

Systematic Theology II

ST602

Spring 2008

Richard E. Burnett, Ph.D.

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

Bowie Divinity Hall

Erskine Theological Seminary

Telephone: (864) 379-6551 (Seminary Office 17)

Seminary Fax: (864) 379-3171

E-mail address: burnett@erskine.edu

Office hours: Thursdays and Fridays, 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 continues 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 21st 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.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Order textbooks from the Erskine Seminary Virtual Bookstore at www.ecampus.com/erskine from January 4, 2008.

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*, 2nd 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 6th 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 9.

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 during the exam week (May 12-14), date to be announced by the Registrar.

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.3.

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 you have completed, signed, and submitted your registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a **binding contract**. Your 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.**

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.

Inclusive Language

The seminary encourages all student 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.

Incompletes:

Students should review the Seminary policy on “Incompletes” in the Seminary catalog. A grade of “Incomplete” is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only when the student (1) has completed most of his/her course work and (2) has been providentially hindered from doing the rest of the course work. Note that there is a processing fee associated with “Incompletes,” and that “Incompletes” must be completed by the stated deadline or they automatically become an “F.” Only the Dean may approve extensions of deadlines for “Incompletes.”

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. 6 Introduction:

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 11-30

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

Feb. 13 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. 20 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. 27 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 5 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 12 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 19 Easter/ Spring Break!

(Note Marvin McMickle Workshop on Preaching in the African-American Tradition on March 26 at 1:00 p.m., in Bowie Chapel, part of the Erskine Lecture Series.)

March 26 The Doctrine of God: Problems and Temptations

Bloesch, *God The Almighty*, 205-260

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

April 2 The Doctrine of Humanity and Sin

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 25-52

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 9 The Doctrine of Christ

Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 53-79

Recommended Reading:

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

(Note that Robinson Lecture #2 will be presented at 1:30 p.m. and Whitesides' Preaching Service #2 at 2:30 p.m. on April 16, part of the Erskine Seminary Annual Spring Conference.)

April 16 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 23 The Doctrine of The Atonement

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 30 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 7 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.