



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

**Introduction to Theological Education
PM 501F
Spring 2012**

Instructor: [Mary E. Lowe, Ed.D.](#)

Email: mlope@erskine.edu

Phone: 864.379.6669

Fax: 864.379.8887

Address: P. O. Box 668, Due West, SC 29639

[McCain Library](#) (toll free) 1-877-876-4348

Three credit hours

Meeting times: Saturdays: 2/18, 3/17, 4/14, 5/5
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Meeting location: Erskine Seminary's Florence Campus - [First Presbyterian Church](#)
700 Park Avenue, Florence, SC 29501
Phone: (843) 662-1726

Course Website: <http://ets.mrooms3.net/>

Online access information will be emailed to students' Erskine email addresses prior to the first class meeting. Please use your Erskine email address when communicating in this course.

This course is considered a hybrid class. Hybrid courses are those that blend face-to-face classroom teaching and learning with online technologies in order to provide students with more opportunities for learning, spiritual formation through community building, and deeper insight and reflection. Internet access is a must for this course.

This course utilizes Erskine's Virtual Campus learning management system as a place to make a number of required class resources available to you. Thus, you will need frequent access to a computer with a reliable internet connection. After you are officially registered for the course, you will be provided information necessary to access the online course or portion of the course. Information will be sent to the student's Erskine email address and access to the online course site should be done in a timely manner.

Course Description

The design of this course is to make students aware of their needs for whole person development in preparation for Christian service. Students will explore learning skills that enhance academic performance as well as ministry effectiveness. Students will also explore foundational matters in spiritual formation that equip them to facilitate spiritual development in themselves and others.

Course Objectives

1. To expose students to an understanding of the essential skills of self-directed learning in a graduate seminary context.
2. To promote students' ability to evaluate learning situations and determine the best learning strategy for them to employ, given the constraints of their own learning style and the educational outcomes of the particular learning experience.
3. To equip students with an understanding of graduate level expectations of academic work.
4. To understand the Biblical concepts and definitions in the field of spiritual formation.
5. To understand and identify the dynamic process of Christian spiritual growth and be able to help others to use spiritual disciplines for growth.

Resources

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. 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 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.

Orienting Adults to Learning in Theological Education, Steve & Mary Lowe, 2005 (available in online classroom)

Assessing Adult Learning in Theological Education, Steve & Mary Lowe, 2005 (available in online classroom)

Cetuk, V. (1998). *What to Expect in Seminary: Theological Education as Spiritual Formation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Cooper, D. (2008). *So You're Thinking About Going to Seminary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

Recommended Websites

<http://www-distance.syr.edu/sdltools.html>

<http://www-distance.syr.edu/sdlskills.html>

http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2005/Internet_Status_2005.pdf.pdf

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

Grading Criteria and Scale

In light of the teaching and learning philosophy of this course, learners will be encouraged toward self-directedness. Learners will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. To that end, learners will make use of learning contracts. Webster (1991) defines *contract* as, "an agreement between one or more parties for the doing or not doing of something specified" (p. 295-296). Webster (1991) also defines *learning* as, "knowledge acquired by systematic study in any field of scholarly application" (p. 772). By combining these two definitions, *contract learning* specifies what is agreed upon between student and professor.

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog assigns a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores receive equal weighting. Your final grade is the average of each grade received.

- A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Erskine Seminary 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 FAQs

1. Students must submit all assignments to the professor via e-mail attachments unless otherwise notified. Where directed students will also upload assignments to the online classroom for other student reactions.
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number. Failure to include this information will result in a returned assignment.
4. Due to the participatory nature of this class, students are expected to attend all class meetings and to be on time. If students have to be absent for part or all of a class meeting day, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses as much as one full class day or its equivalent in late arrival or early departure should consult with the professor to see if it is still possible to pass the course.
5. Click [here](#) for the academic schedule.

Course Assignments

Module One: Community

During the first section of the course, students will:

1. Make weekly contributions to the discussion board postings.
2. Read the required texts and write summary paper.
3. Complete required assignments pertaining to self-directed learning.
4. Complete other assignments as directed.

