

*Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning*

**ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

[www.erskineseminary.org](http://www.erskineseminary.org)  
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**ST 551G Survey of Systematic Theology**

Fall 2008

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Associate Professor of Systematic Theology

**Class Meeting Times and Location**

Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

September 20<sup>th</sup>, October 18<sup>th</sup>, November 15<sup>th</sup>, and December 13<sup>th</sup>

Greenville Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

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*\* If you send a FAX to Columbia, please inform me by e-mail or telephone that you have done so. You are welcome to e-mail papers to me in Word format, or mail them to my home address. **For all papers, a hard copy must always be submitted to me, either handed to me in class, mailed to my home, or placed in my mailbox at the seminary. A copy of all work submitted must be kept by the student.***

## OFFICE HOURS

In Columbia: Fridays, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon.

*My office is located at the Erskine Theological Seminary Columbia extension site, 1500 Lady Street, Suite 200, Room 205. Enter by the side door off the driveway from Lady Street and go to the second floor. Due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I strongly recommend that you schedule an appointment. You are welcome to call me at home. Please make your calls between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Because Columbia is not convenient for many students, I will do my best to be available. We can meet in Due West on Tuesdays and before or after class in Greenville. I have a flat rate long distance telephone service, so I shall be happy to bear the cost of long distance telephone meetings if that is more convenient for you.*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Using both historical and modern materials, this course aims to deepen awareness of the major doctrines of Christian theology and the current discussion of them. *M. Div. and M.A.T.S. students may not take this course. Required for M.A.C.E., M.A.C.M., M.A.P.M., and M.C.M. students. Alternate years. Three hours.*

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. Fundamental to that task is helping our students to know and understand the things which have been revealed to us by God. This course is a survey of the major doctrines of Christian theology. Its aim is to introduce students to the discipline of systematic theology and to show its place and importance for the ministry of the word in the church. From the lectures, readings, classroom discussion, and writing assignments, diligent students should acquire the foundational knowledge needed for beginning the study of systematic theology, and for understanding what God has revealed in the Scriptures. A student successfully completing this course should be able to:

1. Understand and explain the nature of theology and some basic concepts involved in it.
2. Understand and explain the importance of systematic theology for a right interpretation of Scripture, and for preaching and teaching the word of God.
3. Understand the basic steps involved in moving from the text of Scripture to a statement of the Bible's teaching in a sermon or essay.
4. Understand and explain the "four-fold curriculum," *i.e.*, the connection between exegesis of the Scriptures, systematic theology, historical theology, and practical theology.
5. Understand and explain the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (available from <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>)

1. Any systematic theology text by a single author of your choosing, preferably one that is accepted in your church or denomination. If you need recommendations, please consult with your professor, or another minister or faculty member who belongs to your church tradition. You may wait until after the first class to make your selection.
2. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

1. J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993.

## REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance** – Preparation, attendance, and participation in class sessions are required. Bring your Bible to each class session. Students must arrive on time for class, and following breaks. You are expected to remain at each session until it concludes. Students who miss more than 3 class sessions or its equivalent through

late arrival or early departure (10 hours or more) will normally be asked to withdraw from the course or receive a failing grade.

2. **Reading Worksheets** – There will be three reading worksheets on the material covered in the lectures and readings assigned in Grudem and in your theologian. There will be 20 questions on each exam, most are short answer requiring a sentence or two to answer. Each worksheet will also ask you to write a paragraph summarizing your beliefs on each of the doctrinal topics covered for that assignment. Each worksheet will be worth 25% of your grade: 1% for each **short** answer questions and 3% for the doctrine summaries.
3. **Major paper** – *IMPORTANT: Before writing a paper, each student should consult the seminary’s approved paper on “Writing Theological Papers” by Dr. Fairbairn. This can be located on the McCain Library’s web site, under Library Research Guides, under Seminary Guides, <http://www.erskine.edu/library/content/WritingTheologicalPapers.doc>.*

The major paper will consist of a statement of faith (one or two pages, single-spaced) summarizing your beliefs on the basic doctrines of the Christian faith covered in this course (Revelation, God, Humanity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Salvation, Church, Sacraments, and the Last Things). This statement of faith will combine the individual paragraphs you have written on the reading work sheets. This statement of faith will be accompanied by a paper of 12-15 pages double-spaced, providing further explanation for the statement of faith, giving appropriate Biblical support, and using suitable quotations from the theologians you have read. The paper will count for 25% of your final grade.

