

ST 806: SEMINAR IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Fall 2009

Required for Th.M. Students Majoring in Systematic Theology

Due West: Thursdays, 8:00-11:00 AM

3 Semester Credit Hours

Professor: R. J. Gore, Jr., D.Min., Ph.D.

PO Box 594, Due West, SC 29639

<http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/gore/gore.htm>

FALL 09 OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday: 1:30-4:30

Other times arranged by appointment

Contact me at inaliamATgmail.com for appointment and for submitting course work

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, I recommend that you call or email me to schedule an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In a seminar format, students examine both the methodology and content of systematic theology. A primary topic of focus is chosen for each semester. The course involved substantial reading and research in primary and secondary sources, both classical and contemporary. Students present the findings of their research in both oral presentations and written essays. *Required for Th.M. students majoring in Systematic Theology. Elective for other Th.M. students. Offered alternate years. Three hours.*

Special Note: The primary topic of focus chosen for this semester is the doctrine of the word. The doctrine will be examined exegetically, historically, and systematically. Both historical and contemporary controversies will be considered. According to the student's concentration in the Th.M. program, a major paper (4000-5,000 words) will be completed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, Erskine Theological Seminary offers the Master of Theology (Th.M.) degree. Its purpose is to equip students with skills and experience in advanced research in Biblical or theological studies. This course aims to fulfill that purpose by a comprehensive study of the doctrine of the word.

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

1. Demonstrate understanding of advanced theological methodology
2. Understand the Bible's own teaching about the doctrine of the Word in light of its own literary, historical, and theological settings
3. Know the broad outline of the church's historic view of Scripture

4. Evaluate historic and contemporary controversies concerning Scripture
5. Gain practice in even-handed, comprehensive evaluation of theological ideas

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Warfield, Benjamin B. *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. ISBN-10: 1436714060
 Publisher: Kessinger Publishing

Carson, D.A. and John Woodbridge, eds. *Scripture and Truth*. ISBN-10: 0801025702
 Publisher: Baker

Rogers, Jacn and Donald McKim. *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*.
 ISBN-10: 1579102131 Publisher: Wipf and Stock

Beale, G.K. *The Erosion of Inerrancy in the Evangelical Church*. ISBN-10: 1433502038
 Publisher: Crossway

McGowan, Andrew. *The Divine Spiration of Scripture*. ISBN-10: 978-1-84474-2202
 Publisher: Apollos

Gaffin, Jr., Richard B. *God's Word in Servant Form*. ISBN- 10: 978-0-9800370-0-5
 Publisher: Reformed Academic Press

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>. A limited number of copies of each textbook will be available from the Erskine Campus Bookstore, and copies may be ordered through that Bookstore.

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 own mastery of biblical, theological, and historical material essential to an understanding of the doctrine of the word. This will be accomplished through class lectures and textbook reading (requirement 2 below).

The second component is the **Research Component**. Each student will refresh and advance his/her skills in research (requirement 1 below) and will complete a formal research project (requirement 3 below).

The third is the **Classroom Component**, the students' collective reflection on the doctrine of the word amidst historical and contemporary controversies. This reflection will be facilitated by student presentations of their research and responses to other students' research (requirement 3 below).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One (10 points): Each student will read the book *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* by Warfield and will write a brief (3-5 pages, double spaced), informal paper in which he/she explains the most important issues Warfield identified in the controversies concerning the doctrine of inspiration. It is highly recommended that the student do this reading before the seminar begins, and the paper is due on Sep. 17.

Requirement Two (10 points): Each student will read the remaining textbooks in their entirety. Students should do this reading as early in the semester as possible. On Oct. 15, the student will turn in a signed statement indicating that he/she has completed this reading.

Requirement Three (80 points): Each student will choose one issue from the list below and will research the issue/topic in preparation for an in-class presentation and final research paper.

The student may choose from the following areas of research:

- Development of the Canon
- Inspiration
- Illumination
- Inerrancy
- The autographs, redaction, and textual transmission
- Textual Criticism
- John Calvin on Scripture
- B.B. Warfield on Scripture
- Cornelius Van Til on Scripture
- Abraham Kuyper on Scripture
- Herman Bavinck on Scripture
- Karl Barth on Scripture
- _____ on Scripture
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy
- The Peter Enns Controversy
- Postmodernism and Scripture

In connection with this research, the following will take place:

- 1) The student will produce a preliminary 6-8 page paper presenting the findings of this research and will turn in this paper electronically (as a WORD attachment to an email) the week before that issue is to be discussed.
- 2) The paper will be given to another student who is the designated respondent to the paper.
- 3) The student will present the findings of his/her research to the class.
- 4) The designated respondent will react to the paper.
- 5) The student will lead a discussion on the issue/topic.

- 6) On the basis of feedback from the respondent, the professor, and the rest of the class, the student will produce a final paper of 4000-5000 words, due four weeks NLT Dec. 10. This paper is to be submitted electronically.

The grading for this requirement will be as follows:

Preliminary written paper:	10 points
Oral presentation and leading of discussion:	10 points
Oral response to another student's paper:	10 points
Final written paper:	50 points

Criteria for Grading the Final Research Paper:

Writing that is grammatically correct and stylistically clear

A form that adheres to the guidelines in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition)

Adherence to the parameters of the assignment (length, scope)

Choice of a topic that is suitable for this course and for the length of the paper

Clear organization of material

In the introduction, a clear statement of the topic, the specific question to be addressed, and the way the paper will address it

In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant primary and secondary sources

In the body, evidence that the student grasps historical and philosophical information

In the body, evidence that the student understands theological and spiritual concepts

Depth and creativity in handling the topic and question

OVERALL 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 EXPECTATIONS and 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. 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.

Attendance: If a student misses more than one class period (3 hours), or significant time from classes totaling more than 3 class hours during the semester, he/she may be required to do make-up work. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the professor immediately (before the missed class time if possible so that taping can be arranged) to have the extra work and “due

date” assigned. All make-up work must be handed in by noon on Dec. 15. Except in extraordinary circumstances, a student cannot complete this course if he/she misses more than two class days (or 6 hours total). If this happens, the student must consult with the professor as soon as possible to see whether the reasons for the absences warrant special arrangements to complete the material for the course.

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.

Return of Written Work: Federal privacy guidelines do not allow the return of student documents to an unsecured mail box *unless* the student grants permission in writing. Students who wish to have their work returned as early as possible to their student mail boxes will place their student box number on the front page of their work. This will be viewed as written permission to return documents in this manner. Students who decline to give such permission (that is, students who do not write their box numbers on the work) will get their work back in person at a later time.

Late Work: Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. The final deadline for submitting all late work is noon on Monday, Dec. 15. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of “0,” unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to receive an incomplete for the course. (See the policy on incompletes just below.)

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 fill out 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 will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his final grade report. An “I” in this course must be removed by March 1, 2009. Only the Dean may grant the extension of an incomplete beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, the grade automatically becomes an “F.”

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 one attends fewer chapels than required.

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:

Plagiarism injures the community by inhibiting the recognition and cultivation of gifts imparted by the Spirit. Clearly unattributed use of the words and/or ideas of others fails to give appreciative recognition of their gifts. But this illegitimate appropriation of the gifts of others also blocks the recognition and cultivation of the actual gifts of the person engaged in plagiarism.

Plagiarism creates an atmosphere of falsehood in the community's discernment and cultivation of gifts, both within the Christian community and in God's larger creation. Since freedom comes only by way of truth (Jn. 8:32), such falsehood can only result in captivity, and therefore has no place in the Christian community.

On this basis, the Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgement of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and electronic media.

1. Quotations. Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.

2. Paraphrasing. Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in the text.

3. Ideas. Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the idea has been further elaborated by the student.

4. Bibliography. All the sources consulted in the preparation of an essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.

In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community:

1. Multiple submission. Failure to obtain prior written permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.

2. False citation. The deliberate attribution to, or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not, in fact, obtained.

3. Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge. Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism. The Seminary's provisions for "due process" apply in cases of alleged plagiarism.

[The italicized statement above is used by permission of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, based upon a document adapted by LTSP, with permission, from "Princeton University Rights, Rules and Responsibilities," 1990 Edition. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.]

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.

REMEMBER- if you can GOOGLE IT, SO CAN I!

COURSE OUTLINE—LECTURE SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

On Sep. 17, a detailed schedule will be drawn up, giving the due date for each student's preliminary paper, the dates for each student's presentation, and the date each student is to be the respondent.

Sep. 3	Introduction to Systematic Theology
Sep. 10	Overview of the contemporary context
Sep. 17	<u>Informal paper on Warfield is due.</u> Overview of historic context
Sep. 24	Overview of Biblical context
Oct. 1	Selected focus
Oct. 8-Oct 22	Student-led discussion
Oct 29	NO-CLASS
Nov. 5-12	Student-led discussion
Nov. 19-26	NO CLASS – Professor in TX/Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 3	Student-led discussion
Dec. 10	Student-led discussion
Dec. 17	All Make-Up and Late Work Due (All late work penalized)