

# **Systematic Theology I**

**ST 601**

**Fall, 2008**

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 pm.** 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.

## **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:**

**Note: Required textbooks may be ordered through the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.**

Bloesch, Donald G. *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1992.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration and Interpretation*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1994.

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

### **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 essay on "Writing Theological Papers" on Professor Fairbairn's website: [http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics\\_Files/Faculty/Fairbairn.html](http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/Faculty/Fairbairn.html)  
This paper will be due on Dec.3.

**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.10.

**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, p.30.

## **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.

The course depends heavily on class participation, so students are expected to be present for each class meeting in its entirety. Seminary policy allows students to miss one class (3 hours) without penalty. Students who miss more than three hours will be subject to grade reduction in the course.

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:**

### **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.**

### **Incompletes**

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."

### **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").

### **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.

### **Chapel Attendance Policy (FOR TUESDAY-THURSDAY ON-CAMPUS CLASSES)**

All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday courses) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the catalog or registration booklet for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per chapel fee if you attend fewer chapels than required.

**Style and Bibliographical Formatting Requirements** - All papers must be typed/processed (twelve-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in Turabian, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 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.

### **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. 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.

See the seminary catalogue or student handbook for further information.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

#### **Sept. 3            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. 10            Where To Begin? The Crisis of Authority in the Modern World**

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*, pp.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/docs/issues/15.2docs/15-2pg23.html>]

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. 17      **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. 24      **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

**Oct. 1            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.

Outler, Albert C. "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral – In John Wesley"  
<[http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan\\_theology/theojrnl/16-20/20-01.htm](http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/16-20/20-01.htm)>

**Oct. 8            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. 15      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*, pp.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.

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

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.

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. 22      Missions Emphasis Week – No Class**

**Oct. 29            The Doctrine of Revelation**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 46-84

Recommended Reading:

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

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

**Nov. 5             The Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Illumination**

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

\*Be sure to have read by now John Calvin, *Institutes I.6.1-8.13*, 69-92

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.

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. 12           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. 19           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

**Dec. 3            The Question of Truth and Open Season on Any Game!**

Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture*, 278-302

Recommended Reading: The Holy Bible, again!

**Dec. 10           Final examination**

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