*IMPORTANT: 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). This document is available on the McCain Library’s web site, under Library Research Guide, under Seminary guides, <http://www.erskine.edu/library/content/Style-FormStandards.pdf>. 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.*

## GRADING AND EVALUATION

The grading scale published in the seminary catalog will be used to arrive at your final grade. Your reading worksheets will receive a numerical grade. The scale is:

A	95-100	B	88-90	C	80-83	D	72-75
A-	93-94	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71
B+	91-92	C+	84-85	D+	76-77	F	0-69

The major paper will receive a letter grade. For letter grades, the scale is:

A	4.0	B	3.0	C	2.0	D	1.0
A-	3.7	B-	2.7	C-	1.7	D-	0.7
B+	3.3	C+	2.3	D+	1.3	F	0

### SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

*“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?”*

Luke 14:28

Each seminary class requires about 120 hours of work, covering both time in class and time spent in reading, researching, thinking, and writing. About 40 hours will be spent in class for this course, leaving about 80 hours of work to be done outside. Roughly, that means that for each 3 hours per week you spend in class, you will need 6 more hours that week to complete the assigned work. Plan ahead. Let the one who has ears to hear, hear!

***The dates given below are when the assignments are due!*** Please complete the readings before class and bring your questions about the reading to class.

- September 20<sup>th</sup> Introduction to Systematic Theology, and the Doctrines of Revelation and God
- Read Grudem, pp. 15-261
  - Read in your theologian on the above topics
- October 18<sup>th</sup> The Doctrine of God (cont.), and the Doctrines of the Person and Work of Christ
- Read in Grudem, pp. 262-354, 439-633
  - Read in your theologian on the above topics
  - **DUE: Worksheet #1**
- November 15<sup>th</sup> The Doctrines of the Holy Spirit and Salvation
- Read in Grudem, pp. 634-809, 840-850
  - Read in your theologian on the above topics
  - **DUE: Worksheet #2**
- December 13<sup>th</sup> The Doctrines of the Church, Sacraments, and Last Things
- Read in Grudem, pp. 810-839, 853-903, 950-1015, 1091-1167
  - Read in your theologian on the above topics
  - **DUE: Worksheet #3**
  - **Due: Major Paper**

ERSKINE SEMINARY POLICIES

## FOR INCLUSION IN COURSE SYLLABI

### 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, because my office is in Columbia, this class meets in Greenville, and most of you are commuting from elsewhere, my office hours will not likely be of much help to you. If you need to talk with me, I will make every effort to accommodate you. We can meet before or after class in Greenville, during lunch, or by telephone. I teach once a week in Due West on Wednesday afternoons, so if any of you are on campus Wednesdays we can meet there. If you are taking classes in Columbia, I can perhaps arrange to meet you before class in Columbia. I have a flat rate long-distance telephone service so I shall gladly bear the cost of the long-distance calls. 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. Students wishing to take a course which meets four times over the semester **must** attend the first meeting of the course. Students who cannot attend the first course meeting should not register for the course or, if already registered, should drop the course and complete the drop/add form. (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 or all of another 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 whether it is still possible to pass 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). You may access this document at the McCain Library’s web site, under Library Research Guides, under Seminary Guides, <http://www.erskine.edu/library/content/Style-FormStandards.pdf>. 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.

### 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.

Rev. May 16, 2008 v.3

## A FINAL WORD

This is a class in Christian doctrine, meaning that it is a class studying the teaching of the Bible. We study all the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, seeking to understand each part of the Bible in harmony with the whole. As we do so, we study what the Church has said about the Bible through all its ages, that we might have the benefit of instruction from those most gifted in the Church to help us understand the Word of God. We do not study doctrine for doctrine's sake; we study it for truth's sake, and thus we primarily study Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The truth we are seeking is the truth of the glory of God and everlasting life. Our Lord prayed to His Father on behalf of His followers, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). I as your teacher will be seeking the answer to that prayer for your life and mine as I teach. I urge you to seek the answer to that prayer as you participate in this class. May God have the glory for it all, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.* "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory" (Ps. 115:1).

(For a moving use of this text, see the conclusion to the movie *Henry V*. Youtube.com has a clip at <http://video.aol.com/video-detail/henry-v-1989-kenneth-branaugh-non-nobis-and-te-deum/447245964>.)