All work for the first module is due by the second class meeting.

Module Two: Competencies

During the second section of the course, students will:

1. Make weekly contributions to the discussion board postings.
2. Read and complete selected portions of the Lowe/Lowe text and workbook.
3. Write a Reflection Paper.
4. Complete inventories and other assignments as directed.

All work for the second module is due by the third class meeting.

Module Three: Completeness

During the third section of the course, students will:

1. Make weekly contributions to the discussion board postings.
2. Read and complete selected portions of the spiritual formation material and inventory as well as maintain a faith development journal.
3. Read required texts.
4. Complete other assignments as directed and write a final, critical integrative paper.

All work for the third module is due by the fourth class meeting.

Assignment Components

Community

It is the expectation that community formation will continue beyond in-class meetings. To that end, students are asked to 1. **Respond each week** to the question posted to the discussion board and **reply** to at least one other student. I will post a question under “Third Place” each week; students should post their **initial** response no later than midnight of Wednesday and **reply to another student** by week’s end (Sunday evening). Failure to complete this assignment will significantly jeopardize the student’s grade.

Papers

This course has an emphasis on communication by way of written dialogue. Students will be expected to communicate reflections through a series of short Memos and other papers. The word “communication” is connected semantically to the term community and it is the assumption of the course that students will be proactive in course interaction through their writing. Good writing should integrate, summarize, and provide a cogent overview. **Graduate-level writing is expected.** All writing should follow American academic conventions, as set forth in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These conventions are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “[Style and Form Standards](#) for all Masters Level Programs,” which students should read carefully and follow diligently.

Competencies

Part of the objective for this course is to help students develop skills and competencies that will adequately prepare them for graduate-level theological education. To that end, there will be a series of inventories assigned. Students are expected to actively engage in those materials.

Reading

A limited number of texts are required for this course. During seminary students should be acquiring materials for their personal library. Consider these texts resources for future learning and ministry.

Spiritual formation

Theological education should be viewed as part of the process of spiritual formation. To that end, students will be engaged in reading and reacting to materials pertaining to spiritual growth and development.

Final paper

The final paper will serve as your final exam for the course. The paper will demonstrate your ability to **integrate** class discussions, required readings, and your own personal reflection in light of what you have learned about yourself as an adult self-directed learner. Your paper should give evidence of your exposure to and understanding of the course concepts presented in lectures, your **critical engagement** with the required texts for the course, and the results of any learning inventories. Finally, your paper should **incorporate concepts** learned in the Spiritual Formation materials along with your own reflections and insights. Your paper should also reflect graduate level writing skills. This paper should be 10-12 pages long, double-spaced, and follow seminary writing guidelines.

WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The seminary has produced a *Writing Theological Papers* document that guides a student through the process of producing a high quality theological paper. It is included as part of the materials for this course located in the online classroom and is part of your Student Handbook provided by the seminary.

Please edit your paper for typographical errors, misspelled words, stylistic miscues, and grammatical mistakes. The paper should be double-spaced and constitute original work written for this course only and cannot include material previously used in another course or for another purpose. Please read over the notation regarding the seminary policy on plagiarism included at the end of this syllabus. Your use of the work or thoughts of another without proper citation and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. **Content found at an Internet web site is construed to be copyrighted material written and produced by another person.** Undocumented wholesale use of words from an Internet web site passed off as the student's own work in a research paper of this sort constitutes plagiarism and considered a violation of the seminary plagiarism policy. Students who are determined to have violated the seminary's policy on

plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the paper, will not be allowed to re-submit another paper, and will have a written record of the violation added to their permanent student record. Further violations of the seminary's plagiarism policy could result in temporary or permanent dismissal from the seminary.

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf

Bibliography

(The following bibliography is formatted according to APA standards, a departure from the seminary-required Turabian style.)

- Aslanian, C. & Brickell, H. (1980). *Americans in transition: Life changes reasons for learning*. New York: College Board Publications.
- Ausubel, D. (1977). The fascination of meaningful verbal learning in the classroom. *Educational Psychologist*, 12 (2), 162-178.
- Barna, G. (2001, May 21). *More Americans are seeking net-based faith experiences*. Retrieved July 31, 2004 from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=home>
- Brockett, R. and Hiemstra, R. (1991). *Self-Direction in adult learning*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Burgess, P. (1971). Reasons for adult participation in group educational activities. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 22:3-29.
- Cannell, L. (1999). A review of literature on distance education. *Theological Education*, 36 (1), 1-72.
- Eastmond, D. (1995). *Alone but together*. Cresskill: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Gross, R. (1991). *Peak learning: A master course in learning how to learn*. Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher, Inc.
- Havighurst, R. (1953). *Human development and education*. New York: Longmans.
- Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. (1993). *Management of organizational behavior: Utilizing human resources, Sixth Edition*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Houle, C. (1961). *The inquiring mind*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kahn, N. (1992). *More learning in less time*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Kember, D. (1985). *Open learning courses for adults*. Englewood Cliffs: Educational Technology Publications.

- Kemp, S. (2002, January). *Learning Communities in distance education*. Paper presented at the conference of the Association of Christian Continuing Education of Schools and Seminaries, Seal Beach, CA.
- Keirsey, D. & Bates, M. (1984). *Please Understand Me*. Prometheus Nemesis.
- Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-Directed Learning*. New York: Association Press.
- Knowles, M. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Follett Pub. Company.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Lamdin, L. (1991). Roads to the learning society. *Council on adult and experiential learning*, 124 – 25.
- Larsen, E. (2001, December). *Cyberfaith: How Americans pursue religion online*. Retrieved August 28, 2004 from the Pew Internet and American Life Project Web site:
http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_CyberFaith_Report.pdf
- Laughner, T. (n.d.). *Psychological sense of community (PSOC): Four factors (membership, influence, integration, fulfillment of needs)*. Retrieved March 20, 2004, from
<http://www.tltgroup.org/CommunityConnectedness/LaughnerElements.htm>
- Levine, Joe (2003). *Learners, Learners Everywhere: The Challenge of Teaching at a Distance*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Lowe, Stephen D. (1991). Expanding the taxonomy of adult learner orientations. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, March, 1991.
- Lowe, S. (2000, February). *Building community and facilitating formation in seminary distance education*. Paper presented at the 30th Annual Evangelical Deans' Council Meeting, Phoenix, AZ.
- Myers, I. with Myers, P. (1995). *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Oswald, R. & Kroeger, O. (1988; rpt 1989). *Personality Type & Religious Leadership*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute.
- Palloff, R. & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Papadakis, M. (2003, September). *People can create a sense of community in cyberspace*. Retrieved March 25, 2004, from
<http://www.sri.com/policy/csted/reports/sandt/it/>
- Patterson, E. (1996). The questions of distance education. *Theological Education*, 33 (2), 59-74.
- Reissner, A. (1999). An examination of formational and transformational issues in conducting distance learning. *Theological Education*, 36 (1), 87-100.

- Rowntree, D. (1991, reprint). *Learn How to Study*. London: Sphere Books Limited.
- Shah, I. (1981). *Learning How to Learn*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2003). *Teaching and Learning at a Distance* (2nd ed). New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Smith, L. and Walter, T. (1992). *The Mountain is High: Success Strategies for Adult Learners*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Smith, R. (1982). *Learning How to Learn*. Chicago: Follett.
- Tough, Alan (1975). *The Adult's Learning Projects*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Whitehorn, T. (2004). *Cyber-Tithing: On-line giving creates ease and convenience for church supporters*. Retrieved September 23, 2004 from <http://www.churchbusiness.com/articles/181cover.html>

Recommended Journals and Periodicals

The American Journal of Distance Education.

International Council for Distance Education Bulletin.

Ocotillo: The Journal of Adult Learning.

International Journal of Lifelong Education.

Journal of Adult Training (published by the Evangelical Training Association)