Bloesch. *A Theology of Word & Spirit*, 34-66

Recommended Reading:

Heron, Alasdair I.C. *A Century of Protestant Theology*. Philadelphia. Westminster, 1980. ISBN 0-664-24346-0

Kierkegaard, Soren. *Fear and Trembling*. Trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: University Press, 1983. ISBN 0-691-02026-4

Mackintosh, H.R. *Types of Modern Theology*. London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd, 1937.

**Sept. 21      The Language and Task of Theology**

Donald Bloesch. *A Theology of Word & Spirit*, 67-102, 107-142

Recommended Reading:

Battles, Ford Lewis Battles. "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity" *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 31 (1977): 19-38.

Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia. Westminster, 1984. ISBN 0-664-21829-6

Hunsinger, George. *How To Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. See especially 165-173. ISBN 0-19-505974-3

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville, Kentucky. Westminster-John Knox, 2005. ISBN 0-664-22327-3

**Sept. 28      The Concepts of Revelation, Nature, and Grace**

Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit*, 143-178; 184-211

John Calvin, *Institutes* I.1.1-5, 35-69

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* I (1871); reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989, 18-30.

Recommended Reading:

Barth, Karl. "The Christian Understanding of Revelation" in *Against the Stream*, London. SCM, 1954, 203-240.

Barth, Karl and Brunner, Emil Brunner. *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace: By Professor Dr. Emil Brunner And the Reply "No!"* By Karl Barth. Wipf & Stock, 2002. ISBN:1-592-44112-2

Berkouwer, G.C. *Studies in Dogmatics: General Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Wm. B. Eerdmans. 1955. ISBN: 0-8028-3032-3

Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Wm. B. Eerdmans. 1994. See especially 59-145. ISBN 0-8028-4180-5.

Parker, T.H.L. *Calvin: An Introduction To His Thought*. Louisville. Westminster/John Knox, 1995, 13-27.

Outler, Albert C. "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral – In John Wesley"  
[http://wesley.nnu.edu/fileadmin/imported\\_site/wesleyjournal/1985-wtj-20-1.pdf](http://wesley.nnu.edu/fileadmin/imported_site/wesleyjournal/1985-wtj-20-1.pdf)

**Oct. 5            The Question of Theological Method: Practical Implications For Ministry**

Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit*, 212-272

Recommended Reading:

Hauerwas, Stanley. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony – A Provocative Christian Assessment of Culture and Ministry for People Who Know That Something is Wrong*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-687-36159

Mouw, Richard J. *He Shines In All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace*. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Wm. B. Eerdmans. 2001. ISBN 0-8028-2111-1

Okholm, Dennis L. and Phillips, Timothy R., Editors. *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation*. Downers Grove, Illinois. IVP, 1996. See especially 7-20. ISBN 0-8308-1869-3

**Oct. 12           The Doctrine of Holy Scripture & The Question of Biblical Authority**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 11-45

Karl Barth, "The Strange New World of The Bible," *The Word of God and The Word of Man*, 28-50.

Recommended Reading:

Berkouwer, G.C. *Studies In Dogmatics: Holy Scripture*. Trans. Jack B. Rogers. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975. ISBN 0-8028-3394-2

Burnett, Richard E. "Historical Criticism" in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, general editor, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Baker Academic, 2005, 290-293

Burnett, Richard E. "John Calvin and the Sensus Literalis" in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 57 (2004): 1 – 13.

Smart, James D. *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church: A Study in Hermeneutics*. Philadelphia. Westminster. 1970. ISBN 0-664-24894-2

**Oct. 19            The Doctrine of Revelation**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 46-84

Recommended Reading:

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics* I/1:88-124 (§4 “The Word of God In Its Threefold Form”) (On Reserve)

Burnett, Richard E. “John Calvin on Secular and Sacred History” in *Tributes to John Calvin* (Philippsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 217-246.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Maryknoll, New York. Orbis Books, 1992. ISBN: 0-88344-842.

**Oct. 26            John Calvin and the Doctrine of Holy Scripture**

John Calvin, *Institutes* I.6.1-8.13, 69-92

McGowan, A.T.B. “John Calvin’s Doctrine of Scripture” in *Tributes to John Calvin* (Philippsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 356-380.

Nicole, Roger. “John Calvin and Inerrancy” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25.4 (1982): 425-442.

Reid, J.K.S. “Calvin on the Authority of Holy Scripture” in *The Authority of Scripture: A Study of Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible*. New York. Harper & Brothers, 1958, 29-55.

“Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics” (1982) in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25.4 (1982): 397-401.

**Nov. 2            The Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Illumination**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 85-140.

Recommended Reading:

Bromiley, Geoffrey W. “The Church Doctrine of Inspiration” in *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958, 205-217.

Hodge, A.A & Warfield, Benjamin B. “Inspiration” in *The Presbyterian Review* 6 (April) 1881, 225-260.

Warfield, Benjamin B. "Inspiration," from *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, General Editor, 3. Chicago: The Howard-Severance Co., 1915, 1473-1483. Also in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932, 1, 77-112.

**Nov. 9            The Interpretation of Scripture and The So-Called "Hermeneutical Problem"**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 141-208 (you may skip pp.209-222)

Recommended Reading:

Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. Trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. Indianapolis, Indiana. Bobbs-Merrill, 1958. ISBN 0-672-60262-8.

Burnett, Richard E. *Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN 0-8028-0999-5

**Nov. 16            Rudolf Bultmann: A Test Case in "Making The Gospel Relevant"**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 223-277

Recommended Reading:

Barth, Karl. "Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt To Understand Him," *Kerygma and Myth*, II. Trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1962, 83-132).

Tillich, Paul. "You Are Accepted," sermon in *The Shaking Of The Foundations*. London: SCM Press, 1949, 153-163

**Nov. 19-27        Thanksgiving Break!**

**Nov. 30            The Question of Truth and Open Season on Any Game!**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 278-302

Recommended Reading: The Holy Bible, again!

**Dec. 6             Final examination**

THOUGH NO MAJOR ALTERATIONS IN THIS SYLLABUS ARE ANTICIPATED, THIS SYLLABUS IS TO BE CONSIDERED TENTATIVE UNTIL THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS.