



Introduction to Theological Education PM 501 CO

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Class Meeting Times and Location

Saturdays: 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Erskine Theological Seminary Columbia Campus

1500 Lady Street, Suite 200

Columbia, South Carolina 29201

(803) 771-6180

Elective. Three credit hours

Course Description

The design of this course is to make students aware of their needs for whole person development in preparation for service in the Christian church. 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 familiarize students with online community formation.
3. 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.



4. To equip students with an understanding of graduate level expectations of academic work.
5. To understand the Biblical concepts and definitions in the field of spiritual formation.
6. To understand and identify the dynamic process of Christian spiritual growth and be able to help others to use spiritual disciplines for growth.

Course Format

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 will emphasize the importance of communication as it impacts the community of learners. This will take the form of written dialogue as well as online community building through the use of discussion boards. Students will be expected to be intentional about forming community. Additionally, students will be expected to communicate reflections through a series of short Memos. Communication is connected semantically to the term community and it is the assumption of the course that students will be proactive in course interaction.

Finally, it is the assumption and expectation of this course that students will be proactive and self-directing in their learning.

Erskine Virtual Campus (EVC)

This course utilizes the EVC website 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 then you will receive information regarding access to the online classroom. Students should ideally have their online accounts set up by the first class session. As soon as you have received information for accessing the online classroom, you may check for important information pertaining to the class

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 (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) 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)

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

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

Recommended Websites

Online students have access to the Erskine Library. You can access online services at <http://www.erskine.edu/library/>. Though you may wish to check out books via interlibrary loan, the [online database](#) has a number of articles and resources available for download. As an Erskine Seminary student, you have access to the ATLA Religion database which has 500,000 citations of articles and books. Subjects covered include: Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, Pastoral Care, Ethics, etc. About 150,000 of these records have full-text articles attached. You can access the online database by logging into your account using your student identification number.

Other sites:

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

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

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.

Please decide the grade for which you would like to contract and send email indicating your decision.

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. All assignments must be submitted via the online classroom unless otherwise notified.
2. Please use Microsoft Word for written assignments.
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. Students **must** attend the first meeting of the course. Those who cannot attend the first course meeting should not register for the course or, if already registered, should complete the



- drop/add form and drop the course. (If the drop/add form is not completed and turned in to the Registrar, the student will still be charged for the course and will receive an “F” grade.) If students have to be absent for part 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 essentially misses a quarter of the class requirements which jeopardizes the option of completing the course. Students should consult with the professor to see if it is still possible to pass the course in light of absences.
5. Online Discussion—During the month of February students will participate in an asynchronous online discussion using the online classroom. Students will be asked to post weekly responses to the *Third Place* discussion forum. Each initial post must be made Wednesdays by 11:00 PM. By Saturday, 11:00 PM, students should respond to a classmate’s post. Failure to post each week will result in a grade reduction.
 6. It is the expectation of this professor that students are aware of the Seminary’s plagiarism policy and will abide by those guidelines. Any and all forms of plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course.

Course Platform

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, “Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program.” It is with this stipulation that the Virtual Campus has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, “Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities.” In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High speed access to the Internet



Course Assignments

Module One - Community

Week 1	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Begin reading the Cooper text. At the graduate level, students are not expected to read the text word-for-word but rather those sections that help the student understand the main points of each chapter. Students should underline or highlight significant portions. ◆ Read chapter one of Lowe/Lowe textbook. Students should underline or highlight significant portions. ◆ Review Self-Directed learning projects (available in online classroom). ◆ Review and complete assigned Self-Directed Learning projects (available in online classroom). ◆ Participate in online activities as directed.

! All work for the first module should be completed (and uploaded to the online classroom) before the second face-to-face class session.

Module Two – Competencies

Week 2	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continue reading Cooper text. ◆ Read chapters 2 & 4 of Lowe/Lowe textbook. Underline or highlight significant portions. ◆ Complete selected portions of Learning Assessments (from workbook available in online classroom) ◆ Participate in online activities as directed.

! All work for the second module should be completed (and uploaded to the online classroom) before the third class session.



Module Three - Completeness

Week 3	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continue reading Cooper text. ◆ Begin reading Cetuk text. ◆ Read chapter 3 of Lowe/Lowe textbook. Underline or highlight significant portions. ◆ Begin Faith Development Journal. ◆ Participate in online activities as directed.

! All work for the third module should be completed (and uploaded to the online classroom) before the fourth class.

Week 4	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Finish reading Cooper text. ◆ Continue reading Cetuk text. ◆ Begin critical integrative paper* ◆ Continue Faith Development Journal. ◆ Participate in online activities as directed.

Weeks 5-8	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continue reading and finish Cetuk text. ◆ Begin critical integrative paper ◆ Continue Faith Development Journal. ◆ Participate in online activities as directed.

*This paper will demonstrate your ability to **integrate** class discussions, required readings, discussion board postings 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. The paper should contain an appropriate summary of each of the required readings. 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.

Due date: the last day of finals week (last week of February).

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies



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

Bibliography

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

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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)