

## **Systematic Theology II**

**ST602**

**Spring 2009**

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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 the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Humanity, and the Doctrine of Christ.

### **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 II 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 (May 12).

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:** (Note: Required textbooks are available from the Erskine Theological Seminary Bookstore at [http://www.ecampus.com/erskine.](http://www.ecampus.com/erskine))

Bloesch, Donald G. *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1995.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Jesus Christ: Savior & Lord*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1997.

Bloesch, Donald G. *The Battle for the Trinity*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2001.

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

\*Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993.

\*Not required, but highly recommended.

**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

McKim, Donald K. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. 1996. ISBN 0-664-22089-4

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). This paper will be due on May 12.

**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 May 9.

**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.36.

## **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.

### **Office Hours**

My normal office hours are printed in this syllabus. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I strongly recommend that you call or e-mail to schedule an appointment.

### **Official Seminary Class Attendance Policy:**

Class participation is considered an important part of the total educational experience at Erskine Seminary. Students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis and are responsible for the mastery of all materials required in the course. Each professor will indicate in writing the specific class attendance policy at the beginning of each course. In general, students are allowed up to three hours of unexcused absence without penalty. Students wishing to take a course which meets four times over the semester **must** attend the first meeting of the course.

**Policy Regarding Absences:**

Students are required to attend all class sessions. If students have to be absent for any reason, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses more than three class sessions for any reason will automatically fail the course.

**Style and Bibliographical Formatting Requirements:**

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). 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.

**Chapel Attendance Policy:**

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.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Feb. 4            Introduction:**

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 11-30

Bloesch, *Battle for the Trinity*, xi-xviii

**Feb. 11            Critical Reflection Upon Our Talk About God**

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 31-58

Bloesch, *Battle for the Trinity*, 1-55

Recommended Reading:

Goodloe, James C. “On the Trinity” in *The Presbyterian Outlook*, Feb. 18, 2002 (On Reserve).

**Feb. 18            The Transcendent God of Revelation**

Bloesch. *God The Almighty*, 59-102

Recommended Reading:

Lewis, Alan E. *Between Cross & Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday*. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Eerdmans. 2001. ISBN 0-8028-4702-1

**Feb. 25      God The Creator, Redeemer, and Ruler**

Bloesch. *God The Almighty*, 103-136

Recommended Reading:

Farrer, Austin. *Love Almighty & Ills Unlimited*. Garden City, New York. Doubleday. 1961.

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 40-96

**March 4      The Love and Holiness of God**

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 137-165

Recommended Reading:

*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, ch.2, “Of God And Of The Holy Trinity” (On Reserve)

Hendry, George S. “Of God, And Of The Holy Trinity” in *The Westminster Confession For Today* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 40-48. (On Reserve)

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 40-65

**March 11     The Doctrine of The Trinity**

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 166-204

Recommended Reading:

Braaten, Carl E. “The Trinity Is the Model of the Church’s Unity and Mission” in *No Other Gospel! Christianity among the World’s Religions*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992, 103-118 ISBN 0-8006-2539-0

Torrance, Thomas F. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of The Ancient Catholic Church*. Edinburgh. T & T Clark. 1988. ISBN 0567292193 (On Reserve)

**March 18     The Doctrine of God: Problems and Temptations**

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 205-260

Bloesch, *Battle for the Trinity*, 57-106

**March 25      The Doctrine of Humanity and Sin**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 15-52

Recommended Reading:

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 97-111.

Hesselink, I. John. *On Being Reformed: Distinctive Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings*. New York: Reformed Church Press, 1988, 43-47. ISBN 0-916466-01-09 (On Reserve)

Plantinga, Cornelius. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995. ISBN 0-8028-4218

**April 1        The Doctrine of Christ**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 53-79

Recommended Reading:

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 124-159

**April 8        Easter/ Spring Break!**

**April 15      The Doctrines of The Virgin Birth & The Preexistence of Jesus Christ**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 80-120, 132-143

Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 95-100.

**April 22      The Doctrine of The Atonement  
(Erskine Spring Conference Lectures and Preaching Session, 1:30-3:30 p.m.)**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 144-174

Recommended Reading:

Baille, Donald M. *God Was In Christ*. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1948. See especially 157-179

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 150-159

**April 29      The Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 175-209

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1957, 43-78, 272-297. ISBN 0-6848-1500-1 (On Reserve)

Recommended Reading:

Leith, John H. *Basic Christian Doctrine*, 171-209

Leith, John H. "The Christian Life in Relation to Justification by Faith Alone" in *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 87-106. (On Reserve)

Sauter, Gerhard. "God Creates Faith – Do We Consent" in *Protestant Theology at the Crossroads* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 77-94.

**May 6            The Lordship and Finality of Christ**

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 210-249

Recommended Reading:

Braaten, Carl E. "Christ Is God's Final, Not the Only, Revelation" in *No Other Gospel! Christianity among the World's Religions*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992, 65-81. ISBN 0-8006-2539-0

**May 13          Final Exam**

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

